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### *German scientist gives speeches on BC's cold water corals*

Dr. Manfred Krautter, who is a professor at Stuttgart's university and a renowned specialist in corals and sponges, recently conducted a speaking tour through BC, invited by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS). Dr. Krautter co-heads a German-Canadian scientific project between Stuttgart University's Institute for Geology and Palaeontology and Natural Resources Canada's Pacific Geosciences Center at Sidney, B.C. The binational project is financially supported by the "Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft" (German Research Foundation).

It is only little known that corals grow not only in warm oceans, but in cold water, too. Until 1989, glass sponge reefs were thought to be extinct and were known only through the fossil record. Then the first living examples were found in the Hecate Strait. Since then, more of these sponge reefs have been discovered off the Sunshine Coast and off Galiano Island. These glass sponge reefs, the only known living examples in the world, provide an important habitat for other sea animals, too.

They have been growing there for over tens of thousands of years. They are called glass sponges because they are made of silicon and are quite brittle. As they are fragile, immobile, and slow growing, activities like bottom trawling, offshore oil digging and cable laying are extremely dangerous to them. This is why the CPAWS demands that permanent marine protected areas (MPAs) are put into place for their protection.

Dr. Krautter's tour touched Sechelt, Vancouver, Galiano Island, Victoria, Nanaimo, Courtenay, Port Hardy, and Prince Rupert. It will end Thursday November 16 at Queen Charlotte City's Community Hall (7:30 p.m.) (German Embassy, with files from the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society)

- [The sponge reef project - a website by Prof. Dr. Manfred Krautter](#)
- [Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, B.C. website](#)