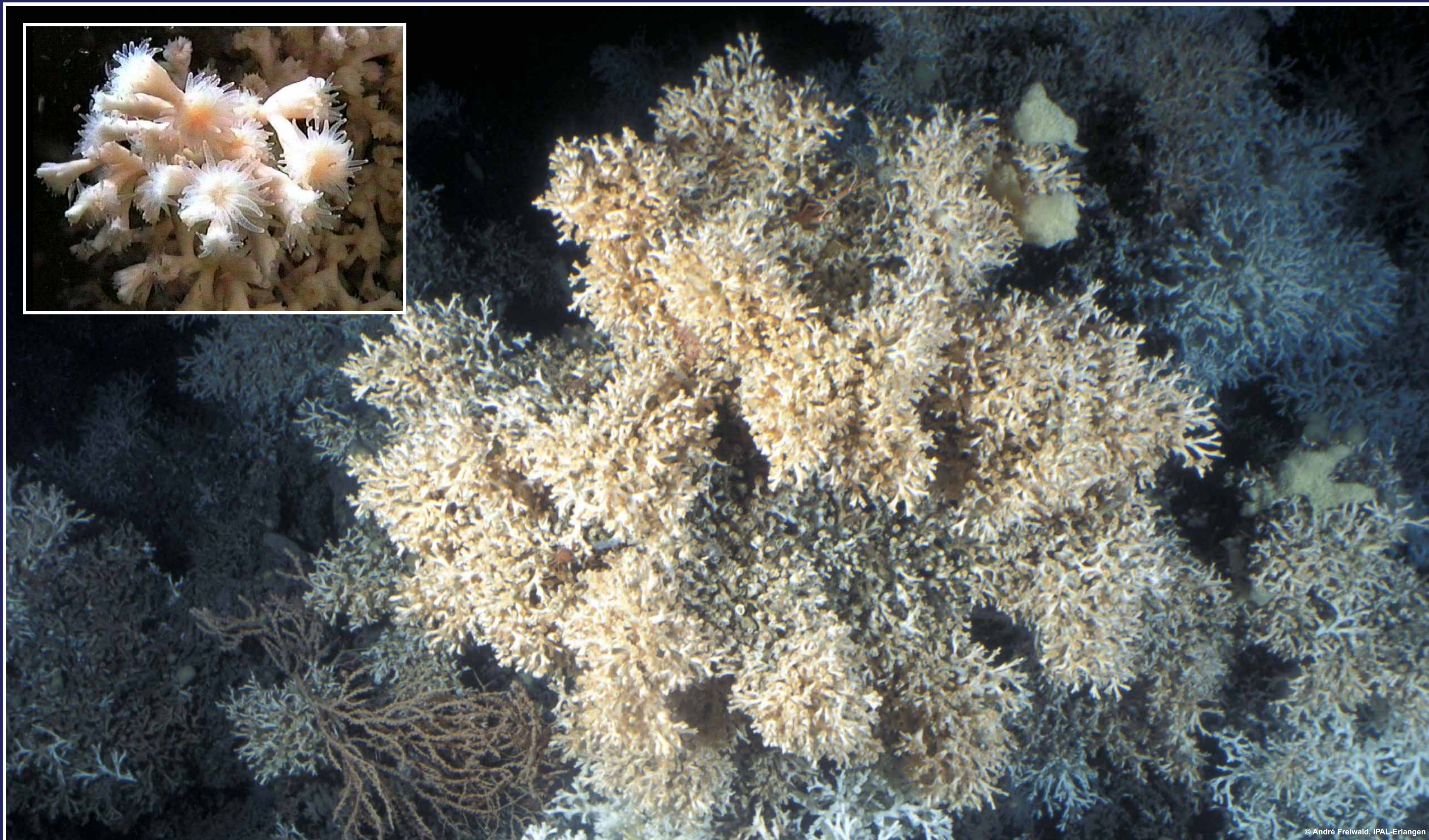




UNEP
Coral Reef Unit

United Nations Environment Programme Coral Reef Unit



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Known distribution of *Lophelia pertusa* in the Atlantic Ocean

Most records are from waters within national exclusive economic zones (EEZ)



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Fish nurseries

Cold water coral reefs are important and rich seabed habitats, which support and sustain commercial fish species

COLD WATER CORALS Threatened reefs in the dark

Cold water reefs are made up of stony corals like *Lophelia pertusa* which flourish in the plankton-rich currents on the continental shelves down to several hundreds of metres below sea level.

Similar to tropical corals in their shape, size, complexity and function, these reefs are found in many oceans and provide habitats for thousands of species.

Cold water corals grow very slowly and are just as vulnerable to environmental impacts as their tropical cousins. Human activities such as trawling in the fish-rich reefs have already left their mark, and have devastated many coral assemblies before scientists have had a chance to assess their full distribution and ecological role.



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Environmental threats

Ongoing trawling devastates cold water coral reefs through physical impact and lost fishing gear.

<http://coral.unep.ch>

In collaboration with:



Produced by corals @ unep-wcmc
October 2003



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