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France OT Annual National Report

Delegation of France Overseas Territories

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Abstract	

This report summarizes and updates fishing activity by France Overseas Territories flagged vessels authorized by the French Government to operate in the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) Area for 2024. This annual report includes the BFIA report, the VME report, the observer program implementation report, and the annual data verification report, according to the "Guidelines for the submission of Annual National Reports to the SIOFA Scientific Committee".

The fishing activity has been very low in 2024, only one longliner vessel operated in the toothfish fishery subarea 3.b (Del Cano management unit) during one cruise for a total of 4 days. No VME indicator thresholds were triggered during 2024.

All 2024 data presented in this report will be submitted, in May 2025, to the SIOFA secretariat in accordance with CMM-02(2023). They comply with French domestic policy associated with the dissemination of fisheries data and this report does not disclose any non-public domain data within the meaning of SIOFA CMM 2016/03.

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[2] Documents available only to members invited to closed sessions.

Recommendations (for proposals and working papers only)
It is recommended that the SC: • 1. Notes the National Report provided by FR-OT. • 2. Notes that the FR-OT has complied with the annual reporting requirements of the SIOFA Scientific Committee. • 3. Notes that there has been no change in the fishing fleet and the fishing activities were very low during the previous calendar year. The BFIA does not need to be updated.

Recommendations (for proposals and working papers only)

It is recommended that the SC:

France OT annual report on fishing activities in the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement Area

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Contents

Introduction

This report summarises fishing activity by French Overseas Territories flagged vessels in the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) Area. French operators are currently authorised by the French Government to target various species with demersal lines and potting gears. In accordance with CMM-02(2023) (Conservation and Management Measure for the Collection, Reporting, Verification and Exchange of Data related to fishing activities in the Agreement Area) and previous superseded CMMs, French historical logbook data have been provided to the SIOFA Secretariat.

High seas fishing authorization in the SIOFA area are only deliverable to vessels that already hold a license issued by the Prefect, Administrator of the Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises (TAAF). Permits are granted for a one year period. Consistent with SIOFA CMM-02(2023), French high-seas fisheries permits require the implementation of vessel monitoring systems, 100% observer coverage for all operations.

Description of fisheries

In 2024, six vessels, from the Southern French Territories, were authorized by the French authorities to fish in the SIOFA area. The fleet includes five longliners and one trawler/potter vessel to target various species with pots, dropline, vertical longlines, automatic longlines and demersal longlines.

The size of vessels is from 55 to 77 meters. The port of registry is "Port-aux-Français", Kerguelen Islands, (TAAF).

Fleet composition

In 2024, there was no change in the fleet and the French Territories fishing activities in the SIOFA AREA with one active demersal longliner operating in the toothfish fishery subarea 3.b (Table 1) for 4 days during one cruise.

Table 1: The number of French Overseas Territories vessels that actively fished in the SIOFA Area, 2011-2024

Year	Vessels that actively fished	
	Longliner	Potter
2024	1	0
2023	1	0
2022	1	0
2021	1	0
2020	2	0
2019	1	0
2018	0	1
2017	2	0
2016	0	1
2015	2	0
2014	2	0
2013	2	0
2012	2	0
2011	2	0

Catch and effort summaries

Fishing effort

In 2024, there were 20 fishing operations of 2 700 hooks (a total of 54 000 hooks set) between 1 152 and 1 552 meters in 4 days, all in Area 3b (Table 2 and Figure 1).

Table 2: Summary table of longline effort by set (number of line) in the SIOFA areas, 2011-2024. Blanks: no operations. N.B: * vertical longline

Year	Sub-areas for reporting effort data								
	1	2	3.a	3.b	4	5	6	7	8
2024				20					
2023				5					
2022				80					
2021				54					
2020				46					
2019				40					
2018					30*				
2017				26	4	3			
2016					12*				
2015				66					
2014				103					
2013				126					
2012				88					
2011				80					

Table 3: Summary table of trap effort by set (number of trap) in the SIOFA areas, 2011-2024. Blanks: no operations.

