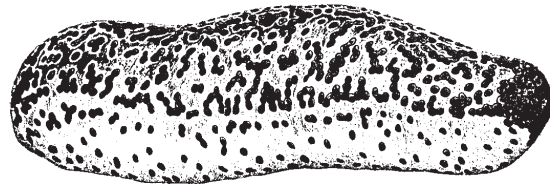


B E C H E - D E - M E R

CORRESPONDENCE


**Correspondence from Beche-de-mer Special
Interest Group members**
Compiled by Chantal Conand

From S. Uticke [Australian Institute of Marine Studies, PMB 3, Townsville, Queensland 4180, Tel: 61 7 7534211, Fax: 61 7 7725852, E-mail: S.UTICKE@aims.gov.au

Things here seem to develop quite well. I have three populations of S. chloronotus and/or H. atra mixed with some less abundant species on three different islands. I have the chance to sample these and abiotic parameters on a monthly basis via ship-based field trips, so this part is quite OK. In the aquaria system here I keep some H. atra, H. edulis and H. chloronotus, which appears to be more difficult than on Lizard Island.

As usual they are shrinking, but this time nearly all of 20 H. chloronotus divided after one to three months (for some coincidental, non-scientific reason, all on weekends!). They appeared to be feeding OK and even spawned at the same time as in the field. Again, as well as some other species which spawned in the field, I only observed males taking part in mass spawnings. Did you ever observe females taking part in mass-spawning events?



From Dale Sarver [Black Pearls, P.O. Box 525, Holualoa, Hawaii 96725, Tel: 808 3257108, Fax: 808 3253425, E-mail: dalej@aloha.net

We are continuing to work on the nursery stages of the Hawaiian sea cucumbers. It is a very tricky problem, but I think we are getting closer. We just got several-

hundred Stichopus horrens through the critical period and they are now growing well. We hope we can start making the results more consistent.



Stichopus horrens
[Photo: Dale Sarver]

From Johan Bell [ICLARM Coastal Aquaculture Centre, P.O. Box 438, Honiara, Solomon Islands, Tel: 677 29255, Fax: 677 29130, E-mail: ICLARM@FFA.gov.sb

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) has provided ICLARM with restricted core funding for five years to develop methods for the mass-rearing of tropical sea cucumbers for the purpose of enhancing wild stocks.

The main aims of the project are to develop reliable methods for inducing sea cucumbers to spawn, identifying suitable algae and diatoms for the nutrition of the larvae and developing repeatable, cost-effective methods for rearing the larvae and juveniles to the stage where they are robust enough to transfer to coral reef habitats.

The project was approved by ACIAR on 27 March 1995. To date, work has involved construction of the necessary facilities at the Coastal Aquaculture Centre. These include accommodation for project staff, additional offices and wet laboratories, expansion of the hatchery, and an algal facility.

Recruitment of staff was finalised at the end of 1995. The new staff appointed to the project with ACIAR funds include a Scientist to complete the research tasks, a Research Associate dedicated to producing and isolating tropical algae and two Technical Aides. ICLARM will also contribute a B.Sc. (Hons) graduate and a Technical Aide to the project.

*The project will concentrate on propagation of species of high value, particularly sandfish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*), although some research will also be done on surf redfish (*Actinopyga mauritiana*) as it is common near the Coastal Aquaculture Centre.*

At the conclusion of the ACIAR project, ICLARM will seek funding to develop optimum release strategies for hatchery-reared sea cucumbers, and to test the effects of releases on existing fisheries for sea cucumbers.



From Aquila Sea Products, Mozambique

1. *Pilot project: create a hatchery and a sea ranch for sea cucumbers in the Morrubene area.*
2. *Migration of *H. scabra*.*

I would like to report on a phenomenon which we witnessed; I wonder if anyone else has seen this before.

*In the Morrumbene Estuarine Zone there are many channels where *H. scabra* is found, usually along with algae and sea grass. The currents are swift during incoming and outgoing tides.*

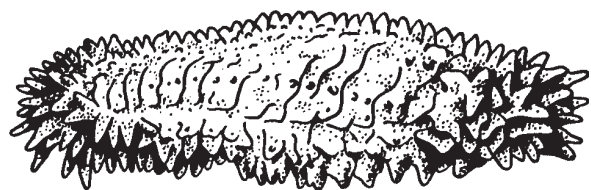
On being disturbed in an area and some cucumbers eviscerated, and during the outgoing tide hundreds of cucumbers appeared above the sand and formed either a sort of a wheel shape with the body or contracted the body to form a sort of a thick cigar shape.

Then they proceeded to roll with current very rapidly and moved away at the speed of the water which reached an estimated seven knots. The next day there were no cucumbers evident in this area and we could not find where they had moved to. We have also found that juveniles and large cucumbers tend to live in separate areas and seldom mix in a given area.



From Norman Reichenbach [Oceanographic Society of Maldives, P.O. Box 2075, Malé, Republic of Maldives, Tel: 960 325076, Fax: 960 325978]

*It is like the fishery here has gone the way other places have gone: lots collected for about five years and now several species are rare. There is a ban on collection of sea cucumbers using SCUBA. Otherwise no regulation. Many of the species like *H. fuscogilva* and *H. ananas* are recovering, (since they can live deep here (down to 40 m). In contrast, the marketable shallow-water species like *H. nobilis* and *A. mauritiana* can be quite rare due to continuing collection efforts.*



From S. M. Pauls

I would greatly appreciate having copies of the Beche-de-Mer Information Bulletin No. 6 and 7. I need the information on the Galapagos illegal fishery of sea cucumber because these persons are now here in Venezuela (Caribbean South America) in some marine national parks, fishing clandestinely and in some islands here they are fishing illegally.

Please, we need all information that you have, including contact persons with telephone/fax/e-mail numbers about the illegal fishing of sea cucumber in South America (Galapagos, Ecuador, Peru, etc.). We have here in Venezuela a serious problem now.



From D.B. James [Tuticorin Research Centre, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, 90 North Beach Road, Tuticorin 628001, India]

Dr D. B. James, Senior Scientist working at the Research Centre of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Tuticorin (Tamil Nadu, India) visited the Maldives as an FAO Consultant for 10 days. He made an initial visit to the mariculture site in Leamu Atoll to give recom-

mendations on spawning, larval rearing and production of seed stock for commercial tropical sea cucumbers. He has to visit the Maldives again in June 1996 for two weeks, and make a final visit in December 1996 for one month for seed production of sea cucumbers.

