

Trophic position of the common hake *Merluccius gayi gayi* (Guichenot 1848)

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Feeding habits have been widely used to elucidate trophic relationships. The latter can be studied from different approaches, such as the analyses of stomach content and stable isotopes. In this study we will combine both techniques, assessing both the feeding habits and trophic level of this species. The common hake, *Merluccius gayi gayi*, has been reported to be one of the most important demersal predators from southcentral Chilean waters. It is an endemic species ranging from Antofagasta (23°39'S, 70°23'W) to Canal Cheap (47°3'S, 74°12'W). This species inhabits from 50 m to 500 m in depth, reaches a maximum size of 80 cm, and it has been reported to feed mostly on invertebrates. A total of 286 specimens was examined from central Chile. The most important prey item was a group of invertebrates. Additionally, bony fishes were also identified. Stable isotopes suggested this species is a meso-predator feeding mostly in the water column.