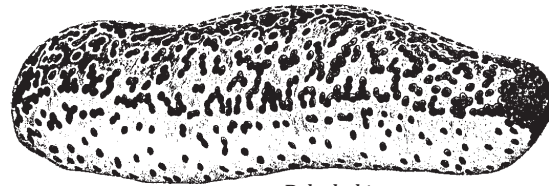


B E C H E - D E - M E R
I N F O



Bohadschia argus

Developments in beche-de-mer production in Indonesia during the last decade

by A. Tuwo and C. Conand,
*Université de Bretagne Occidentale,
Brest, France*

Although Indonesia is now the main world beche-de-mer (or teripang in Indonesia) producer and exporter, the fishery is still poorly documented. The holothurian fishery in Indonesia is mostly intended for the processing of beche-de-mer for export, although the Chinese minority consume it and some Indonesian fishermen also appreciate it.

Available statistics from the last decade are presented in Table 1 and show the recent trends. Indonesian export statistics from the Trade Department are divided into total exports and exports to the main world beche-de-mer markets, Hong-Kong, Singapore and Taiwan (1). Import data from these markets, Hong Kong (2) and Taiwan (3) and FAO data on catch and export are complementary sources of information. According to the national statistics, annual production has multiplied by five between 1981 and 1987. Since 1987, it has stayed around 4,700 t per year. This corresponds to around 50,000 t captured (to take into account the weight loss which occurs during processing). From FAO export data and from the pooled imports from Hong Kong and Taiwan, peak production seems to have taken place in 1988, as in other countries. The major part of the production is exported to Hong Kong. Taiwan imports seem to be decreasing at present. In Singapore's import statistics, beche-de-mer is not always specified in

shipments of dried sea food, as is the case with the imports from Indonesia.

In Indonesia, as in the other tropical Indo-Pacific countries, various large species of holothurians are fished. These artisanal fisheries are scattered throughout the different islands : Lampung, Java, Nusatenggara, Sulawesi, Maluku, Irian Jaya. Two types of fishing practices are undertaken.

With small boats, a few fishermen (3 or 4) go to the reef, for daily harvest, without diving equipment. The processing is done when they return.

With larger boats, around ten fishermen go far away, often with their family, for one or even several months. They use diving gear (compressed air) and sell the processed product in the nearest town. Around ten species of sea cucumbers are processed by the traditional Indonesian methods, which may include two unusual features : soaking in salt before boiling (Figure 1) and incisions in the body wall for larger species before boiling (Figure 2). These practices give an unusual appearance to the processed product and probably result in lower quality. Improvement of the processing methods would provide higher quality products and more cash income for the fishermen.

Table 1. Beche-de-mer production in Indonesia, from different sources (in tonnes)

Source	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
National statistics exports (1)										
Total exports	878	840	1,518	2,160	3,890	3,670	4,605	4,755	4,888	4,679
Exports to Hong-Kong, Singapore and Taiwan	658	608	1,232	1,266	3,185	2,342	2,877	3,644	3,040	3,438
Hong Kong imports (2)	295	393	599	1,046	2,421	2,472	2,173	3,131	1,785	2,143
Taiwan imports (3)	—	—	370	331	389	348	505	502	202	144
Total (2+3)	—	—	969	1,377	2,810	2,820	2,678	3,633	1,987	2,287
FAO: catch	285	275	232	456	351	478	512	590	590	—
exports	545	623	1,274	1,318	3,123	2,362	2,517	3,480	—	—

Culture of *Holothuria scabra* (sandfish) in enclosures is practised in South-East Sulawesi. Small individuals, around 6 cm, are collected on their grounds (muddy sands) and transplanted to net enclosures (around 150 m²), at a density of 5 to 10 per m². After six months, they have grown to around

20 cm and are ready to be harvested for processing. These low-cost cultures have also been practised in India. Detailed studies on the growth of the species, in and outside the enclosures, are still needed, as well as price analyses.



Figure 1. Soaking of various sea cucumber species in salt before boiling (Sulawesi, Indonesia)



Figure 2. Boiling a large prickly redfish (Sulawesi)