



Access World News

## Protecting Coral

New York Times, The (NY) - Tuesday, September 26, 2000

**Abstract:** *Dr Elliott A Norse letter on threat to deep sea corals and myriad species that live among them posed by commercial fishing trawlers*

To the Editor:

Re "Deep Peril for Deep Sea Coral" (Sept. 19): Deep sea corals create ideal habitat for the young of commercially important fish species by providing shelter from predators. When trawling removes corals and other structure-forming animals from the sea floor, young fish lose their refuges, which might explain why overfished Atlantic cod stocks are not recovering.

Also, the global extent of trawling is vast. A recent study in the scientific journal *Conservation Biology* by Dr. Les Watling, a marine biologist at the University of Maine, and me estimates that on an annual basis trawlers scour a sea floor area equivalent to twice the size of the lower 48 states. Protecting large areas from bottom trawling is the only effective way to protect deep sea corals and the myriad species that live among them. Establishing the proposed Gulf of Maine International Ocean Wilderness along the United States-Canadian Atlantic border would be an important start.

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**Caption:** Photo (Institute of Marine Research, Norway)

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