

Information on the sea cucumber fishery in the Querimbas Archipelago, Mozambique

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All sea cucumbers on Vamizi Island, in the northern Querimbas Archipelago in northern Mozambique, are generically referred to as *macajojo*. The sea cucumber fishery there has existed since 2000 and possibly earlier. Some fishermen specifically target sea cucumbers (using just a mask or a mask and snorkel), while others collect them incidentally while they are spearfishing for finfish.

The sea cucumber fishery is particularly popular with transient or immigrant fishers, with 10 or 20 people setting out on a collecting trip in a single *machua* (traditional wooden sailing boat). A small number of resident fishermen also collect sea cucumbers. Apparently, sea cucumber fishing used to be very productive, but fishermen complain of declining catches and now say that very few are left.

Sea cucumbers are not eaten locally, but are instead kept in buckets of water and sold to traders; their ultimate destination is unknown.

Prices for sea cucumbers vary greatly according to species, but ranged in 2005 from MZN 500– 100,000 per animal.

Table 1. Prices for three sea cucumber species

Local name	Scientific name	Price per animal
Subinho	<i>Thelenota ananas</i>	50,000 MZN
Trogida	<i>Stichopus herrmanni</i>	50,000 MZN
Namonha	<i>Bohadschia</i> sp.	1000 MZN

Another species, probably *Holothuria fucogilva* (Fig. 4) (C. Conand pers. comm.), was collected as secondary information opportunistically, so I am uncertain as to how many species/types of sea cucumber the fishermen can recognise.



Figure 1. Subinho (*Thelenota ananas*)



Figure 2. Trogida (*Stichopus herrmanni*)



Figure 3. Namonha (*Bohadschia* sp.)



Figure 4. *Holothuria fucogilva?*