

Drop in price observed for the trochus shell between mid-1991 and mid-1992

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Correspondence from Warwick Nash (Department of Primary Industry Tasmania, Taroona Research Laboratories, GPO Box 619F, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia) to Garry Preston, concerning the drop in price observed for the trochus shell between mid-1991 and mid-1992.

'... There are several factors contributing to the price drop. When prices were increasing steadily (and quite rapidly) a couple of years ago, some of the button processors, particularly the smaller ones, were concerned that the increasing price of shell might price them out of the market. So they bought more shell than they could use immediately. This stockpiling later slowed down demand and the price dropped.

The price drop was helped along by re-entry of the Indonesian shell into world markets. The Indonesians, who had placed a ban on the collecting of trochus in 1987 are again selling trochus shell. Since it seems that shell buyers want Indonesian

shell in preference to shell from anywhere else, the demand for shell from the Pacific dropped — particularly since the buyers had stockpiled shell from other countries.

Other shell appears to be competing with *Trochus niloticus* for a share of the button market. El toro, the big button factory in Spain, has reportedly placed an order for 4,000 tonnes of 'Port Sudan shell' (presumably a trochid) at US\$ 2,000 per tonne, which is substantially less than the price of *Trochus niloticus* shell at the moment (about AS 4,000 in December 1991) Tom Cyran was also told by Italian buyers that cheaper shell is coming onto the market from 'somewhere'.

So it seems that there are several factors all helping to push the price of trochus shell down. None of these seem to be transient in their effects, so I anticipate that there will not be much of an increase in shell price in the near future...'

Prices on local and overseas market in Vanuatu for trochus

by J.P. Gaudechoux,
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According to the Fisheries Department, Port-Vila, Vanuatu, there are now five shell processing factories in Port-Vila. The two main products processed are trochus and green snail.

The buyer pay to fishermen 200–300 vt/kg for raw trochus. The export prices (for processed trochus) are:

Blank buttons	20.00 US\$/kg;
Cut pieces	4.00 US\$/kg;
Waste	0.50 to 1.00 US\$/kg

Bibliographic references on trochus

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All the documents in the list below are catalogued in the Fisheries Information Project's trochus bibliographic database and are held either in the SPC library or in other collections known to us (we have additional documents awaiting cataloguing and these will be noted in future issues). Some are publications, but many are internal documents, mimeo reports and other forms of ephemera. In some cases we can provide single photocopies of references free of charge to SIG members or fisheries

officers in Pacific Island countries. In other cases, where confidentiality requirements or copyright restrictions apply, we may be limited to advising enquirers of contact addresses through which they may be able to obtain the document in question.

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