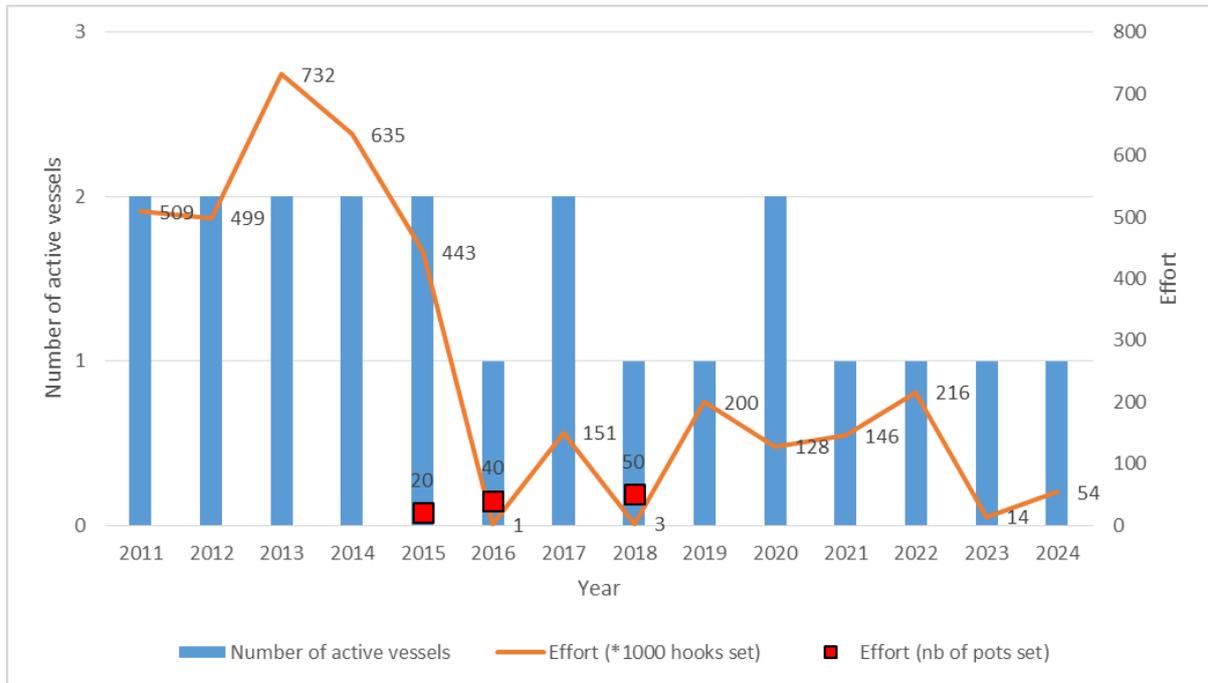| Year	Sub-areas for reporting effort data								
	1	2	3.a	3.b	4	5	6	7	8
2024									
2023									
2022									
2021									
2020									
2019									
2018					50				
2017									
2016					40				
2015				20					
2014									
2013									
2012									
2011									

Fishing effort

Figure 1: Effort (number of hooks, number of pots) and number of active vessels in the SIOFA Area, 2011 to 2024

