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Media release

EDS delighted at new Kermadec sanctuary but oceans work not yet done

EDS is delighted with the announcement of the new Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary today. The sanctuary covers an area of 620,000 square kilometres around the five Kermadec Islands. All fishing and mining activities will be excluded from the sanctuary.

“The new ocean sanctuary will be largest contiguous area of ocean where all fishing is prohibited. It represents a major step forward for our oceans.

“We would like to congratulate the Pew Charitable Trust, WWF New Zealand, the Royal Forest and Bird Society and other groups for their successful advocacy in achieving this significant milestone in oceans conservation”, says EDS Policy Director Raewyn Peart.

“The establishment of the new oceans sanctuary represents a major achievement. But its implementation is reliant on ad hoc legislation. What the government has yet to resolve is the reform of our oceans legislation to enable marine protected areas to be established throughout New Zealand’s ocean realm.

“Passing a new Marine Protected Areas Act was part of the National Party’s election manifesto but has yet to come to fruition. We understand that a discussion paper on this topic will emerge before Christmas.

“The new legislation needs to apply to the Exclusive Economic Zone, so that a proper programme of spatial protection can be applied to the bulk of New Zealand’s oceans. This will help to provide greater certainty for the petroleum and minerals industries as well as for the environment.

“We also need more flexibility in the types of marine protected areas that can be created, and a robust, independent process to consider prospective areas.

“EDS is hopeful that the decision on the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary will herald a new era in oceans management in New Zealand,” concluded Ms Peart.