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Mankind Continues To Destroy Marine Life With New Fishing Method

By Marlyne Zamora · May 16, 2018



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With the prevalence fishing nowadays, people are getting more engaged in the activity. However, some result to destructive fishing methods; therefore, destroying marine life and habitat. The University of Western Australia and the University of British Columbia collaborated to conduct a study which found that over 400 million tons of fish valued at \$720 billion are caught and thrown in the past 65 years through a destructive fishing method called bottom trawling.

Bottom trawling is a form of industrial fishing that captures fish and destroys corals in the process by dragging a big net, called a trawl, across the seabed from shallow coastal waters to waters as deep as 6,000 feet. Trawls are commonly used to fish species usually found on the seafloor, even those fish which are in excellent condition but unusable and they end up getting set aside.

Because of this destructive method, endangered fish get harmed along with the corals on the seabed. The collateral damage, known as the bycatch, comprise 90 percent of the total catch. Discarded fish become food for scavenging animals, and seafloor habitat gets destroyed.

Tim Cashion, the study's lead author and researcher with the Sea Around Us organization at the University of British Columbia, said small-scale fisheries caught 5.6 million tons of fish through bottom trawling in the last six decades. In 2017, otter trawls destroyed 2.4 centimeters of the seabed and caused the most destruction of marine life. Depending on the type of fishing gear and other variables like the depth of penetration of the trawl, marine life will take 1 to 6 years to regenerate.

Callum Roberts, one of the authors of a previous study, said however that not every fish and other marine life gets threatened and that there are several sea creatures left that are healthy and recovering. Despite this, he added that the worsening situation of sea creatures is worrying when the authorities turn a blind eye on the matter.

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