

DEMERSAL FISHERY RESOURCES AND BATHYMETRIC RANGES WITHIN THE ECONOMIC ZONE OF NEW CALEDONIA (POSTER)

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In New Caledonia, four main depth ranges can be exploited : 0-100 m, 100-500 m, 500-800 m and 800-1500 m. The first one includes all the lagoons and covers an area of 37000 km² (2.7 % of the EZ). Relevant catches attain 4000 tons a year (50 % of the total fishery production) half of which comes from subsistence and recreational fisheries. The main species caught by handline are Lethrinidae (Emperors), Serranidae (Groupers), Scaridae (Parrot fish) and Siganidae (Rabbit fish). Bottom fisheries within the other depth ranges were analysed as part of the ZoNéCo programme. The depth range 100-500 m which covers an area of 25500 km² (1.8 % of the EZ) is exploited by the coastal fishery. Demersal species represent half of this coastal production, i.e. 0.6 % of the total fishery production. The main species are Etelinae, groupers and emperors caught on the outer reef slopes from 100 to 250 m with reels and from 250 to 500 m with bottom longlines. The depth range 500-800 m which covers an area of 24000 km² (1.7 % of the EZ) was exploited by an industrial deep-sea fishery. The alfonsino (*Beryx splendens*) was the target species along with the bluenose (*Hyperoglyphe antarctica*) and the armorhead (*Pseudopentaceros richardsoni*). The catches were made by bottom longlines and trawls mainly over the seamounts located in the south-east part of the EZ. The depth range 800-1500 m which covers an area of 172500 km² (12 % of the EZ) was explored by scientific surveys using bottom trawls and traps. This depth range is not yet exploited. The orange roughy (*Hoplosthetus atlanticus*) does not seem to occur over the seamounts of the New Caledonia EZ although it is abundant further south in New Zealand, on similar features. A few commercial species of deep bottom crustaceans which are exploited in other countries, were caught in the same bathymetric range.

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