Fishing footprint

The fishing footprint of the FR-OT fleet from 2009 to 2024 is shown in Figure 2, using a 0.5° x 0.5° grid.
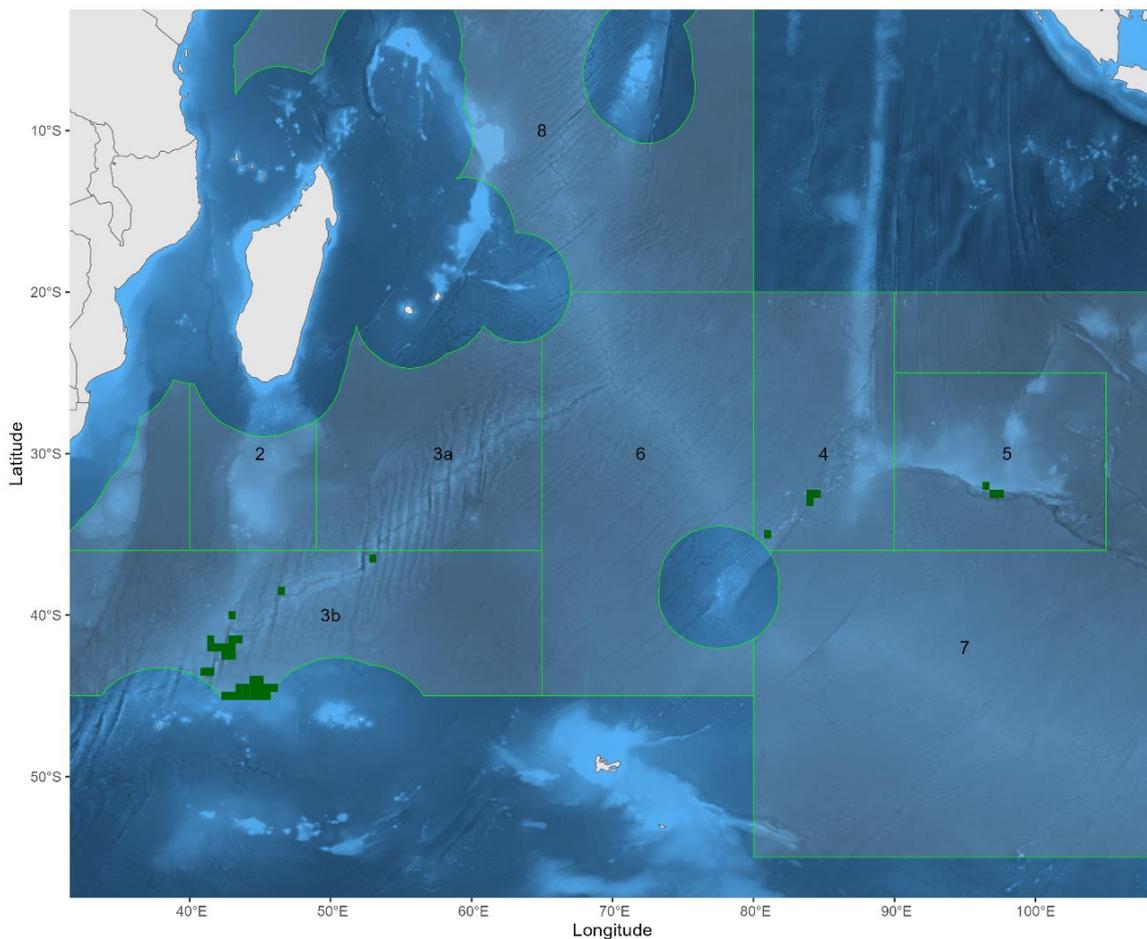

Figure 2: FR-OT 2009-2024 footprint (0.5° x 0.5° grid, all gears)

Catch

The main catches (Table 6) for the southern area are the Patagonian Toothfish (TOP), Macrourids (GRV) and *Antimora rostrata* (ANT). Catches include also some *Amblyraja taaf* (RFA) and *Etmopterus sp.* (ETF) and some other species with low catches.

The catches are mainly made with demersal longlines (Table 4). Catches with traps and vertical longlines remain very low (Table 5).

Table 4: Summary table of demersal longline total catches in kilograms, in the SIOFA areas, 2011-2024. Blanks: no operations.

Year	Sub-areas for reporting catch data								
	1	2	3.a	3.b	4	5	6	7	8
2024				8 895					
2023				1 631					
2022				29 372					
2021				13 181					
2020				15 175					
2019				29 083					
2018									
2017				25 149	282	538			
2016									
2015				70 521					
2014				66 765					
2013				84 620					
2012				48 427					
2011				69 990					

Table 5: Summary table of trap and vertical longline total catches in kilograms in the SIOFA areas, 2011-2024. Blanks: no operations.

Year	Sub-areas for reporting catch data								
	1	2	3.a	3.b	4	5	6	7	8
2024									
2023									
2022									
2021									
2020									
2019									
2018					402,47				
2017									
2016					97,9				
2015			2,6						
2014									
2013									
2012									
2011									

Table 6: Longline catch (kg) by species for the main target, bycatch, associated and depended species (R-retained and D-discarded) in the SIOFA areas, 2011-2024. The absence of catches is noted '0'. No operations is noted '-'.

