

[NaturalNews.com](#) printable article

Originally published July 6 2008

Deep Sea Fishing Devastates Ocean Ecosystems, Destroys Fish Stocks

by David Gutierrez

(NaturalNews) Ecologists warn that the most destructive form of fishing is becoming more prevalent, with potentially disastrous consequences for ocean life.

"Industrial fisheries are now going thousands of miles, thousands of feet deep and catching things that live hundreds of years in the least protected place on Earth," said Elliott Norse, president of Marine Conservation Biology Institute. "They are roving bandits using state of the art technologies to plunder."

In the practice of deep sea trawling, [fishing](#) boats drag massive, mile-deep nets across the ocean floor far from shore, snatching up anything in their path. Once a rare practice, deep sea trawling has increased in popularity as coastal fisheries are depleted and the demand for seafood continues to rise.

"All fisheries are gradually turning into deep-sea fisheries because they have fished themselves out of the shallow waters," says Robert Steneck, a marine ecologist at the University of Maine. "The solution is not going into the deep sea, but better managing the shallow waters, where fish live fast and die young but where the [ecosystems](#) have greater potential for resilience."

Because the open sea is not claimed as the territory of any nation, few regulations on deep-sea trawling exist. Yet the deep sea is home to more biodiversity than any other [ecosystem](#) on Earth, with the possible exception of the tropical rainforests. A profusion of species found nowhere else make their homes among the canyons, ridges and mountains of the ocean bottom. Yet these unique geological features are flattened when a 15-ton trawler net collides with them, destroying the habitat of even the fish that escape capture.

Deep sea species tend to be long-lived and slow-growing, meaning that they are particularly vulnerable to over-fishing. Stocks of the orange roughy, for example, were depleted by 75 percent within 20 years of when New Zealand began fishing for them.

According to Rashid Sumaila of the University of British Columbia, fishing nations need to eliminate the massive subsidies that make the practice possible.

"It's important to nip these subsidies in the bud before more interests get barnacled around them," Sumaila said. "Eliminating them would render these fleets economically unviable."

All content posted on this site is commentary or opinion and is protected under Free Speech. Truth Publishing LLC takes sole responsibility for all content. Truth Publishing sells no hard products and earns no money from the recommendation of products. NaturalNews.com is presented for educational and commentary purposes only and should not be construed as professional advice from any licensed practitioner. Truth Publishing assumes no responsibility for the use or misuse of this material. For the full terms of usage of this material, visit www.NaturalNews.com/terms.shtml