

Hope you enjoy these true stories from Every Child Ministries' missionaries in Africa.

# Tell Me About African Fishing

by Lorella Rouster, missionary with Every Child Ministries

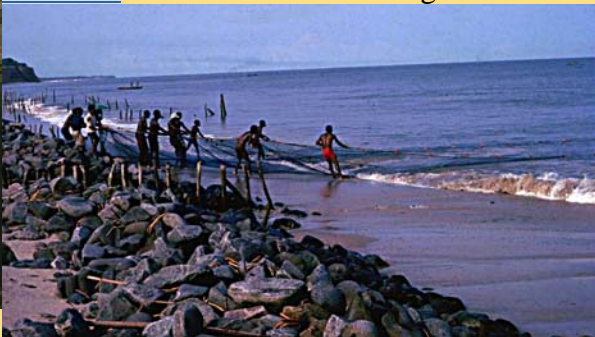
During the nine years we lived in [DR Congo \(then called Zaire\)](#) and in my later travels in [Ghana](#), I observed many interesting African fishing techniques.

One of them was very close to home. We lived on a large lake. One end was very shallow. One day I noticed that the women of the village had piled up mud to dam off one side of the lake. Then they all came out en masse with their buckets. All morning they scooped the water out to the deeper side of the lake, chanting songs as they worked, the buckets moving in rhythmic unison. Finally the water was all removed from the shallow end of the lake and the women eagerly swooped up the little fish left squirming on the bottom.



Congo has many rivers, and it is common for the people to trap fish in the river. Along the edges of quiet, shallow rivers they build little ponds. When the water is up, the fish swim in, and when it is low, the people find them trapped there. In the middle of the rivers and in the more swift-moving rivers, they lay traps woven from sticks and vines. The fish swim in but find it very difficult to swim out. Sometimes they build makeshift walkways over the river to tend their traps.

[In Ghana](#) when I observed fishing in the ocean, the Biblical idea of casting out your nets took on a whole new meaning to me. I was enjoying some relaxation on one of Ghana's beautiful beaches. I watched with interest two groups of fishers in the distance on each end of the beach from me. There were about a dozen men pulling on



each of the nets. They worked in unison, chanting a rhythm as they pulled the heavy nets in from the sea inch by slow, tedious inch. After many hours I noticed that they were getting closer together. Finally I realized that they were all pulling on the same net! As they got closer together, others joined them, even young people, for the final "pulling in." When the net was gathered in at last, they found all kinds of fish inside, large and small, and divided up the catch into piles on the beach, one for each family who participated.

I had always thought of fishing as a solitary pastime before. I thought a lot about the kind of teamwork needed to bring in a catch from the ocean. Lots of people, lots of muscle power, hours and hours of long, sustained effort. I wondered if this was the kind of fishing [Jesus](#) had in mind when He said, "I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Reconciling people to God is not a solo sport but a cooperative venture requiring maximum, sustained effort from [everyone who belongs to Christ](#).