Year	*Dissostichus eleginoides*		*Macrourus sp*		*Antimora rostrata*		*Amblyraja taaf*		*Etmopterus sp*		Total	
	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D
2024	2 953	0	0	1 757	0	4 183	0	0	0	2	2 953	5 942
2023	672	0	32	156	0	768	0	4	0	0	704	927
2022	11 566	41	4 303	2 260	0	11 062	110	29	0	2	15 979	13 393
2021	4 497	0	497	833	0	7 344	0	10	0	0	4 994	8 187
2020	5 210	10	1 132	1 220	0	7 486	0	117	0	0	6 342	8 833
2019	9 618	20	5 103	3 607	21	10 192	19	502	0	2	14 761	14 323
2018	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2017	7 610	0	5 020	2 656	0	9 500	0	361	0	469	12 630	12 986
2016	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	17 200	60	12 300	6 700	0	33 800	0	400	0	1	29 500	40 961
2014	13 500	0	7 700	3 800	0	37 600	0	3 900	0	561	21 200	45 861
2013	16 000	0	13 000	5 600	0	44 200	0	0	0	582	29 000	50 382
2012	17 700	0	3 900	2 600	1	10 900	0	0	0	0	21 601	13 500
2011	22 100	0	8 800	3 500	0	28 000	0	0	0	167	30 900	31 667

Fishery data collection

All the licensed French Territories vessels have a fishing observer on board, covering 100% of fishing activities. The task list is described in WHSOP1-INFO-06-French-Observer-program (Annex 03: Observer's program task list). Data collection occurs at two different levels:

-Skipper level: have to collect all detailed information on fishing events and catches.

-Observer level: independently, fishery observers (covering 100% of gear deployment) collect data on a fourth of the set to monitor catches.

All data are registered on board in a digital logbook and transferred to the MNHN fishing database "PECHEKER". Analysis of the data are made using SQL Developer and R.

Table 7: Details on the scales and resolutions of the fishery data collection

	longliner data collection items			
Year	tow / set (*individual or some aggregation*)	time scale (*set-tow hauling time, daily, etc.*)	spatial scale (*tow/set exact position or grid, please provide grid resolution*)	species details (*any aggregation or species grouping*)
2011-2024	Individual (set by set)	set hauling time	set exact position	species level

Tagging program

Tagging program on toothfish is conducted according to the SIOFA CMM-15(2023) and described in info-paper WHSOP1-INFO-06-French-Observer-program. CCAMLR Scientific Committee protocols on tagging are also followed.

A rate of at least 5 fish per tonne of green weight caught is respected. A minimum overlap statistic of at least 60% is apply for tag release.

FR-OT vessels also follow the circular 2021-36 regarding the method of tags supply.

Observers are responsible for tagging, the crew helps with the provision of fish at the size targeted by the observers.

In 2024, 16 TOP have been tagged and 2 recaptured (Table 8).

Table 8: Number of TOP tags released and recaptured by FR-OT vessels from 2020 to 2024

years	tag release number	tag recapture number
2020	29	4
2021	30	2
2022	62	1
2023	6	1
2024	16	2

VME Thresholds

The crew must collect and retain all benthic organisms for each segment in numbered buckets, those buckets will be made available for observers. The observers record benthic organisms composition and abundance for each set (Table 11). This information is also recorded in a digital logbook and transferred to the MNHN fishing database "PECHEKER".

No VME indicator thresholds were triggered for the period 2011-2024 (Table 9). The move-on protocol didn't need to be applied.

No interactions with threatened, endangered and protected species were reported in 2024 (Table 10).

Table 9: Threshold levels for encounters with VMEs and move-on protocols for the period 2011-2024

Gear/fishery	Threshold (kgs)	Move-on protocols
Longline	0	None apply

Table 10: Summary VME Taxa (wet) weight (kg), operations exceeding thresholds and effort in the SIOFA areas, the absence of VME catches is noted '-', the absence of thresholds is noted 0.

