

Scientist look for new marine species for commercial use

October 21 2013

In northwest Mexico, the biggest part of the fishery production is based in few species such as sardine, squid, tuna and shrimp. However, the Center of Biological Research of the Northwest (CIBNOR) has identified new marine species capable of increasing the volume of this production.

For this purpose, exploration journeys to the depths of the sea were made in, so far, unexplored areas of the West Coast of the Peninsula of Baja California and the Gulf of Tehuantepec, head of the project César Augusto Salinas Zavala, said.

The ships left from the port of Ensenada with the necessary equipment for dragging the ocean floor, fishing with traps for fishes and crustaceans, as well as tools for measuring marine microorganisms.

Within the findings obtained by the researchers were two dominant species: the hake (*Merluccius productus*) and the pelagic red crab (*Pleuroncodes planipes*) that equal to 90 per cent of the total catch. Meanwhile, the rest of the fishing was composed by black cod.

The specialist in ecological fisheries highlighted that the West Coast of the peninsula of Baja California counts with the last redoubt of biomass in Mexico available for sustainable extraction. With the hake, the researchers registered eight positive catches out of 26; the main area where it was found was the Gulf of Ulloa, north from Magdalena Bay. The total biomass of the zone is estimated in approximately 150

thousand tons.

Regarding its economic potential, this fish has a great commercial value in Spain, which is recognized as the main market for this product where its acquisition is high above average from the rest of the world.

Meanwhile, for the pelagic red crab, ten catches out of 14 were registered in the Gulf of Ulloa. The potentiality for this resource had been already reported but not in greater depths than 150 meters. The exploitation of this crustacean can be for direct consumption or as provider of hydrolyzed protein (protein broken down to its component amino acids; used in the food industry since it's easier to digest), it also can be used as input in the manufacture of flour for the elaboration of balanced food.

Salinas Zavala added that within the results of the project it's pretended to impact the fishery sector, offering certainty in the commercialization, industrialization and generation of new employment sources if the fisheries are broaden towards new areas of fishing like the West Coast of the peninsula of Baja California and the Gulf of Tehuantepec.

Provided by Investigación y Desarrollo

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