Southern hake: Patagonian Fishery

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**
Merluccius australis

**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**

**Management Quality:**

- Management Strategy: ≥ 6
- Managers Compliance: 6.1
- Fisher Compliance: < 6

**Stock Health:**

- Current Health: 7
- Future Health: 6.5

**FIPS:**

No related FIPS

**MSC:**

- Chile Austral hake (Merluccius australis) industrial trawl and longline: MSC Certified

**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 fishery.
- Improve the regulatory compliance of the fishery to eliminate all IUU fishing, especially unreported landings by the artisanal fleet.

[Fishery Profile](https://www.fishsource.org/fishery_page/6102) (This profile last updated on 17 March 2019)