Year	Unit	Sub-areas for reporting catch and effort data								
		1	2	3.a	3.b	4	5	6	7	8
Year 2011-2024	Weight (kg)				0	0	0			
	Nº Operations				0	0	0			
	Effort				0	0	0			

Table 11: VME taxa bycatch quantities from logbooks data in 2024.

2024	scientific name	FAO code	volume (litre)	weight (kg)
taxa	Actiniaria	ATX		0,91
	Anthozoa	CNI		0,01
	Antipatharia	AQZ		0,1
	Bathylasmatidae	BCD		0,05
	Cnidaria	CNI		0,69
	Demospongiae	SPO		1
	Echinodermata	ECH		0,25
	Euryalida	OOY		1,15
	Gorgonacea	GGW		0,02
	Hexactinellida	HXY		1,48
	Isididae	GGW		0,45
	Pennatulacea	NTW		0,65
	Primnoidae	GGW		0,02

Biological sampling and length/age composition of catches

Since the beginning, biological and size composition sampling by species is conducted by scientific observers on board the FR-OT vessels (Table 12).

Table 12: Summary numbers of fish sampled* per species for the past seven years

Species (FAO code)	Years						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
TOP	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 358 BS: 0	L/F: 245 BS: 10	L/F: 184 BS: 32	L/F: 558 BS: 32	L/F: 10 BS: 0	L/F: 242 BS: 15
GRV	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 351 BS: 5	L/F: 72 BS: 3	L/F: 217 BS: 1	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 3
ANT	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 79 BS: 0	L/F: 399 BS: 5	L/F: 232 BS: 3	L/F: 280 BS: 1	L/F: 25 BS: 0	L/F: 84 BS: 3
RFA	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 38 BS: 0	L/F: 218 BS: 0	L/F: 326 BS: 0	L/F: 41 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 53 BS: 0
SDC	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 3 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 1	L/F: 1 BS: 2	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0
CZF	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 1	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0
LEV	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 5	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 2	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0
CVY	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 16 BS: 6	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0
SRX	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 1 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0
BXD	L/F: 1 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0
CHZ	L/F: 18 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0
ROK	L/F: 27 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0
WHA	L/F: 3 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0
WRF	L/F: 24 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0	L/F: 0 BS: 0

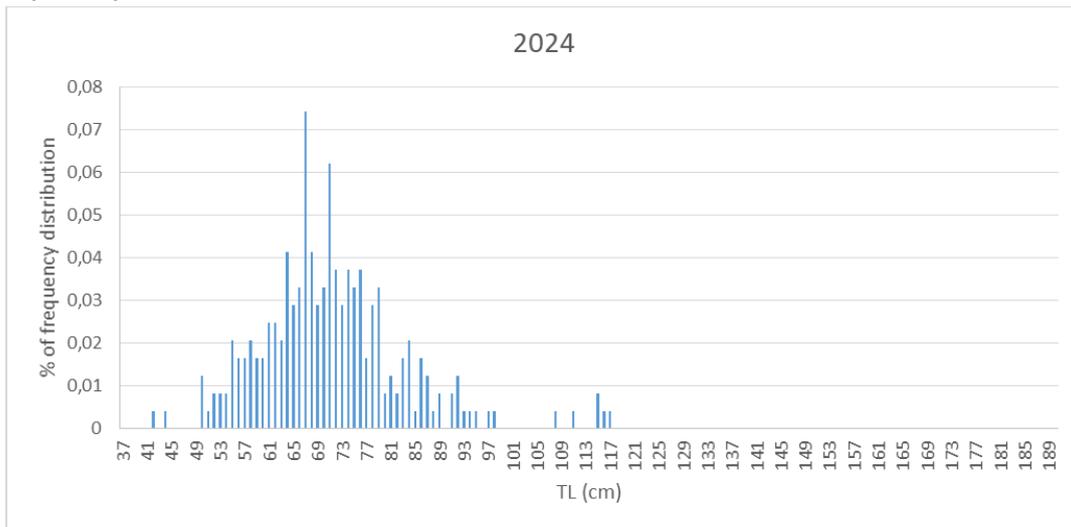* For L/F: length/frequency counts, BS: for complete individual biological sampling

Table 13 below shows the length frequency information of the species in 2024. Information about sex and maturity is also available.

