

# Communications...

## From Chris Mah.

Chris Mah has started a new echinoderm-related blog where he posts discussion topics, reports on field work, various articles, news and other educational and popular items.

Web page: <http://www.echinoblog.blogspot.com/>

## From Steve Purcell.

[http://www.lnc.nc/articles/article\\_70329\\_223659.htm](http://www.lnc.nc/articles/article_70329_223659.htm) is a link to an article (in French) that attests to the fact that in New Caledonia sea cucumber fishers travel long distances from their ports and jurisdiction of fishing to collect sea cucumbers on remote reefs. Fishers from other regions are causing conflicts with locals over fishing rights, customary reserves, and respect over resources. The article notes that the customary leaders on Ouvea put in a formal complaint about the fishing at Beautemps-Beaupré Atoll.

## From Igor Eeckhaut.

A new method involving a natural molecule has been developed to induce oocyte maturation in holothuroids. Oocyte maturation in sea cucumbers is stopped during the meiosis at prophase I. Maturation naturally concludes just before spawning, leading to mature oocytes ready to be fertilized. Although thermal shocks applied on mature individuals can induce spawning, it was not possible until now to perform reliably *in vitro* fertilization of sea cucumber oocytes. The method and molecule are patented under the number WO 2008/003691 (patent title: "oocyte maturation method"; patent authors: "Richard Rasolofonirina, Aline Léonet, Michel Jangoux and Igor Eeckhaut"). The method induces maturation and fertilization of more than 90% of oocytes while other oocyte maturation inducers [1-Methyladenine, dithiothreitol (DTT), dimercaptopropanol (BAL) and L-cysteine] induce 28 to 90% of maturation. Moreover, the use of later OMIs results in fertilization rates that never exceed 40%, the obtained larvae always present developmental abnormalities. The new method is used in routine in the new trade company, Madagascar Holothurie SA. It is efficient throughout the whole year on *Holothuria scabra*.

## From Mark O'Loughlin.

Recent (since 2000) Asteroidea and Holothuroidea papers by Mark O'Loughlin et al. on the Internet published in "Memoirs of Museum Victoria", and available free at:

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/About/Books-and-Journals/Journals/Memoirs-of-Museum-Victoria/>

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- O'Loughlin P.M. and Waters J.M., 2004. A molecular and morphological revision of genera of Asterinidae (Echinodermata: Asteroidea). *Memoirs of Museum Victoria* 61(1):1–40.
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## Congress announcements

**The International Echinoderm Conference “Echinoderms in a Changing World”** will be held at the University of Tasmania in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia from 5–9 January 2009.  
Webpage: <http://www.cdesign.com.au/echinoderm2009/>

**The 7th European Conference on Echinoderms** will be held in Goettingen, Germany from 1–8 October 2010. The homepage will be available in August or September 2008, at the latest.

**The 4th “Arbeitstreffen deutschsprachiger Echinodermenforscher”** will be held from 24–26 October 2008 in Vienna, Austria at the Natural History Museum. The conference website is already online at:  
[http://www.nhm.wien.ac.at/Content.Node/forschung/geologie/echino\\_treffen.html](http://www.nhm.wien.ac.at/Content.Node/forschung/geologie/echino_treffen.html)  
First circular (English), available at:  
[http://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/Content.Node/forschung/geologie/mitarbeiter/pdfs/Zirkular1\\_EN.pdf](http://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/Content.Node/forschung/geologie/mitarbeiter/pdfs/Zirkular1_EN.pdf)

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