

Group seeks protection for Alaska cold-water coral

The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska - An environmental group is petitioning the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to list 43 cold-water corals as threatened species.

Biologist Kiersten Lippmann of the Center for Biological Diversity says the corals face extinction because of climate change, including warming and ocean acidification, plus commercial fishing, especially trawling.

She says in the group's announcement that trawling can destroy many square miles of corals in a single day.

She says corals form three-dimensional fish habitat similar in structure to tropical coral reefs.

Lippman says Alaska corals occur in greatest abundance a few miles off the Aleutian Islands, in Bering Sea underwater canyons and on submerged volcanoes in the Gulf of Alaska.

N O A A h a s 9 0 d a y s t o r e s p o n d t o t h e p e t i t i o n .