

Change in Length and Weight of *Holothuria mexicana* sea cucumber during processing

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We very often do not know what lies beneath and the Caribbean Sea and its neighbouring Gulf of Mexico are no exception. Rogers et al., researchers from the University of Belize, explore some less commonly understood but critical organisms, sea cucumbers, specifically, *Holothuria mexicana*. These researchers delve into the world of how these organisms are processed in order to determine the amount being harvested from their natural habitats. Very often from protected marine parks.

In Belize, the sea cucumber fishery was opened from 2009-2016 but making estimations of how many were harvested is difficult as sea cucumbers were exported in a semi-processed state or dried. As seen in [many previous studies](#), researchers have been studying these creatures and their harvesting before and were well-aware of the issues mentioned, not only in the Caribbean region. However, conflicting methods of processing hampered researchers in monitoring their populations in the wild. Rogers *et al.*, are hoping to improve the situation in Belize if the fishery were to re-open. This study is valuable to the Caribbean countries that have a sea cucumber fishery or plan to create one.

What's next?

The authors explore these methods in more detail, making key recommendations for the fishery industry of Belize for their regulation, protection and processing. Their research sheds light on the various processes involved in many sectors of the Caribbean's fisheries, and the importance of properly adhered to data collection for the conservation of our unique fauna.