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ABSTRACT

Shark bycatch observed on commercial bottom longlines fisheries, off the Kerguelen Islands (division 58.5.1), 2006-2016

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Abstract

Data collected by fishery observers aboard French deep-sea bottom longline vessels, targeting Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*), were examined to quantify and describe sharks bycatch within the Kerguelen EEZ (northern part of the plateau). From 2006 to 2016, crew reported the total catches of the line and observers were asked to identify and count fish bycatch on 25% of the total fishing effort. A total of 26 203 longline hauls and more than 55 million hooks were checked by observers reporting 29 500 sharks. Four shark species were identified (*Centroscymnus coelolepis*, *Etmopterus viator*, *Lamna nasus*, and *Somniosus antarcticus*) among which *E. viator* was numerically largely dominant (99%). An abundance index (number of shark per 1000 hooks) was used to show bathymetric and geographical distributions and length frequency distribution (LFD) was also analysed when possible. This study confirms the distribution area of *E. viator* and LFD shows three length classes (new recruit, juvenile and mature). This study also reveals the tallest and deepest specimen of *E. viator* ever recorded in Kerguelen EEZ. For the three other shark species data are too scarce to have more information than already known.