

Antarctic cranch squid

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- a top predator of the Antarctic waters - its distribution and relationship with Antarctic and Patagonian toothfish

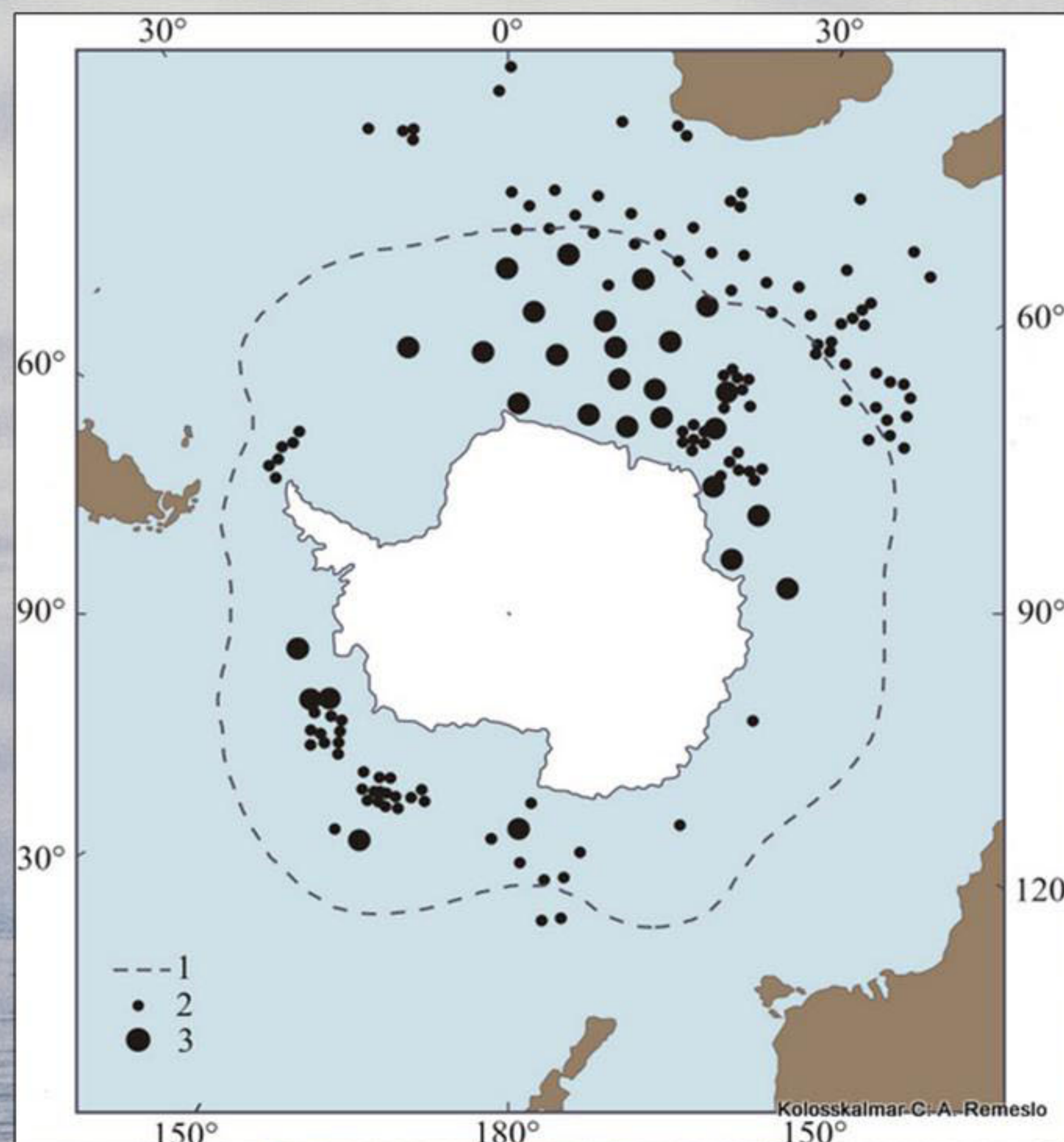
Antarctic cranch squid (*Mesonychoteuthis hamiltoni*, Colossal squid)

- 1925** - First described by Guy Coburn Robson
- 1950s – 1970s** - Antarctic whaling period
Numerous findings (mostly pieces) in the stomachs of sperm whales, examined and described by Soviet biologists
- 1981** - First catch of live specimen (mantle length 2.42 m) by trawl – Soviet research vessel 'Evrika', near Dronning Maud Land, Antarctica (depth 750-780 m)
- Since 2003** - Several catches of big specimens, mostly by long liners hunting toothfish (2003, 2007, 2008 - Ross Sea, 2005 - South Georgia)

Conclusions

Materials collected by us as CCALMR observers testify of a complex food and behavioural relation-ship between Antarctic cranch squid and Antarctic as well as Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsoni* and *D. eleginoides*).

