

East Torres Strait Sea Cucumber Survey

25th November – 6th December, 2019



Background:

The Torres Strait Beche-de-mer Fishery (TSBDMF) has become an important source of income for Torres Strait islanders since it was re-established in the early 1990s. While most sea cucumber species are considered to be in good condition, closure or catch limits have been implemented for several high value fishery species such as Sandfish, Black teatfish and Surf redfish. Currently, fishing is mainly focused on White teatfish, Blackfish, Deepwater redfish, Prickly redfish and of late, Curryfish species.

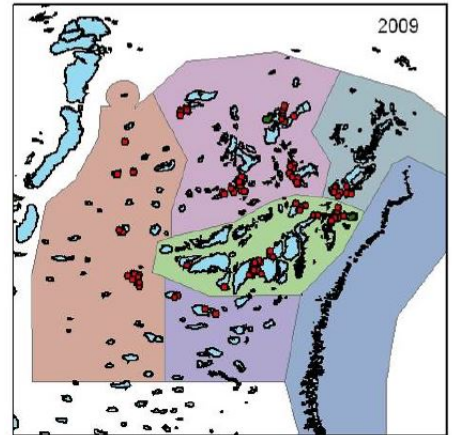
The Fish Receiver System was introduced in December 2017. There is still however, limited information available to assess the status of fishery populations, with incomplete catch and effort time series data available prior to 2017. A stock survey is presently the only viable method for determining the size and status of fished beche-de-mer populations for Torres Strait.



CSIRO scientists and Mer Island co-researchers during a survey in 2009

Methods:

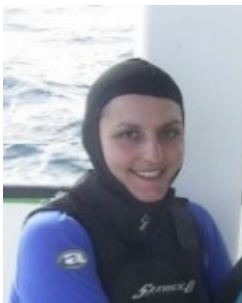
The survey will be conducted over 12 days from 25th November to 6th December, using “MV Wild Blue”. The sites selected for survey, will be chosen to provide the greatest power to detect changes in density of sea cucumbers. We will also take advice from Torres Strait fishers as to likely high density areas for investigation.



Area of East Torres BDM survey

Where: The East Torres Strait (please see survey map), with the focus on Prickly redfish ‘Seker Aber’ , Curryfish species ‘Bambam Aber’ & ‘Warwarr Aber’, Black teatfish ‘Pauraber/Goleh-Goleh Pauraber’ and Surf redfish ‘Teraber’ (Erubmer Language; K & L Gutchen)

Who:



Nicole Murphy



Tim Skewes



Steven Edgar



MV Wild Blue

This is the first of two upcoming surveys - please let us know if you have any feedback or questions, and you're welcome to come see what is happening and have a chat during the surveys

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