

CO-OPERATION NEEDED TO SUSTAIN HAKE INDUSTRY

Written by Tracy

Tuesday, 21 October 2014 17:01

The South African hake trawl fishery has been acknowledged as one of the most sophisticated, well-managed and scientifically robust fisheries in the world. However, this status and the related economic contribution of this industry is heavily reliant on continued high levels of co-operation between the public and private sectors to retain MSC certification due for renewal in 2015.

This emerged during a visit by The Stakeholder Council of the Marine Stewardship Council who are meeting in Cape Town, the first time that the committee of this global regulatory body has met in the Southern Hemisphere.

Johann Augustyn, Secretary of the South African Deep Sea Trawling Industry Association (SADSTIA) says the South African hake trawl fishery was the first hake fishery and the second ground fishery in the world to achieve certification by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in April 2004, and that being part of the MSC programme sets South African trawl operators apart from many of their global competitors, a factor that has become increasingly important in the current economic climate.

Research commissioned by the MSC demonstrates that the loss of certification would carry significant risks for South Africa. This would include the loss of about 12,000 direct and indirect jobs, a decrease in the value of the Hake Industry of 35 % over 5 years and a reduction in the industry's contribution to the national GDP of between 28%-47% over 5 years,

Since initial certification, SADSTIA has mapped the total trawl footprint historically trawled in South African waters over the past century since the inception of trawling, and ring-fenced it. This ring-fenced area represents approximately 4.4% of the total South African Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). While SADSTIA members have voluntarily restricted themselves to fishing only within the ring-fenced area, it has requested DAFF to include this measure as a compulsory permit condition.

CO-OPERATION NEEDED TO SUSTAIN HAKE INDUSTRY

Written by Tracy

Tuesday, 21 October 2014 17:01

SADSTIA has also (at its own expense) commissioned ground-breaking research on the environmental impact of trawling on the benthic habitat (bottom of the sea). This will be the very first time anywhere in the world that this kind of study will have been commissioned. As part of the study, stunning images of the fishes and marine life living on or close to the seabed nearly half a kilometre under the sea have been gathered by UCT scientists working with a submersible camera off the west coast of South Africa.