How rich is the deep-sea Antarctic benthic hydroid fauna?

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To elucidate the richness of the deep-sea Antarctic benthic hydroid fauna at present, a study of the bathymetric distribution of the known species of benthic hydroids inhabiting the Antarctic Region has been carried out. Most of the 149 known species, even having wide bathymetric ranges and reaching large depths, must be considered shelf species, since the Antarctic continental shelf-break occurs two to four times deeper than in other oceanic areas. Only 34 species are found below the continental shelf-break, and consequently can be considered inhabitants of the Antarctic deep-sea. Of these, only seven could presently be considered strict inhabitants of that environment, since the remaining are eurybathic species present in the deep-sea as part of its wide bathymetric distribution.