

Observation of predation by the titan triggerfish on a holothurian at Reunion Island

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On 3 February 2021, in the lagoon of La Saline, Reunion Island, I observed a titan triggerfish (*Balistooides viridescens*) for a half an hour, from 17:35 to 18:05.

This one was of good size (about 80 cm), was less than 15 m from the beach, in a depth of about 1 m and was feeding. At first, it was rather interested in corals, putting itself vertically to lift them.

Then, from 17:50, it started to attack a sea cucumber *Holothuria leucospilota*. At first, it sucked the sea cucumber with its mouth,

certainly biting it with his teeth, and then spit it out. It repeated this several times. After less than 5 minutes, the holothurian expelled its Cuvierian tubules and probably part of its internal organs, which were pinkish. The titan triggerfish first ate the internal organs, then it started to crunch the black flesh of the holothurian until it was cut into two. It then devoured the entire black flesh.

The sea cucumber was completely gone in less than 15 minutes.



Figure 1. Sequence of predation on *Holothuria leucospilota* by a titan triggerfish. (Images: Peggy Richard)

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