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THIS WEEK 17 May 2003

Old men of the sea have all but gone

THE world's fisheries are in a far worse state than anyone thought. Great predatory fish such as shark, marlin, swordfish and tuna that once filled the seas are much scarcer today, according to a new assessment. Worse, stocks that are thought to be flourishing may already have been stripped bare without anyone noticing.

Many of the world's important fisheries have already collapsed. The most notorious recent example is the cod fishery in the Atlantic off Newfoundland, where a scientific advisory panel recommended earlier this month that the Canadian government list Newfoundland's cod as an endangered species. Now a decade-long trawl through the archives by marine ecologists ...

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