Cape hakes, Namibian coast

Fishery: Namibian coast, Namibia, Bottom trawls

IDENTIFICATION

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**
Merluccius paradoxus, M. capensis

**SPECIES NAME(S)**
Cape hakes

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**
The stock assessment and catch data combine both deep-water hake (Merluccius paradoxus) and shallow-water hake (M. capensis) species. Catches of the two species are of the same magnitude, but the shallow-water hake resource in Namibia is assumed to be much larger. The relation/degree of separation of these stocks to neighboring South African stocks is as yet unclear (Japp et al. 2012; Paterson and Kainge 2014; MFMR 2014b), but research is underway to better understand the stock structure of both M. paradoxus and M. capensis (BCC 2014).

**RELATED LINKS:**
- Namibian Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR)
- Namibia National Marine Information and Research Centre (NatMIRC)

ASSESSMENT

**Strengths**
- Namibia is one of the few fishing nations that has 100% observer coverage of their fishing fleet (these observers function primarily as compliance officers).
- The new management plan, in place for the period of 2014-2018, includes strategies to recover the stock to MSY levels, mitigate impacts on the ecosystem and improve monitoring and data collection (MFMR 2014a, 2014b).
- A Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) pre-assessment has been completed and entering full assessment is under debate.
- A project (ECOFISH), coordinated by the Benguela Current Commission, is currently underway and, among other outputs, aims to improve the stock assessment used in the management of hake (BCC 2012).

**Weaknesses**
- Stock assessment is still performed for Merluccius paradoxus and M. capensis combined.
- There is some uncertainty about the actual fishing mortality as well as underreporting, high grading and discards and the non-segregation of shallow and deep water species.
- Although biomass is deemed to have increased in recent years, the combined biomass of the two hake stocks is still estimated to remain around the 1990 biomass and at one third of MSY levels (Kirchner et al., 2012).
- TACs have generally been set well above the level recommended by scientists.
- Over-capacity and lack of transparency in the quota allocation scheme are still regarded as problematic in this fishery.
- The Namibian hake fishing industry has been hard hit by poor catch rates and a high proportion of juvenile fish landings.
- There is bycatch of devil anglerfish (monk) which is considered “Near Threatened”.

**SCORES**

**Management Quality:**

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<th>Management Strategy</th>
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**FIPS**

No related FIPs.

**MSC**
Merluccius paradoxus and M. capensis trawl and longline fishery: MSC Full Assessment.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**CATCHERS & REGULATORS**

1. Scientific bodies should develop and make publicly available separate assessments for deep-water and shallow-water hake stocks and identify individual stocks within species.
2. The new management plan should be made publicly available, together with scientific advice on sustainable catches.
3. Managers should set a total allowable catch (TAC) according to scientific advice.

**RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN**

- Monitor the progress of this fishery through the MSC Full Assessment process. Ensure the fishery achieves certification or launches a FIP to resolve outstanding issues.

1. Start a fishery improvement project to address sustainability issues in this fishery. For advice on starting a FIP, see SFP's Seafood Industry Guide to FIPs at http://www.sustainablefish.org/publications/2014/04/30/the-seafood-industry-guide-to-fips.
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shallow-water hake stocks, set total allowable catches within scientific recommendations, and publish the new fishery management plan.