

Oil and water don't mix, neither should bottom trawling and EU MPA's

MPA's that are properly managed and protected have shown increases in biomass, diversity, density and size. Eventually the marine flora and fauna spillover out of the MPA as either adults or larva which then allows fishers access to more and larger fish and invertebrates.

13% increase in size of fish

19% increase in diversity

121% increase in density

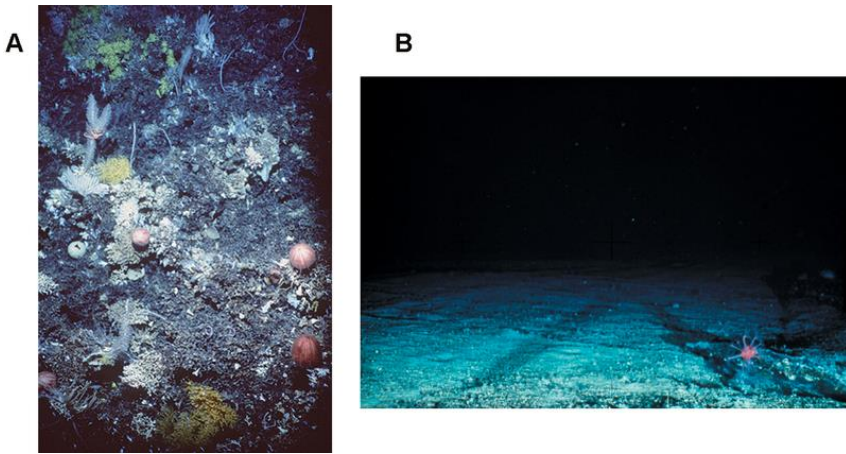
251% increase in biomass

Bottom trawling is one of the most destructive forms of commercial fishing. Heavy metal doors are used to hold open a net that is used to catch commercial seafood. The doors dig into the ocean bottom and are dragged along causing large, deep grooves that tear up the seafloor. A recently released report determined that 59% of the 727 Marine Protected Area's (MPA) created by the European Union are being bottomed trawled. The purpose of an MPA is to protect sensitive marine ecosystems and to allow marine biota to increase in diversity and population size. Bottom trawling activity in MPA's is in direct conflict with the purpose of an MPA.



Trawler hauling nets (double rigging). Using heavy metal doors. Public domain. Robert K. Brigham <http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/htmls/fish0813.htm>

Point of interest: Batwing boards minimize seafloor damage and cause less drag on the boat which reduces fuel consumption helping both the financial bottom line of the fisher and reduces CO2 emissions.



The Effect of Trawling the Seafloor for Groundfish. (A) The coral community and seabed on an untrawled seamount. (B) The exposed bedrock of a trawled seamount. Both are 1,000–2,000 meters (1094–2188 yards) below the surface. Photo, with permission, by CSIRO Marine Research. Licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Generic](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/) license. No Changes were made to the photo.

The MPA's that are being bottom trawled in the EU waters are being trawled 1.4 times as often as non-MPA's and there is greater abundance of sea life *outside* of the MPA. This clearly indicates that bottom trawling specifically, but fishing in general, should be prohibited in the EU MPA's.

Recommendations

- ❖ The European Union should ban all forms of fishing in Marine Protected Areas.
- ❖ If the cessation of fishing in MPA's, at this time, is not feasible then the following options are recommended:
 - Bottom trawling should be banned or at a minimum only be allowed if Batwing Boards are used.
 - An educational program on the benefits of MPA's and success stories of MPA's should be created and be mandatory training as part of the fishing licence requirements.
 - After the third year of the educational program a five-year phasing out of fishing in the MPA's should begin with the goal of zero fishing inside MPA's
- ❖ Management plans should be created for all the MPA's.

References

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