



Toothfish Fact Sheet

IUU Fishing

IN ONE DECADE, IUU CATCHES OF PATAGONIAN TOOTHFISH WERE REDUCED BY OVER 99%

IN 1997...

IUU CATCHES OF PATAGONIAN TOOTHFISH WERE AROUND 32,000 TONNES

55+ IUU VESSELS WERE ACTIVE

TODAY...

IUU CATCHES OF PATAGONIAN TOOTHFISH HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED, AND SINCE 2016 THAT OF ANTARCTIC TOOTHFISH HAS AVERAGED < 250 T.

*As at 01/12/2020

Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing for Patagonian toothfish was first observed around South Georgia in the mid 1990s. Enforcement actions forced the IUU fleet east into Territorial waters around South African, French and Australian Islands. At its peak in 1997, IUU catches of toothfish were estimated to be 32,000 tonnes.

Further strong enforcement actions to combat a second wave eradicated IUU fishing from Territorial waters by 2005. During this time, there were a number of high profile arrests and seizures of IUU toothfish vessels.

At the same time, nations were implementing the CCAMLR catch and trade documentation scheme, linked to satellite vessel monitoring, which meant that ports and markets were being closed to IUU catches.

IUU operators were then forced to steam further to less desirable ports to unload and sell their undocumented fish, in less valuable markets. Their vessels were also included on IUU lists which banned them from many ports and markets, also making the

vessels virtually unsaleable.

All of this added up to a significant loss in profit for IUU operators. Many left the Southern Ocean and more than 20 vessels were arrested and sunk or destroyed during this period.

The remnant IUU vessels then switched to Antarctic toothfish on the high seas, outside of national controls, and continued to do so until 2014, when Sea Shepherd launched the successful Operation Icefish, which brought international, and INTERPOL attention to these IUU operators, who currently are thought to be reduced to 1 or 2 remaining part-time vessels.

Continued surveillance and enforcement in the Southern Ocean remains a high priority, and having a clear understanding of any potential IUU situations are

essential in enabling appropriate action to be taken when required, even though IUU catches of toothfish are at all time low levels. COLTO estimates IUU catches since 2016 have averaged less than 250 tonnes per annum. This is less than 1% of the global toothfish catch and a reduction of over 99% from peak levels.

These are remarkable achievements which are internationally recognised as one of the few success stories in controlling IUU fishing.

Any IUU catches are taken into account by fish stock assessments where applicable.

COLTO remains vigilant and active to ensure IUU fishing for toothfish remains at these historic low levels, and looks forward to when we can say, for certain, that it has been eliminated.

