

Researchers call for better ocean stewardship

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This is fangtooth, *Anoplogaster cornuta*, one of numerous deep-sea creatures.
Credit: Danté Fenolio, Ph.D. Manager of Conservation and Research San Antonio Zoo

It has been said that we know more about the surface of the moon than

we do about our own planet's oceans. That especially applies to the deepest parts of our oceans – depths that are 200 meters or deeper.

Researchers from organizations around the world who specialize in studying and exploring the deepest regions of our oceans have come together to pen a cautionary tale that urges we take a critical look at how we're treating our seas.

"We need to consider the common heritage of mankind - when do we have the right to take something that will basically never be replaced or take millions of years," said Tracey Sutton, Ph.D., Associate Professor at Nova Southeastern University's (NSU) Oceanographic Center.

Sutton, along with scientists and professors from California to Germany to the United Kingdom have written a paper published by *Science* magazine that calls for increased stewardship when it comes to our oceans. The paper can be found [online](#).

The paper addresses the many ways the oceans are currently being exploited (i.e. mining, over-fishing, etc.) and says that we have to "make smart decisions now about the future of the deep [ocean](#)." The goal is to reach a "happy balance" that weighs benefits of use against both direct and indirect costs of extraction, including damage to sensitive and yet unknown ecosystems.

"There's so much more we need to learn about these deep, mysterious places on our planet and our fear is some ecosystems and marine species will be eradicated before we even know they existed," said Sutton. "The [deep ocean](#) is already experiencing impacts from fishing, oil and gas development and waste disposal, and we are trying to get people to pause and see if there are better ways to do things before we negatively impact our seas."

Provided by Nova Southeastern University

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