

Questionnaire on the field observations of juvenile sea cucumbers

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Note from the editor:

Following the questionnaires on 1) spawning observations and 2) fission still occurring, this new questionnaire on juvenile occurrence seems very appropriate for expanding the knowledge on the life cycle of most holothurian species.

Introduction

My research investigates various aspects of the ecology and biology of black teatfish, *Holothuria nobilis*, on Ningaloo Reef, Western Australia. Although my initial research objectives flagged juvenile ecology as a possible avenue of study, I have experienced great difficulty locating juvenile holothurians generally, and *H. nobilis* specifically. In fact, I have yet to locate a single juvenile *H. nobilis* specimen in any of the habitats I have studied on Ningaloo Reef, and in addition, have found little information regarding the ecology of juvenile holothurians in the literature.

This has caused me some concern, as recent advances in tropical sea cucumber mariculture have created scope for the rehabilitation of habitats affected by overfishing, via a process of "re-seeding" using hatchery-raised juveniles. At this stage, how-

ever, I believe this process could be impeded by the considerable lack of information regarding the habitat and ecological requirements of juvenile sea cucumber as the requirements of juvenile and adult holothurians may be quite different.

Clearly, more in situ research is required in this area, and for this reason, both Professor Conand and I are interested in compiling a list of observations of all juvenile sea cucumbers in their natural habitats. This will begin the process of consolidating the existing information relevant to habitat preferences of juvenile sea cucumbers to assist researchers in the preparation of field-based experiments. This observations list will be published with due acknowledgements in the next edition of the Beche-de-Mer Information Bulletin.

I hope that you can be of some assistance by providing details of any observations you make of juveniles in the field. I have provided a table below to help you record relevant details. Please send your observations to the address below with a copy to Professor Chantal Conand (or see complete mailing address on the cover page of this bulletin). If you can be of assistance in this matter, I would be most appreciative.

Juvenile holothurian questionnaire (one sheet per observation please)

Please send to Glenn Shiell (cucumber@cyllene.uwa.edu.au) with a copy to Professor Chantal (Conand.Conand@univ-reunion.fr)

A Species observed:	
B Number of individuals observed:	
C Approximate size (<i>length and width</i>):	
D Location: e.g. <i>Ashmore Reef, Western Australia</i>	
E Habitat: e.g. <i>sea grass, coral rubble, mud, sand, limestone sand, limestone platform, etc.</i>	
F Time of day:	
G Approximate date:	
H Were adults present within the same habitat or nearby?	
I Name and affiliation of observer:	

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