Table 13: Length frequency information by species, number and total length (cm) min, max and mean in 2024
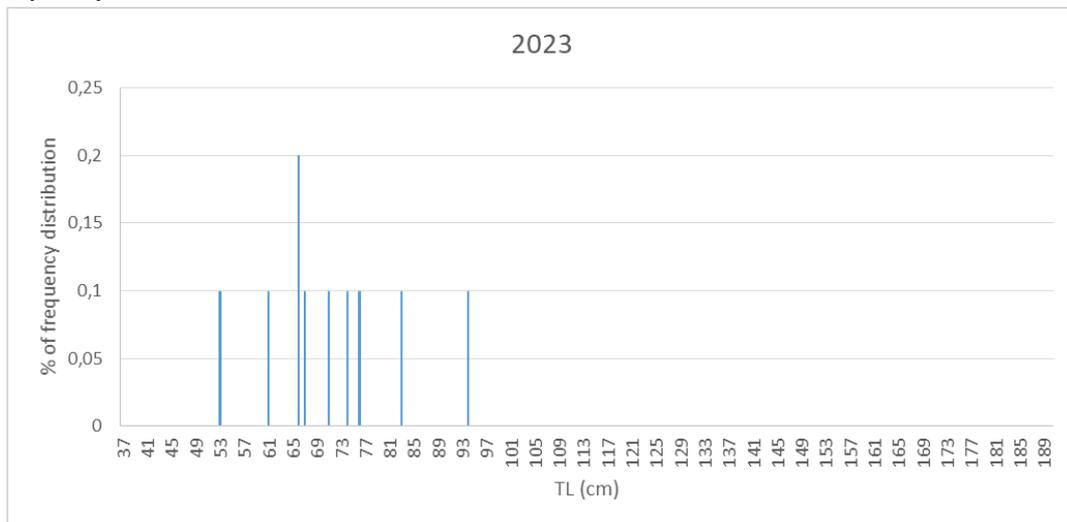
Species (FAO code)	Num	Min	Max	Mean
TOP	242	42	117	71,30
ANT	84	38,7	65,1	54,79
RFA	53	61,1	97,2	78,89

Length frequencies of *Dissostichus eleginoides* caught by longliner between 2024 and 2022 are presented in Figure 3.

a 2024 (n=242)
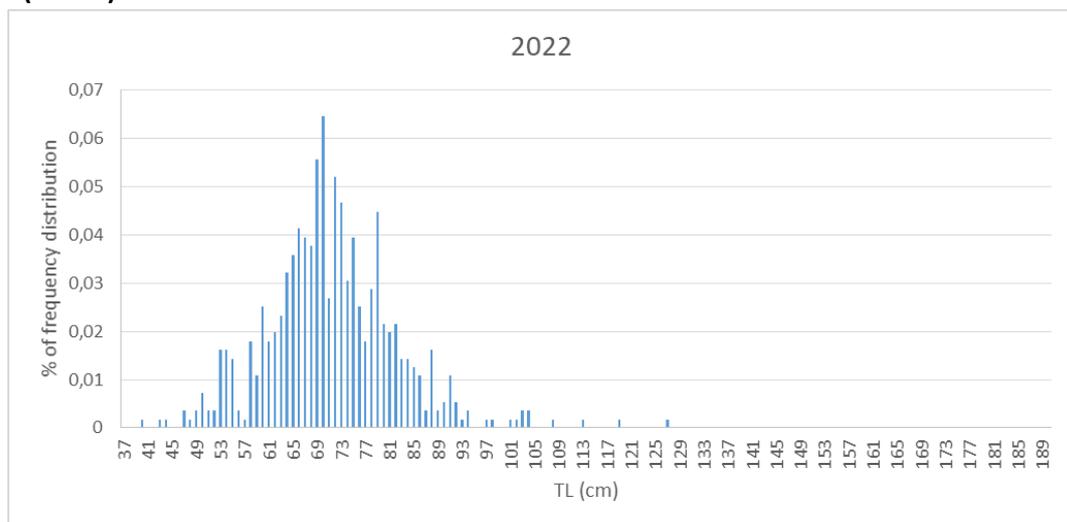

b 2023 (n=10)

c 2022 (n=558)

