

FISHING

Until around 10,000 years ago, humans derived most of their animal food from hunting. As the hunter-gatherer lifestyle gave way to agriculture, more and more of the land animals we eat were farmed instead of hunted, but all over the world, people continued to hunt sea fish. Chapter 1 described how people, being so skilled at hunting, so organised and so determined, have hunted many types of animals to extinction. When a species goes extinct there are none left. One of the main problems for fishermen is to ensure that they do not cause the loss of their very livelihood, and of these crucial foodstuffs, by hunting too many fish. The way the fish are caught can be the cause of other problems. Trawling involves towing heavy fishing gear over the seabed fast to collect up the sea animals. The doors can weigh several tonnes and create furrows when dragged. Depending on the configuration, the footrope may turn over large rocks or boulders. Sessile animals are those that live on the sea bed, not moving, like corals.

Trawling destroys them, including the little-known cold-water corals like *Goniocorella*, found in deep water off the shores of South Africa and *Madrepora*, off the Cape Verde Islands of West Africa. Cold water corals provide a home to many deep-sea animals – crustaceans, fish, sea urchins and brittle stars.

bad fishing?

Trawling for shrimps has high levels of bycatch – all sorts of animals and fish are caught by mistake alongside the shrimp.

