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Abundance of the brown sea cucumber *Isostichopus fuscus* at the National Park Bahia de Loreto, México

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The Natural Protected Area Parque Nacional Bahia de Loreto, including five adjacent islands, was created in 1996. The park presents rocky and sandy shores, mangrove areas and small patches of reef corals, which have been used for fishing and ecotourism activities. The fishery of the brown sea cucumber *Isostichopus fuscus* is one of the most peculiar in the Gulf of California since early nineties and in the Park the fishery takes place since 2000 under special permits known as UMAS (units for wildlife management). However, little is known on the abundance of the resource in natural populations in México, crucial information to determine total allowable catch. The objective of this study was to assess the abundance of *I. fuscus* in the National Park Bahia de Loreto, Gulf of California, during the fishing season 2005-2006. Abundance was estimated through belt transects (25 x 2 m). A total of 29 sites or “banks” were visited, mostly sites where the fishery occurs. Data were analyzed to determine homoscedasticity and normality using the Levene and Kolmogorov-Smirnoff tests, respectively. To detect differences between the islands we used a one way ANOVA (model II;

Palabras clave: abundance, Isostichopus fuscus, density, holothurians, National Park Bahía de Loreto, UMAS