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Patagonian toothfish in international waters of the southwest Indian Ocean (Statistical Area 51)

L.J. López-Abellán

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Abstract

Experimental fishing for Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) took place from 28 June to 27 July 2003. This experiment was carried out by a Spanish longliner, following commercial fishing procedures, in a restricted area south of Madagascar and north of Prince Edward and Marion Islands and the Crozet Islands, outside EEZs and CCAMLR waters. A total of 57 hauls was made at depths between 360 and 1 950 m. *D. eleginoides* was present in all hauls, with catches varying from 53 to 1 158 kg. The northward distribution of *D. eleginoides* is closely related to the extension of the Sub-Antarctic Front, and especially the intermediate layer of sub-Antarctic water masses, which defines the area of *D. eleginoides* toothfish distribution. The survey area would seem to be located at the edge of the principal area of *D. eleginoides* concentration, in which a residual recruitment effect persists. The total CPUE was 42.21 kg/thousand hooks. Within the study area, depth was the most important factor in the distribution of CPUE of *D. eleginoides*.
