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DEEP CONSERVATION WORK ATTRACTS UNITED NATIONS INTEREST

Just two years after opening, The Deep Hull's £45.5 million Millennium Commission lottery project has amazingly now already forged strong links with the United Nations. This latest development is a direct result of the powerful impact of Project - Coral Rescue, the Deep's long term project to protect the threatened North Sea corals. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is showing great interest in the conservation and research work being carried out at The Deep and has asked to be linked to The Deep's own website. UNEP is the world's foremost intergovernmental environmental organisation - one of their main functions is to provide governments with impartial scientific evidence to assist with environmental policy making.

Deep assistant curator Katy Rigby explains,

"Being recognised as a world class centre for research into our native corals is an enormous coup for The Deep. The link is obvious really as UNEP are also conducting research into cold water coral. This is of particular interest to us as we're currently working on a groundbreaking research project with the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) investigating the biology of *Lophelia*, which will eventually be displayed in the Twilight Zone (opening March 2005). UNEP have supplied us with conservation materials which we're using as part of Project - Coral Rescue and we have established web links between The Deep and UNEP. We hope this is only the beginning of a long term partnership"

Research and conservation are ongoing year round activities at The Deep. Project-Coral Rescue is the public face of this work and runs throughout October and is aimed at raising awareness of the threats facing our native corals. It is a surprise to most of us that the North Sea is home to endangered coral reefs. We are far more familiar with the threats facing corals in warmer climes. Project-Coral Rescue is highlighting the plight of two North Sea species – the reefbuilding white coral *Lophelia pertusa* and the pink sea fan, *Eunicella verrucosa*.

For further information on The Deep, please visit www.thedeep.co.uk and for UNEP, please visit www.unep-wcmc.org

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