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Ever More People, Ever Fewer Fish Dredging Is a Threat**New York Times, The (NY)** - Saturday, September 19, 1998

Abstract: Marine Conservation Biology Institute president Elliott A Norse letter on Sept 13 editorial warns bottom trawling and dredging by fishermen demolishes seabed habitat of young fish; drawing (M)

To the Editor:

A Sept. 13 editorial correctly portrays overfishing -- catching fish faster than they can replace themselves -- as a grave danger to the sea, but does not mention another threat to the Atlantic cod and many other species: using towed gear like bottom trawls and scallop dredges to catch fish, shrimp and clams.

Most of the seabed is honeycombed and covered with the shells, tubes and living things that fish eat or use as refuge from predators. Trawling and dredging crushes these animals and exposes them to scavengers, demolishing the seabed habitat of young fish.

On the Georges Bank off New England, trawls have plowed the equivalent of the entire bank every four months.

ELLIOTT A. NORSE
Redmond, Wash., Sept. 14, 1998

The writer is president, Marine Conservation Biology Institute.

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