Big squid specimens attack toothfish hooked on long lines, and sometimes do not release them until the fish is hoisted on deck. On the other hand, in the stomachs of toothfish we found beaks and pieces of arms and tentacles of large Antarctic cranch squid, some of them belonging to specimens with mantle lengths of up to 1.8 m.



Findings of Antarctic cranch squid from the stomachs of sperm whales (1961-1973), examined by Soviet biologists mostly south of the Antarctic convergence zone, but also in the subantarctic zone (Map by Yukhov/Klyumov, 1975).

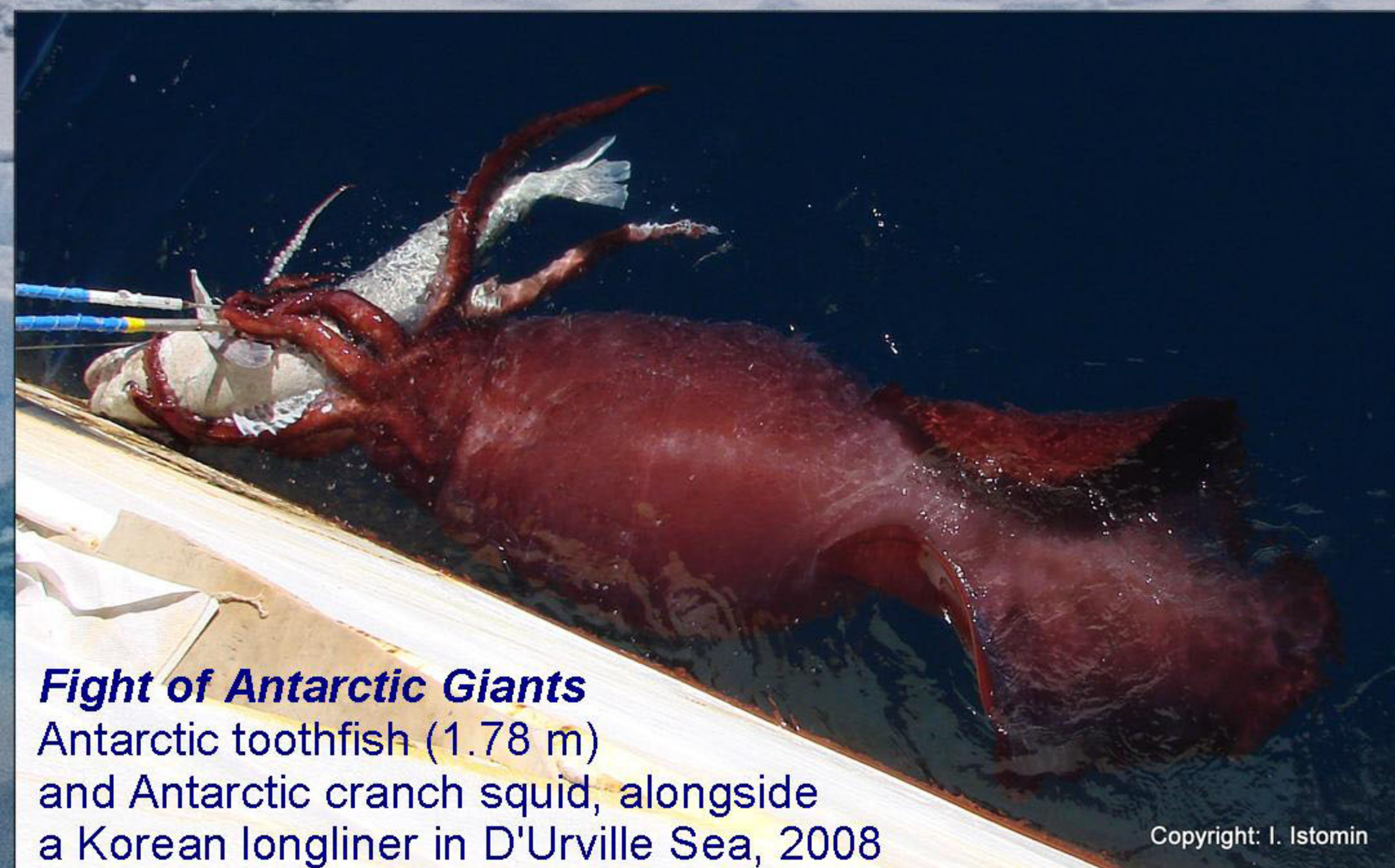
Recent findings of Patagonian toothfish with traces of squid attacks suggest a wider distribution area, including waters of Antarctic origin flowing north along the Patagonian shelf.



Antarctic toothfish
(*Dissostichus mawsoni*)



Beak of Antarctic cranch squid recovered from the stomach of an Antarctic toothfish (length 1.8 m); Mantle length of squid approx. 1.8 m



Fight of Antarctic Giants
Antarctic toothfish (1.78 m) and Antarctic cranch squid, alongside a Korean longliner in D'Urville Sea, 2008



Antarctic Toothfish with beak wounds and numerous sucker marks from squid - one specimen of numerous such catches.



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