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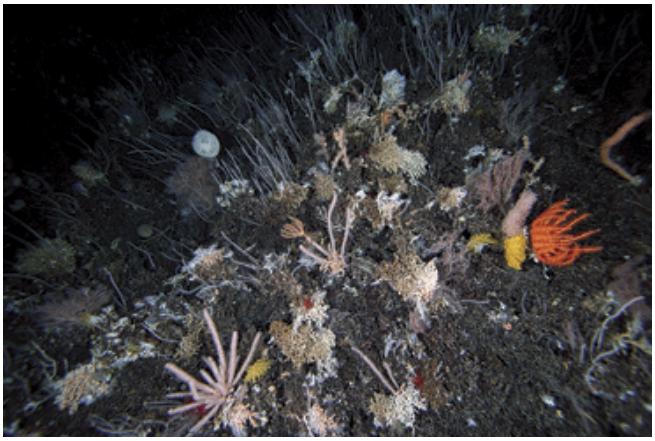
# Hope for rebuilding global fisheries

**An international study published in the journal *Science* has found that curbs to prevent overfishing are aiding the recovery of some depleted marine ecosystems and fisheries.[1]**



Credit: CSIRO

CSIRO's Dr Beth Fulton was one of 19 researchers – led by scientists Dr Boris Worm of Dalhousie University, Canada, and Dr Ray Hilborn of the University of Washington – who found that previously overfished ecosystems were recovering in five of the 10 large marine ecosystems they investigated.

Dr Hilborn noted that while fisheries in parts of the US, Iceland and New Zealand were improving 'there is still a long way to go – of all fish stocks that we examined, 63 per cent remained below target and still needed to be rebuilt'.

And Dr Worm commented that while there is still a troubling trend of increasing stock collapse across all regions, 'this paper shows that our oceans are not a lost cause'.

'The encouraging result is that the exploitation rate – the ultimate driver of depletion and collapse – is decreasing in half of the 10 systems we examined in detail,' he added.

'This means that management in those areas is setting the stage for ecological and economic recovery. It's only a start but it gives me hope that we have the ability to bring overfishing under control.'

Dr Fulton used computer modelling to analyse ecosystem recovery in 31 fisheries worldwide, and 10 in detail – including Australia's southern and eastern scalefish and shark fisheries – to determine the effect of management measures such as catch quotas, fishing closures, ocean zoning, selective fishing gear and community co-management.

1 Worm B *et al.* (2009) Rebuilding global fisheries. *Science* **325** (5940), 578–585, DOI: 10.1126/science.1173146.