

Review of: "Reef Fish in the Vitória-Trindade Seamount Chain of the Southwestern Atlantic: Biogeographical Corridors and Impact of Fishing"

Shruthi Kottillil

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

General comment - The study outlines and makes an effort to put to use data collected several years ago and can help bridge knowledge gaps. But in saying so, the study can also benefit from comparisons to more recent information/data (either from field surveys/secondary literature) and compliment it.

Introduction - The authors have outlined the challenges and limitations of using this survey method well. But at times, it felt the narrative switched between challenges and defining the survey method. It would be better for the readers to first describe the region, its marine biodiversity, and the context that leads to defining the survey methods (and since it was done years ago, the purpose), then move on to the challenges and limitations which they were/were not able to address.

Data collection - Certain information such as the number of cruises per year, the duration of each cruise (was it for a month, 10 days?), and the seasons, etc., is missing. It would be good to mention these and will be useful for further comparisons, to then also take into account the fishing efforts. Sampling numbers are also missing; for example, were all individuals that were seen sampled for TL?

Data analysis (first paragraph, 3rd line) - The line 'the reinforcing the importance ... measures in the area' is out of context.

Results under evidence of fishing impact - The size range differences cannot definitively suggest fishing impacts without comparisons to the lengths that were caught previously or to those caught now. Considerations should also be given to the fishing grounds exploited (such as are they spawning grounds where you are more likely to encounter adults) and the types of bait used for longlines, which can affect the species as well as the life stage of fish that it attracts.

Discussion - It includes only very general discussion of results and does not provide any concrete understanding or inferences of the results. A short note on the effectiveness of such type of studies (from past cruises) would have also been useful. In general, it needs more work to discuss specific important results that link to effective conservation strategies or methods. Although the authors have done it to an extent, for example, comparing the faunal diversity among different continental shelves, there is no discussion around its implication or what it would mean from a diversity (or) conservation angle.

