



Chilean Sea Bass Fact Sheet

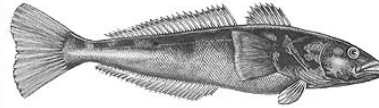


Illustration by Bruce Mahalski

Basic Biology

Latin name: *Dissostichus eleginoides*

Range: Antarctic waters in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans.

Habitat: The continental slope from 70 to 1500 meters deep.

Diet: Fish, squid and crustaceans.

Age and growth: Reproductive maturity usually occurs around 6-10 years of age with a lifespan of 45-50 years. Chilean sea bass have low reproductive capacity with only 48,000-500,000 eggs per female each year. The typical size is 2-3 feet long and 20 lbs.

Sustainability

- Chilean sea bass are managed by an international coalition, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) which manages the area south of 60°S latitude (the Southern Ocean). There are various reproductive populations of Chilean sea bass in this region. Many of these areas are data poor and the statuses of the populations are largely unknown. CCAMLR reports that Chilean sea bass are likely overfished in its jurisdiction; management measures are in place but no rebuilding plans have been instituted.
- CCAMLR has instituted a Catch Documentation Scheme to record chain of custody information on all landed Chilean sea bass from CCAMLR and adjacent waters to try to end illegal fishing; CCAMLR also requires a satellite-linked vessel monitoring system to track fishing vessels from member countries in the CCAMLR Area. The U.S. requires this system on all vessels that sell fish to the U.S.
- Size and rough conditions of the Southern Ocean make enforcement very difficult. In 2000 CCAMLR estimated that illegal catch in 1996-1999 was twice the legal harvest. By 2006 the illegal harvest was estimated to be much lower, but illegal harvest was still high in some divisions, accounting for 90% of the total by about 13 vessels that consistently fish illegally.
- The Chilean sea bass fishery uses bottom longline gear and has bycatch of seabirds. CCAMLR has implemented measures to prevent or minimize the bycatch including observer coverage, seasonal closures, and gear restrictions. These measures have substantially reduced bycatch.

Info for Chefs

- There is one, isolated population of Chilean sea bass that has been certified sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council. If your purveyor offers you this "MSC certified" product please contact the Sustainable Seafood Initiative for more information on our rules.

Info for Servers

- The former common name of this species was Patagonian toothfish. The name was changed to provide a more attractive market name.

Sources:

Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources website and documents accessed at www.ccamlr.org

National Marine Fisheries Service at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ia/intlagree/antarctic.htm

FishBase at www.fishbase.org