Southern hake
Patagonian
Fishery: Argentina

**IDENTIFICATION**

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**
Merluccius australis

**SPECIES NAME(S)**
Merluccius australis (Spanish), Merluza del sur

**COMMON NAMES**
Merluza austral (Spanish), Merluza del sur

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**

Within the Patagonian distribution of the species, a distinct stock is described from the Chilean coast down to the southern tip of the continent, corresponding to regions of Los Lagos, Aysén and Magallanes (IFOP 2018). As only a small portion of its distribution lies within the Argentinian EEZ, the stock is managed and assessed by Chile.

**ASSESSMENT**

**Strengths**
- This is a discrete population with clear boundaries that mostly don’t go outside of the Chilean jurisdiction, which facilitates the management of this fishery.
- There is a management plan in place since 2016 with clear management objectives.
- There is a plan for the reduction of discards and bycatch in place since 2017, and good information on bycatch levels especially in the industrial fisheries.
- There is a seasonal fishing ban in August every year.

**Weaknesses**
- The resource is officially recognized as overexploited.
- The advisory board CCT-RDZSA (Scientific and Technical Committee for the Demersal Resources Zone South and Austral) recognized in the last advice (2017) that F should be reduced below F_{target} given the current status of the stock, but this proposal could not be adopted because the conditions of the Management Plan are binding. And the plan doesn’t forecast a reduction of F at current levels of SSB (31% of SSB_{0}).
- Illegal and unreported fishing is officially recognized as a real problem for the stock by Subpesca (Subsecretary of Fisheries), the Management Authority.
- Fishing mortality rates have been above the recommended F_{MSY}.
- There is no detailed information on the impact of the fishing gears used to harvest southern hake on bottom habitats, although it is supposed to be low.

**SCORES**

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**Stock Health:**

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**FIPS**
No related FIPs

**MSC**
No related MSC fisheries

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN**
- Engage with authorities in prompt implementation of the approved management plan for the fishery.
- Ensure adequate reporting of catches (landing and discards) and bycatch, especially from the artisanal fleet operating in the fisheries.
- Improve the regulatory compliance of the fishery to eliminate all IUU fishing, especially unreported landings by the artisanal fleet.