Antarctic toothfish - Dissostichus mawsoni

Family
Nototheniidae

Other names
Chilean seabass; Merluza negra; Mero; White cod; Bacalao (Chile)

Fishery
Toothfish are caught by longline, trawl and pot, typically in depths of 500-1800m. Patagonian toothfish is caught off the coasts of Chile, Argentina, Peru, Uruguay, Patagonia, and around sub-Antarctic islands and seamounts. Antarctic toothfish is generally caught at latitudes higher than 55 degrees South in the circumpolar waters adjacent to Antarctica. In addition, toothfish are caught outside CCAMLR's Convention Area, mostly taken from domestic fisheries around South America and landed in local ports.

Fishing vessels
Legally-caught toothfish is usually taken by bottom longlines deployed from vessels of 50-60m in length. Some toothfish is also caught by trawl in the Western Indian Ocean and by pot in the Southwest Atlantic Ocean and off South America. IUU fishing vessels may longline or gillnet, the latter method considered particularly destructive to the Antarctic marine environment. IUU-caught toothfish is often transhipped at sea and landed in port by cargo vessels. CCAMLR maintains a list of IUU vessels which is available on its website (www.ccamlr.org)

Physical description
Toothfish are slow-growing and long-lived, reaching maturity at about 8-10 years of age and living for up to 45-50 years. Toothfish caught in the fisheries are typically 80-140cm long and weigh 10-30kg. Large specimens may grow in excess of 160cm and weigh 60-80kg. Toothfish have a fusiform (a gradual narrowing at both ends) body shape, a protruding lower jaw and large lower lip, large eyes and large gill plates.

Other similar species
Dissostichus eleginoides - Patagonian Toothfish

Could be confused with
Toothfish may resemble, or may be misreported as or mixed with the following species:
Hake (HKE), Shark, African barrelfish (SEY), Butterfish/Bluenose (BUX) (when filleted), Greenland halibut (GHL) (when filleted and with skin)
If in doubt as to the species identity, sampling of toothfish catch for protein DNA analysis may be considered.
Photographs of toothfish products and packaging could also be taken to assist with identification.

Traded parts, derivatives and products
Toothfish are normally processed and frozen on board the fishing vessel.
Common basic cuts are: headed, gutted and tailed (HGT) heads, collars and cheeks. Depending on the market, the fish may also be filleted or simply gutted.

Catch Documentation Scheme
All toothfish unloaded or transported must be accompanied by a Dissostichus catch document (DCD) issued subject to the CCAMLR catch Documentation Scheme (CDS). For more information see www.ccamlr.org
Each CCAMLR Contracting Party is required to identify the origin of any Dissostichus spp. landed or imported into or exported from its territories in order to establish if it was caught within the Convention Area according to the Conservation Measures agreed by CCAMLR. Toothfish landed in the port of Contracting Parties will be accompanied by catch and export documents from the point of landing to the point of final consumption. Toothfish without valid documentation cannot be landed in the port of any CCAMLR Contracting Party or subsequently traded. Catch documents cannot be issued to vessels included on CCAMLR's IUU Vessel Lists.

References
Antarctic Toothfish. Photo: Paul Cziko

Fresh Toothfish fillets Photo: Austral Fisheries

Headed and gutted and collars PHOTO: Austral Fisheries

CCAMLR (www.ccamlr.org)
Patagonian and Antarctic Toothfish

*Patagonian Toothfish (below)*

- Toothfish have a fusiform (a gradual narrowing at both ends) body shape
- Large eyes and large gill plates

*Antarctic Toothfish (below)*

- A protruding lower jaw and large lower lip
- Large eyes and large gill plates

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