Interannual distribution of Pacific hake *Merluccius productus* larvae in the southern part of the California Current

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The interannual distribution of early life stages of Pacific hake *Merluccius productus* (Ayres), within the southern part of the California Current (32–23° N) from 1951-2001, was examined to describe the relationship between spawning habitat and environmental conditions. The main purpose was to examine the habitat for spawning related to environmental conditions. Mean annual abundance was affected by different factors along the west coast of the Baja California Peninsula. In the northern areas (Ensenada and Punta Baja) reduced abundance of larvae coincided with El Niño and a regime shift, but in the southern areas (San Ignacio to Bahía Magdalena), the drastic reductions suggest a fishery effect for large adults of the coastal migratory population, starting in 1966. Two spawning stocks, coastal and dwarf, are evident in comparisons of latitudinal differences in occurrence of early stages and differences in temperature preferences that seems to break at Punta Eugenia.

Palabras clave: Baja California Peninsula, Merluccius productus, Pacific hake, larval distribution, California Current.

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