

Statistics on beche-de-mer exports

Compiled by Chantal Conand and the SPC
Fisheries Information Section

We have collected statistics from various sources, countries and territories. Figures are presented for the following countries and territories: New Caledonia, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga. We hope to be able to present a regular statistical column in this bulletin in the future.

1. BECHE-DE-MER EXPORTS FROM NEW CALEDONIA (KG) (SOURCE: CHANTAL CONAND)

Destination	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Hong Kong	122,678	119,900	76,510	37,452	66,878
Singapore	0	0	0	0	8,400
Others	3,920	3,700	3,715	2,022	4,587
Total	126,598	123,600	80,225	39,474	79,865

2. TUVALU BECHE-DE-MER EXPORTS (SOURCE: SAMUALU LALONI, FISHERIES RESEARCH OFFICER)

In addition to the questionnaire, I have been able to interview some people who worked for the two exporters, and they all agree that numbers of beche-de-mer are decreasing. They tend to see fewer and fewer beche-de-mer in one area after a few months. Also they tend to spend longer periods of time diving to get numbers they would normally get with lesser effort.

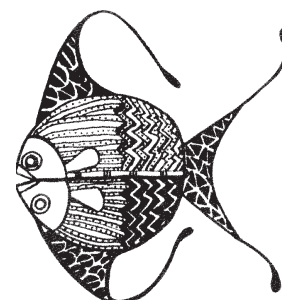
The following beche-de-mer species are exported by the two exporters: white teatfish, leopard tiger fish, prickly red fish, elephant's trunk fish, black fish, surf redfish, black teatfish and brown sandfish.

In 1993, only one exporter was operating at the time, and a total of 895.35 kg of beche-de-mer were exported. In 1994, two exporters were operating and between them 3,697.45 kg of beche-de-mer were exported. In 1995 the same exporters exported 3,217.75 kg of beche-de-mer.

At present the two exporters are not operating as actively as in the past. This is mainly because of a couple of fatal diving accidents that have resulted from the improper use of hookah gear. Also, divers without diving gear are reluctant to dive in deeper waters as the resource in shallower waters becomes depleted.

3. SOLOMON ISLANDS EXPORTS FOR 1995 (SOURCE: FISHERIES DIVISION)

Month	Quantity (kg)	Value (SI\$)
January	—	—
February	7,189.5	106,790.4
March	—	—
April	7,652.5	125,405.9
May	4,260.0	23,000.0
June	1,181.4	13,471.7
July	17,855.0	139,601.8



4. PAPUA NEW GUINEA EXPORTS (SOURCE: BARRY D. KARE, SENIOR FISHERIES BIOLOGIST, NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITY)

New trends have emerged from the renewed interest in exploitation of beche-de-mer in PNG. As species of higher commercial value have been over-harvested, fishermen have resorted to targeting less valuable species, such as deep-water redfish (*Actinopyga echinites*). Localised over-exploitation of beche-de-mer has been experienced in several locations, for example in the Western Province.

This fishery (Western Province) was closed in September 1993 for a year. Biological research was conducted during this period by an officer of National Fisheries Authority (NFA), currently studying for his Masters Degree at James Cook University. His initial findings were that the fishery was recovering at a very slow rate. Based on his

findings, a comprehensive Management Plan has been put in place and this will be implemented when the fishery opens sometime this year. Among other measures, the plan includes total allowable catch, time closures, licencing of exporters/buyers etc. Management plans for other fisheries are yet to be completed, for example Tigak fishery in the New Ireland province.

Export statistics are detailed below for the past three years and the first six months of 1995. Unfortunately, the records kept by our Export Branch are not kept species by species, so the data is a combination of species exploited in PNG. These species include, *Holothuria scabra*, *H. nobilis*, *H. fuscogilva*, *Thelenota ananas*, *Actinopyga miliaris*, *A. echinites* and *H. fuscopunctata*.

Month	Quantity (kg)	Value (Kina)
1992	419,452.30	3,409,738.71
1993	499,849.46	3,044,843.85
1994	207,111.23	1,845,061.29
1995*	122,788.51	1,199,649.23

For currency comparisons, K1 is approx. equal to A\$ 0.9663; this is after the devaluation of Kina in June/July 1995. The value of Kina to Australian Dollars before the devaluation was approx. A\$1.40.

Beche-de-mer fishery in Baja California

by German Perez-Plascecia

An artisanal sea cucumber fishery started work only recently in Baja California (Mexico) thus there is a great lack of adequate biological information and statistics of the captures about the only two species known to be harvested (see figure on page 14).

A small fishery started around 1988 in the Baja California State, first in the Gulf of California region with *Isostichopus fuscus*, and in 1989 there were already landings reported for the Pacific littoral, where *Parastichopus parvimensis* was the species harvested.

The table shows the annual landings for the North-east Pacific region in Baja California, expressed as total wet weight (tonnes) of the organisms, but it is highly probable that not all the captures were reported.

The price for the unprocessed sea cucumber (fresh wet weight) is US\$0.80/kg, which is not very at-

Year	Production (tonnes)
1989	52.0
1990	189.2
1991	662.0
1992	729.4
1993	367.0
1994	563.1

tractive for fishermen compared to the sea-urchin gonad that reaches up to US\$38.00/kg. The sea-cucumber fishery serves then as an alternative when the sea-urchin season is closed. All of the sea-cucumber production in Baja California is processed (body wall, muscular bands or whole clean body) for the Japanese market, but like its closer relative *P. californicus*, the market for *P. parvimensis* is not well developed and is unstable.