



# correspondence

beche-de-mer

**From: Rabia Abdula**

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With the co-ordination of the Eduardo Mondlane University (Mozambique), I will be conducting study on the reproduction and growth of *H. scabra* at Inhaca island (Mozambique). We have some problems with the methodology to be used; can you please suggest an appropriate methodology for this study? I have also been unable to find someone to give me a short course about holothurians; could you please send me some addresses of institutions that study holothurians? Regards.

**From: Kriton Glenn**

E-mail: glenn@basins.anu.edu.au

Date: 20 June 1997

At the 8th Coral Reef Symposium, I met people working on holothurians, and I would like to get some information about eating habits. I am hoping that someone can assist me. Also, I would like to get some information on the international trade of holothurians. Is there any data on this and where could I find it? I am working on Ashmore Reef on the north-west shelf of Australia for my thesis. This reef is protected by Australia from Indonesian fishermen, but they still poach the Trepang. My study is on the sediments of the reef and the pressures that affect them. When I was looking at the forams, I noticed an 'etching' that was non-preferential and all over the foraminifera. I am also trying to get this reef listed as a genetic bank by the United Nations, as it has the highest species diversity of sea snakes in the world. Additionally, it has a very high species diversity of fish and corals.

**From: Mark Baine**

E-mail: mark@icit.demon.co.uk

Date: 9 October 1997

Subject: Corruption in Galapagos. Forwarded from gdavis@fcdarwin.org.ec

Date: 29 September 1997

There were two articles of interest this weekend concerning the auction of the boat *Magdalena*, which was used for the illegal transport of sea cucumbers and was seized earlier this year. One article was in *El Universo* on 27 September; the other, in *El Comercio* on the same date, is longer and translates into English as follows:

'Allegation: In the case of the boat *Magdalena Galapagos*: the people accuse the Second Judge'

Protests against corruption have reached the Galapagos Islands. Representatives of all the associations of workers and professionals in the archipelago marched against the Second Civil Judge, Alberto Avellan. The people accuse him of irregularities that range from extortion, bribery, and abuse of trust to corrupt practice in the management of the judgement on the embargo of the boat *Magdalena*, detained when it was being used to transport sea cucumbers to the continent. A report by members of the Navy and park wardens of the National Park indicates that it was carrying 40 000 sea cucumbers. Its six crew members were also detained for investigations on 6 March 1997.

The boat was going to be auctioned on 19 September, according to a decision issued in April by the judge of the first instance, Eliecer Cruz, director of the Galapagos National Park, in a Forestry law suit initiated at the beginning of this year. Nevertheless, accepting the appeal presented by the ex-owners of the boat, Avellan suspended the auction of the boat. The astonishment in the populace grew when it learned of the accusation by the legal advisor of the Galapagos National Park, Patricio Carrion, who stated that the judgement left the Second Civil Court in the hands of the lawyer Luz Maria Pico Diaz, defence lawyer for the owners of the boat.

This was confirmed by means of a police operation requested by Carrion over the weekend. During this operation, Pico was surprised within the office of the Notary Public of the Canton of Santa Cruz, together with Jose Rivadeneira and Etelvina Pozo, owners of the boat, working on the computer of the Notary, Marco Montalvo, with the judgement in their hands. There is an accusation, number 418-97, addressed to the president of the Higher Court in Guayaquil, asking for Avellan's removal. With regard to the lawyer Luz Maria Pico Diaz, she was removed previously as a criminal judge in Guayaquil by the Supreme Court of Justice due to various improprieties.

### From: Rabindra Singh (Mr)

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I have been in touch with you before to request reprints of your papers. I am in the final stages of my Ph.D. and I am thinking of applying for a Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada scholarship/fellowship to study in a foreign laboratory. I am wondering if there are research projects that you may have, or are aware of, on echinoderm research. I have been studying feeding in the northern sea cucumber *Cucumaria frondosa*, but I am willing to expand my research area to other interesting projects. Any info you can share will be appreciated.

### From: Jennifer Carter

Northern Territory University in Darwin, Australia; E-mail: j\_carter@gis.ntu.edu.au

*Jennifer has started a Ph.D. programme investigating 'Aspects of sandfish ecology in the Top End (Australia): implications for harvesting by Aboriginal communities'.*

This project primarily involves surveying parts of the northern Australian coastline for sandfish abundance and distribution for stock assessment. In the past some 1700 to 1900 Aboriginal people of northern Australia were involved in the collection of trepang to supply Macassan (from what is now Sulawesi) traders who sailed to northern Australian waters every wet season (November to March in Darwin). Many communities are interested in resuming this activity to help attain partial economic independence. Survey methods involve intertidal walks, boat transects and an underwater video camera. The water is very murky, and a small beam trawl will probably also be used to assist with obtaining results in the more turbid areas. Sediment samples have been taken, which will be analysed for particle size and input into a GIS, along with other parameters such as distance to mangroves, reefs, freshwater outflow etc. (with remote sensing and GIS modelling) in an attempt to characterise habitats.

Sandfish are currently being fished by non-Aboriginal fishers and the project will also probably involve biomass dynamics modelling of fishers log-book data (providing I obtain their permission) to get an idea

of sustainability and to relate what has happened in areas that have been fished to the densities I obtain in other areas. Hopefully this research will help to develop sustainable use strategies.

**From: Heather Galley (Secretary and Treasurer)**

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Would you be so kind as to advise what the prerequisites for becoming a member of PIMRIS are, whether our association could in fact join and what the membership fees are.

Mr Garry Preston recently addressed a meeting of our Association in Cairns, North Queensland and presented some excellent publications, namely *SPC Beche-de-mer Information Bulletin*, Number 9 - March 1997, a publication by the South Pacific Commission; and FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 272.2, Part 2, Holothurians. If at all possible we would like to avail our association of the first eight issues of the bulletin and would appreciate your advice as to where we would obtain same. We would also like to convey our congratulations on your publication and our appreciation for the information it contains. So little is available in Australia, and our members were most interested in and very keen to obtain personal copies of these publications.

