

[Home](#) [News](#) [Sport](#) [Radio](#) [TV](#) [Weather](#) [Languages](#)[UK version](#) [International version](#) | [About the versions](#)**BBC
NEWS**[Watch](#) One-Minute World News
[Low graphics](#) | [Accessibility help](#)**News services**
Your news when you want
it**News Front Page**[Africa](#)
[Americas](#)
[Asia-Pacific](#)
[Europe](#)
[Middle East](#)
[South Asia](#)
[UK](#)[Business](#)
[Health](#)
[Science/Nature](#)
[Technology](#)
[Entertainment](#)
Also in the news[Video and Audio](#)[Have Your Say](#)
[In Pictures](#)[Country Profiles](#)
[Special Reports](#)**RELATED BBC SITES**[SPORT](#)
[WEATHER](#)
[ON THIS DAY](#)
[EDITORS' BLOG](#)

Last Updated: Wednesday, 4 January 2006, 18:33 GMT

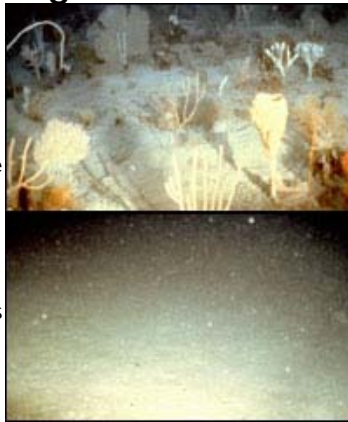
[E-mail this to a friend](#)[Printable version](#)

'Critical danger' warning on fish

Deep sea fish species in the northern Atlantic are on the brink of extinction, new research suggests.

Canadian scientists studied five deep water species including hake and eel.

Writing in the journal Nature, they say that some populations have plummeted by 98% in a generation, meeting the definition of 'critically endangered'.



Seafloor before (top) and after (bottom) the trawlers have been

Scientists and conservation bodies are pressing for a global moratorium on deep-sea fishing which they regard as particularly destructive.

Some fleets have switched to deep-sea fisheries following the collapse in more commonly-caught species such as cod.

Known as bottom-trawling, ships often use heavy trawls which are dragged across the ocean floor, destroying coral and other ecosystems.

[Click here to see how bottom trawling works](#)

Conservation groups have lobbied hard in recent years for a global moratorium.

The most recent attempt to get a moratorium adopted, at the UN General Assembly last November, failed.

Five on the brink

The new study, led by Jennifer Devine of Memorial University in Newfoundland, has produced further evidence that these fishing methods can have big ecological impacts.

The five species studied are all slow to grow and reproduce, attaining sexual maturity only in their teens.

"Deep sea fish are highly vulnerable to disturbance because of their late maturation, extreme longevity, low fecundity and slow growth," the researchers write.

They examined records from

“ **Conservation measures**

SEE ALSO:

[Call to ban destructive fishing](#)
04 Oct 05 | Science/Nature
[Deep-sea trawling's 'great harm'](#)
06 Oct 04 | Science/Nature
[Ancient life on cold-water corals](#)
04 Jun 04 | Science/Nature
[Scottish reef wins EU protection](#)
23 Mar 04 | Scotland
[Ocean census discovers new fish](#)
23 Oct 03 | Science/Nature

RELATED INTERNET LINKS:

[Nature](#)
[Memorial University](#)
[IUCN Red List](#)
[Deep Sea Conservation Coalition](#)
The BBC is not responsible for the content of external internet sites

TOP SCIENCE/NATURE STORIES

[Japanese hopes ride on Discovery](#)
[Skynet military launch postponed](#)
[Progress at UN biodiversity forum](#)

 [News feeds](#)

Canadian Atlantic waters spanning the period 1978-1994 - roughly a single generation.

are necessary and lack of knowledge must not delay appropriate initiatives ”

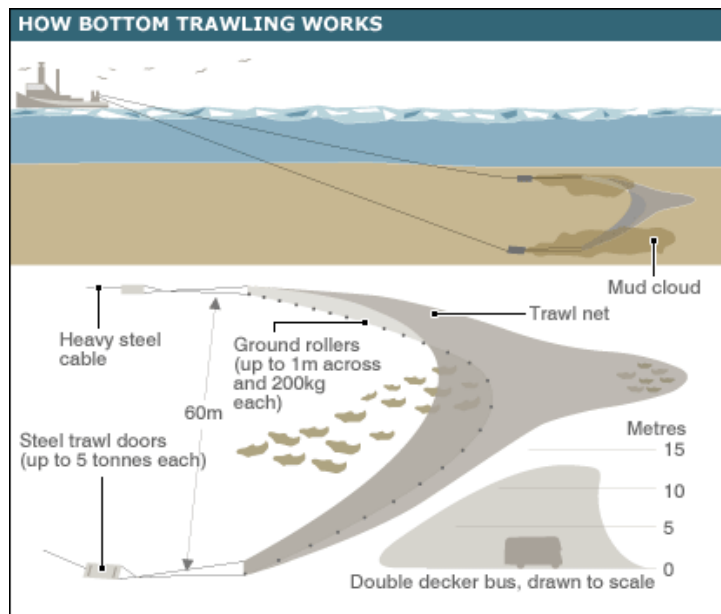
Jennifer Devine & colleagues

They found that populations of roundnose grenadier, onion-eye grenadier, blue hake, spiny eel and spinytail skate all declined spectacularly over the period.

Populations fell by between 87% and 98%; projections show that some would be completely eliminated within three generations.

These statistics would place the five fish within the category of "critically endangered", as defined by IUCN, the World Conservation Union, which publishes the Red List of threatened species.

"Conservation measures are necessary and lack of knowledge must not delay appropriate initiatives, including the establishment of deep sea protected areas," the researchers conclude.



[Click here to go back](#)

 [E-mail this to a friend](#)

 [Printable version](#)

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

[E-mail news](#) [Mobiles](#) [Alerts](#) [News feeds](#) [Podcasts](#)

MMVIII

Most Popular Now | The most read story in North America is: Anger at 'slutty' Starbucks logo

[Back to top](#) ^^

[Help](#) | [Privacy and cookies policy](#) | [News sources](#) | [About the BBC](#) | [Contact us](#)