

Statistics on beche-de-mer production

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We have collected statistics from various sources and countries. Figures are presented for the following countries: Fiji, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

We hope to be able to present a regular statistical column in this bulletin in the future.

Fiji**Local beche-de-mer production 1987-1992 (weight in metric tonnes; value in Fijian dollars)**

Year	Weight (mt)	Value (F\$)
1987	640.39	2,233,460
1988	717.41	2,852,270
1989	365.17	1,890,820
1990	323.33	3,048,860
1991	319.40	3,428,910
1992	402.76	4,972,000

Source: Fiji Fisheries
Division Annual
Report, Ministry of
Primary Industries,
Suva

Note: As much as 350 t of BDM per year is known to have been exported from Fiji as 'Miscellaneous molluscs', and these figures are not included here.

Papua New Guinea**Beche-de-mer exports from Papua New Guinea (1991 - first quarter 1993)**

Month	Quantity (kg)	Value (K)	Month	Quantity (kg)	Value (K)
January	83,569.50	412,632.86	January	51,873.00	396,276.65
February	20,158.00	176,657.59	February	41,400.00	383,329.73
March	58,303.00	348,457.00	March	35,900.00	317,904.15
April	30,923.00	256,185.00	April	32,290.00	287,107.00
1 May	54,716.00	311,852.00	1 May	52,064.00	404,425.40
9 June	23,928.50	225,183.63	9 June	45,731.60	347,321.30
9 July	37,129.00	357,329.67	9 July	50,889.00	420,727.50
1 August	66,826.50	547,518.79	2 August	18,931.60	185,132.14
September	71,496.50	571,528.79	September	48,287.50	399,556.55
October	68,319.00	627,149.20	October	64,394.00	506,718.96
November	54,094.00	294,325.74	November	48,556.50	434,576.00
December	56,584.50	508,987.16	December	55,514.70	423,254.26
Total	626,047.50	4,637,807.43	Total	545,831.90	4,506,329.64

Month	Quantity (kg)	Value (K)
1 January	35,279.50	215,473.40
9 February	38,849.00	217,081.32
9 March	35,743.00	175,788.45
3 Total	109,871.50	608,343.17

Note: Government revenue is 5 per cent of the total value (1 PNG Kina ≈ 1 US\$).

Source: Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Konedobu, PNG

Solomon Islands

Beche-de-mer exports Solomon Islands (1983–1991)

Year	Weight (t)	Value (SI\$)
1983	9.26	51,755
1984	44.29	251,872
1985	13.62	74,880
1986	134.18	733,793
1987	146.38	839,533
1988	146.86	1,469,117
1989	87.10	721,236
1990	118.90	1,880,957
1991	622.38	7,631,952

Local purchase of beche-de-mer by Province (1988–1991)

Province	1988		1989		1990		1991	
	Weight (kg)	Value (SI\$)	Weight (kg)	Value (SI\$)	Weight (kg)	Value (SI\$)	Weight (kg)	Value (SI\$)
Unknown			5,276.40	50,563.65	35.30	249.00		
Guadalcanal			281.80	3,105.90	12,630.15	92,321.89		
Malaita	569.21	6,734.97	7,762.90	46,513.62	68,513.40	819,485.09		
Temotu			1,957.50	4,647.39	2,767.90	17,303.11	11,732.80	58,378.38
Western			23,500.64	90,647.27	25,136.80	355,889.60		
Isabel			5,534.50	24,484.47	11,609.85	64,445.24	149.50	702.55
Central			999.10	2,855.09	12,630.15	92,321.89		
Makira			498.60	2,241.89	243.20	1,407.60		

Note: The local purchase figures have been taken under the Solomon Islands licensing system which requires local exporting companies to provide all data related to their trade in marine resources. This data collection system was first implemented in 1988; the coverage of local buyers for 1989 and 1990 is incomplete (30 per cent and 77 per cent respectively)

Source: Fisheries Division, Ministry of Natural Resources, Honiara, Solomon Islands

Sea cucumbers

by Walter G. Meyer
(Excerpt from an article published
in *Baja Explorer*, Sept–Oct 1992)

They are disgusting to look at before they're cooked, and even less appetising after boiling. The smell of them cooking would make anyone lose an appetite, and the polite name *sea cucumber* conceals the fact they are more closely related to sea slugs than to any garden vegetable.

But, in the quest to get more food from the sea, the little creatures are fetching top dollars in the Far East (US\$20,000 a ton in Japan) and are becoming a delicacy elsewhere (US\$17 a serving at restaurants in British Columbia). The demand to harvest more is putting political, social and economic pres-

sure on the Mexican Government to increase its export of what it calls 'pepinos del mar.'

The species endemic to the Sea of Cortez, *Isostichopus fuscus*, is much more sought after than its Pacific Ocean counterpart, and in fact accounted for 80 per cent of the sea cucumbers exported last year.

Although it is legal to take sea cucumbers for personal consumption, commercial diving for the animals requires a permit. After four years of commercial exploitation, the Mexican government has begun a study of the *fuscus* population in the Sea of