

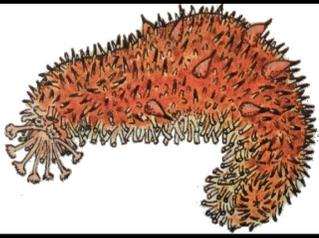


Cabrillo
Marine
Aquarium

FISHIN' FOR F.A.Q.'S

Volume I

Issue 2



Sea Cucumber

FUN FACTS

Sea cucumbers are relatives of the sea star and are both *echinoderms*, which means 'spiny-skinned'.

Several finger-like tentacles that surround the sea cucumber's mouth are used to capture prey. It can even regenerate (re-grow) a new tentacle in less than 3 weeks, if it loses one.

Q. Is it a sea worm?

A. No, although it has a long, soft body it has *pentameral symmetry (5-rays)* like its echinoderm cousin, the sea star. Instead of arms it has 5 rows of tube feet along the length of its squishy body.

Q. Do sea cucumbers have gills like a fish?

A. No, sea cucumbers lack gills and instead breathe by pumping water in & out of an internal organ, called a *respiratory tree*.

Q. What is *evisceration*?

A. Some sea cucumbers throw out their stringy, internal digestive organs to distract and confuse a predator. Their insides resemble wet spaghetti noodles and it can take several weeks for them to *regenerate*.

Q. What are some of its natural predators?

A. Sea turtles, fish & crustaceans are all natural *predators* of the sea cucumber.

Q. Do people fish for sea cucumbers?

A. Yes, sea cucumbers are considered a *delicacy* in many parts of the world and have been commercially overfished for decades. This has caused population numbers to decrease drastically.

At CMA

Check out the colorful cucumbers in Exhibit Tank #6



NEWS FLASH!
THE CALIFORNIA SEA CUCUMBER IS OUR LARGEST LOCAL SPECIES. IT CAN GROW TO BE OVER 2 FEET IN LENGTH.

Fast Facts on a Local Species

Common Name:

Warty sea cucumber

Scientific Name:

Parastichopus parvimensis

Diet: plankton, algae & tiny organic debris

Size: up to 10 inches

Habitat: low inter-tidal zone to the seafloor (100ft-1300ft)

Life Cycle: egg to larva, tiny juvenile to adult

Avg. Lifespan: up to 10 years

Relatives: sea stars, sea urchins & sand dollars

Just for Laughs

Q. Why is it so easy to weigh a fish?

A. Because they have their own scales.