Figure 3 : Length frequency of *Dissostichus eleginoides* measured by fishery observers on FR-OT longliner in the SIOFA Area, (a) 2024, (b) 2023 and (c) 2022

Description of data verification mechanisms

All the data verification mechanisms are conducted according to the SIOFA CMM and described in the French BFIA 2018 (SC-03-03(06)) and in info-paper WHSOP1-INFO-06-French-Observer-program.

Position verification through VMS is used by French administration.

The captain and the fishing observer computerize all the data in a digital logbook and send a weekly report.

Data about vessel trip, landing and port sampling are transferred to the administration and the SIOFA secretariat as requested in the CMM.

The fishing observer sends on a weekly-basis the dataset for verification to the MNHN team. A list of checking has been produced through 20 years of experience thus leading to a very comprehensive tool for checking data. Because this checking tool is made available to observers at sea, their data set can be checked daily and therefore providing very high quality data.
During the previous calendar year, no problems were encountered in the data verification.

Summary of observer and port sampling programs

Port sampling program

In order to keep track of the catch: species and area where the fish were caught are reported on every single box containing the fish to be landed for commercial purposes. An independent company of experts based in La Réunion Island is tasked to weigh a second time (the first time being on the factory of the ship at sea) all the fish boxes and report the exact weight for each combination of area, species and product. Those data are then used to correct the weights collected at sea. For Patagonian toothfish, an official DCD (Dissostichus Catch Document) from CCAMLR is produced at the scale of each trip and contains all needed information on species, products and areas including SIOFA.

Observer program implementation

The FR-OT observer program is described in info-paper WHSOP1-INFO-06-French-Observer-program. This document describes the French observer program, as updated in October 2021 according to the SIOFA CMM. This report includes summary sections covering: observer training, program design and coverage, type of data collected. During the previous calendar year, no problems were encountered in the observer program implementation.

All the data collected by the observer program are provided to the secretariat as per CMM-02(2023). The observation program follows the guidelines in Annex D, on 'Function and tasks of the scientific observer' and Annex E, on 'Protocol for documenting whale interaction in deep-sea demersal longline fisheries'.

Table 14: Observer program design and coverage summary table for period 2011-2024

	trips coverage of set (%)	within set/haul coverage (%)	incidental bycatch (bird, mammal) observation coverage (% by set/haul)
longliner	100	100	25 % for bird 100 % for mammal

In 2024, no interactions with seabirds or mammals were recorded by FR-OT vessels (Table 15). In accordance with CMM 2022/13 Mitigation of seabirds bycatch, FR-OT longline vessels operating in the SIOFA Area are required to deploy tori (streamer) lines to deter seabirds. FR-OT requirements are equivalent to or exceed those specified in CMM-13(2022).

