

**LAST STRAW WHICH DID NOT BREAK THE BACK OF THE CAMEL;  
DR FRIDTJOF NANSEN 2013 CRUISE ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE  
TRANSBOUNDARY QUESTION FOR CAPE HAKES.**

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This talk comprised three parts: introduction, results of the 2013 cruise and the background to these results in the form of the whole project's summary. In the Introduction it was shown that hake fisheries recorded consistent large catches since the end of WWII and it is most important for the region. However, recent assessments of the state of the stock led to different results for different hake species: modelling indicated good stock state for *Merluccius capensis* and poor for *M. paradoxus*. Results of the R/V *Africana* surveys have indicated the opposite. Results of Dr Fridtjof Nansen confirm this. The 2013 results indicated an average year as far as distribution of abundance per length category (and overall biomass estimate) was concerned, but also has confirmed strong increasing trend for *M. paradoxus* stock. Fishable biomass of *M. paradoxus* was estimated as 123286 t. Third part of the talk summarized main findings of the project. *M. paradoxus* was found to have one main spawning ground between Cape Agulhas and St. Helena Bay and one main nursery ground between Hondeklip Bay and Orange Banks. This implies that hake migrates to distant sites of its range from this nursery ground. This is corroborated by the analysis of its length distributions and abundances along sampled geographic range.