

ABSTRACTS

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The South African coelacanths – an account of what is known after three submersible expeditions

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Using the manned submersible *Jago*, the habitats, distribution and number of coelacanths within all main submarine canyons of the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park were studied during 47 survey dives, with a total bottom of 166 hours at depths ranging from 46 to 359m, between 2002 and 2004. Twenty-four individuals were positively identified from three of the canyons, primarily from inside caves at or close to canyon edges at depths of 96 – 133m with water temperatures between 16 and 22.5°C. The population size of coelacanths within the canyons is assumed to be relatively small; coelacanths are resident but not widespread nor abundant within the park.