

The second project using containment is just about to get under way, examining more intensive suspended culture systems as well as the results of feeding to increase growth rates and density of culture. Fan Seafoods Limited, a partner in the fisheries work above, and Gigas Growth Systems Limited, a shellfish aquaculture company focusing on intensive mechanised oyster culture operations, will be undertaking this work with assistance from the Science Council of B.C.

In British Columbia, the viability of sea-cucumber aquaculture and enhancement will depend on the ability to biologically and economically produce sea cucumbers for market and on the regulations

governing activities. Slow early growth for the species and typically low density on fishing grounds are difficulties to be overcome for economic success but increased density and good recovery in culture appear possible. In experimental work to date, however, harvestable size has not yet been reached. As well, regulations are still in the process of being defined by the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans with input from industry members.

The Beche-de-mer information bulletin has been a very useful source of information during these undertakings. The groups mentioned welcome any comments or advice from readers.

Galapagos News

Communicated by Chantal Conand
[Information given by J. Barry, Charles Darwin Foundation]

The situation in Galapagos was reported up to March 1995 in the *Beche-de-mer Information Bulletin* #7. During the following months, various events have taken place which show that the situation is still very tense.

- *1 September 1995*: the President of Ecuador vetoed a law of 'Special Regimen of Galapagos' which did not address the key management issues which face Galapagos. Galapagos conservation benefitted from this line.
- *3 September 1995*: Threats of violence, followed by a series of disruptive actions, began against the Charles Darwin Research Station and Galapagos National Park property and personnel. These actions have taken place in the port cities on three inhabited islands: Pto. Baquerizo Moreno (San Cristobal Island), Pto. Ayora (Santa Cruz Island), and Pto. Villamil (Isabela Island). Protesters also seized the road on Santa Cruz leading to Baltra Island, closing off the main airport for most people, completely closed the

airport in San Cristobal, and seized Park property in Pto. Villamil. On September 4, 1995, protesters descended on the Station and Park headquarters in Pto. Ayora. Station personnel were evacuated by boat, have then returned, and no one has been harmed. No property has been damaged, but mounds of rubber tires have been incinerated near Park buildings

- *January 1996*: in response to a seizure (January 12) by the Galapagos National Park of illegal sea cucumber catches, and the subsequent arrest and incarceration of 8 Ecuadorian fishermen, approximately 30 fishermen seized the local offices of the Galapagos National Park and threatened to destroy the buildings if their colleagues were not released. The fishermen held the offices for twelve hours before the seizure ended.

This seizure of Galapagos National Park property marks the second such occasion in four months, and recalls the 3 January 1995 takeover related to the same issue of illegal sea-cucumber fishing.

Miscellaneous

Prices on the retail market in Singapore appeared to be very high in December 1995, up to S\$150/kg for first grade *Holothuria scabra* var. *versicolor* and S\$100 for *Holothuria nobilis* (teatfish) [F. Conand, personal observation].

Sea cucumbers (*Holothuria scabra*, medium grade) were found at Jakarta airport (duty-free shops) at US\$45/kg in January 1996.