

## Chapter 9

# Seamount fishes: ecology and life histories

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### **Abstract**

Seamounts are biologically distinctive open ocean habitats exhibiting a number of unique features. They have received much attention mainly because of the presence of substantial aggregations of mid- and deep-water fish, which have become the target of highly developed commercial fisheries. Based on life history and ecological characteristics, several authors have placed 'seamount fishes' at the extreme end of the vulnerability spectrum. Although the terms 'seamount' and 'seamount-aggregating' species are in general use, no rigorous criteria yet exist to identify these taxa. Some of the best-known representatives of 'seamount-aggregating fishes' include deep-water fishes like orange roughy, alfonsinos, Patagonian toothfish, oreos, and pelagic armourhead. Many other fish species also occur on seamounts or congregate over their summits to feed. This may be the case for some sharks, tunas, and other large pelagic predators. Other fish species aggregate around shallow seamounts mainly for spawning, such as reef-associated fish like serranids and jacks. This chapter describes seamount fish species, evaluates their adaptations to ecological conditions on seamounts, and describes life history characteristics of frequently occurring seamount species.

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