

ABSTRACT

**HUTCHINGS,L., VAN DER LINGEN,C., GRIFFITHS,M., ROBERTS,M.R.,
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**Spawning on the edge: spawning habits and nursery areas along the southern
African coastline**

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The southern African coastline is dominated by strong currents along both the eastern seaboard, where the warm western boundary Agulhas Current sweeps along the shelf edge, and the western seaboard, in the form of strong shelf edge jets which are associated with the strong thermal gradients induced by upwelling and Agulhas Current intrusions and eddies, imbedded in the general northward drift of surface waters of the Benguela Current. Several potent mechanisms exist for offshore dispersal and loss from the productive shelf waters, such as eddies, filaments, retroflection and offshore Ekman drift. These offshore losses pose special problems for successful retention of planktonic eggs and larvae from broadcast spawners. Most fish species in southern Africa have evolved highly selective reproductive patterns which ensure that sufficient progeny are retained or can enter a number of important nursery grounds along the coastline. Examples of coupled spawning habitats, transport mechanisms and nursery grounds will be given for a variety of pelagic, demersal and inshore dwelling fish species on the southern African coastline, from Mozambique to Namibia, illustrating some leakage of Indo-pacific forms into the Atlantic.