Table 15: Reporting of observed bycatch number, 2011-2024

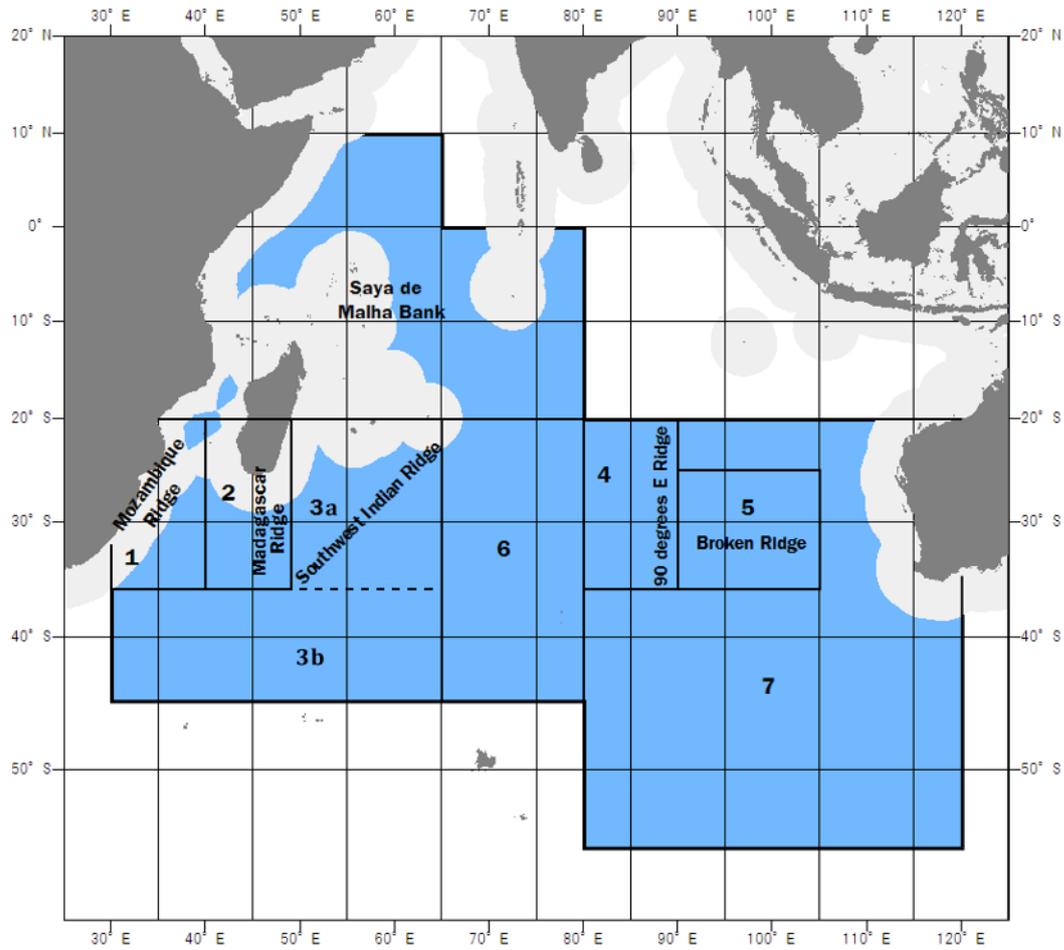| bycatch taxa		seabirds	mammals	sharks (not retained)				
gear	Year			*Centroscymnus sp.*	*Etmopterus sp.*	*Etmopterus viator*	*Squalus sp.*	*Zameus squamulosus*
Longline	2024	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Longline	2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longline	2022	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Longline	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longline	2020	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longline	2019	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Longline	2018	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longline	2017	0	0	3	456	0	1	2
Longline	2016	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longline	2015	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Longline	2014	0	0	0	853	0	0	0
Longline	2013	0	0	0	0	372	0	0
Longline	2012	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longline	2011	0	0	0	0	314	0	0

BFIA report

The FR-OT Bottom Fishing Impact assessment has been described in a Working Paper in 2018 (SC-03-03(06)). There has been no change in the fishing fleet and the fishing activities were very low during the previous calendar year. The BFIA does not need to be updated.

The landing and transshipment report is sent to MNHN from the port sampling at the end of the cruise.

Annex I: Sub-areas for reporting catch and effort data

	Area	Lats		Longs	
		NS		E	
1	Mozambique Ridge	S 20°	S 36°	-	40°
2	Madagascar Ridge	S 20°	S 36°	40°	49°
3a	Northern SW Indian Ridge	S 20°	S 36°	49°	65°
3b	Southern SW Indian Ridge	S 36°	S 45°	30°	65°
6	Mid-Indian Ridge	S 20°	S 45°	65°	80°
4	Ninety Degree East Ridge	S 20°	S 36°	80°	90°
5	Broken Ridge	S 25°	S 36°	90°	105°
7	SE Indian Ocean	S 20°	S 55°	80°	120°
8	North of 20°	N 10°	S 20°	-	80°

[2] Source for Table 1 and Figure 1: Guidelines for submission of annual national reports Rev3.docx

Acknowledgments