

A short history of gleaning in Mabini, Batangas, Philippines

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A general assumption

- perceived as artisanal fisheries (meant for selling) not as subsistence fisheries for local consumption.



The problem

- Escapes monitoring by documenting bodies;
- not well covered in fisheries statistics data;
- few independent studies;
- thus, assumption remains to be tested.



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Inherent meaning of gleaning

- Tagalog = *paninihi*, Cebuano = *panginhas*, i.e., gathering of seashells;
- usually not sold, but consumed at home or shared with family, friends and neighbors.



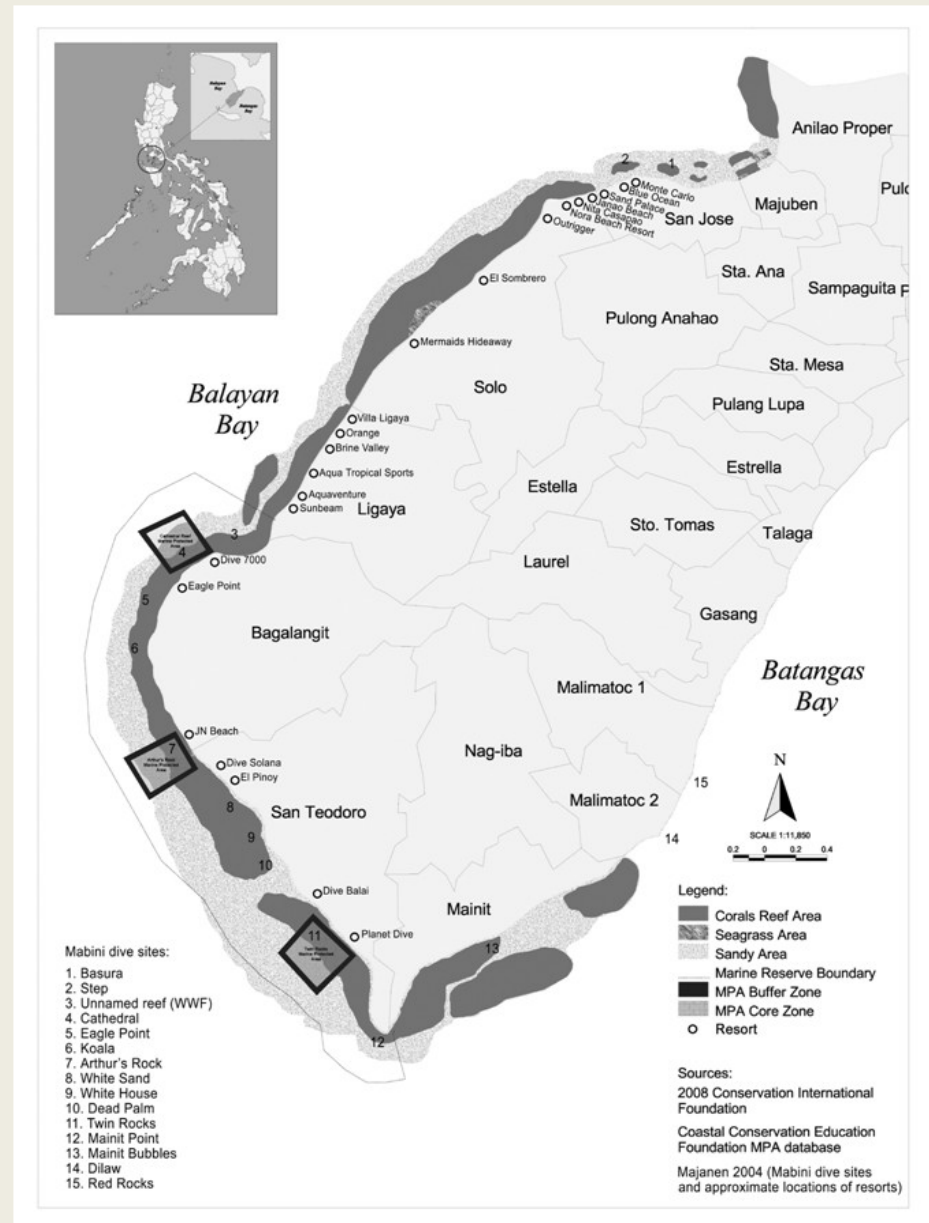
Different folks, different strokes

- People from different cultures have different taste buds and differences in species targeted are evident.
- In the Sulu Sea, trepang or balatan, is a million peso gleaning fishery.



Why Mabini ?

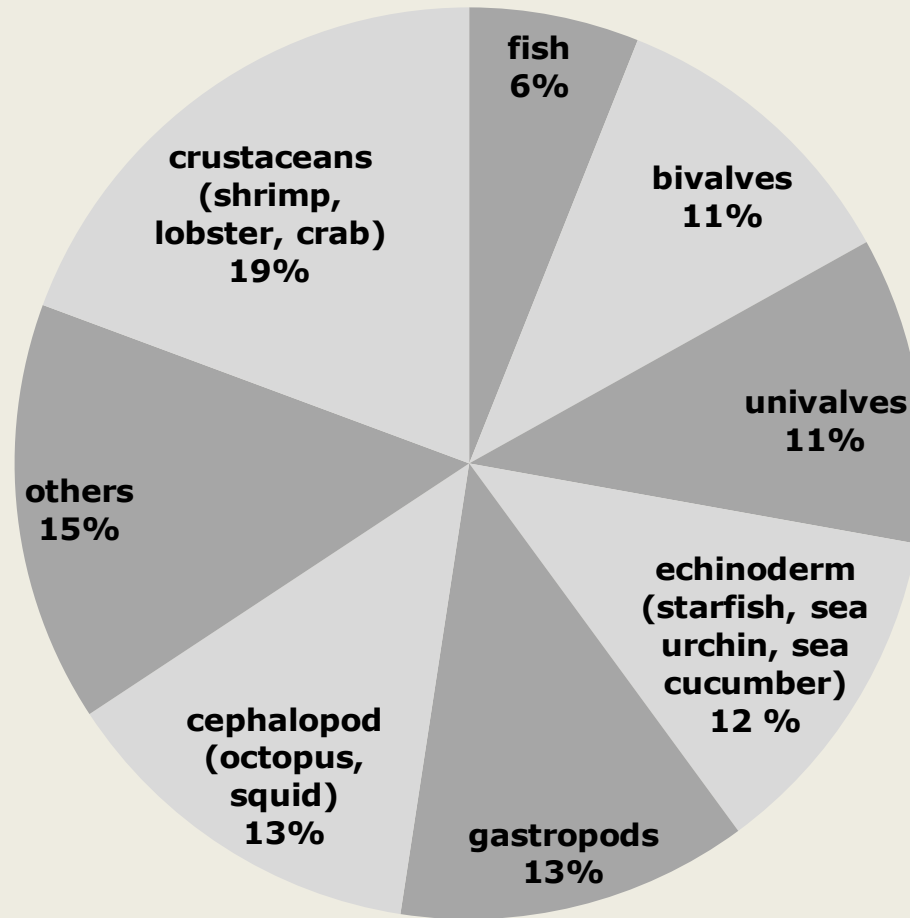
- a marine biodiversity hotspot;
- little influence from migrant fishers (Visayas and Mindanao), though interactions with them exist over long eons of time;
- collective memory of Mabineños on gleaning can be taken as a standard for the southern Tagalog region.



Focus discussion group surveys

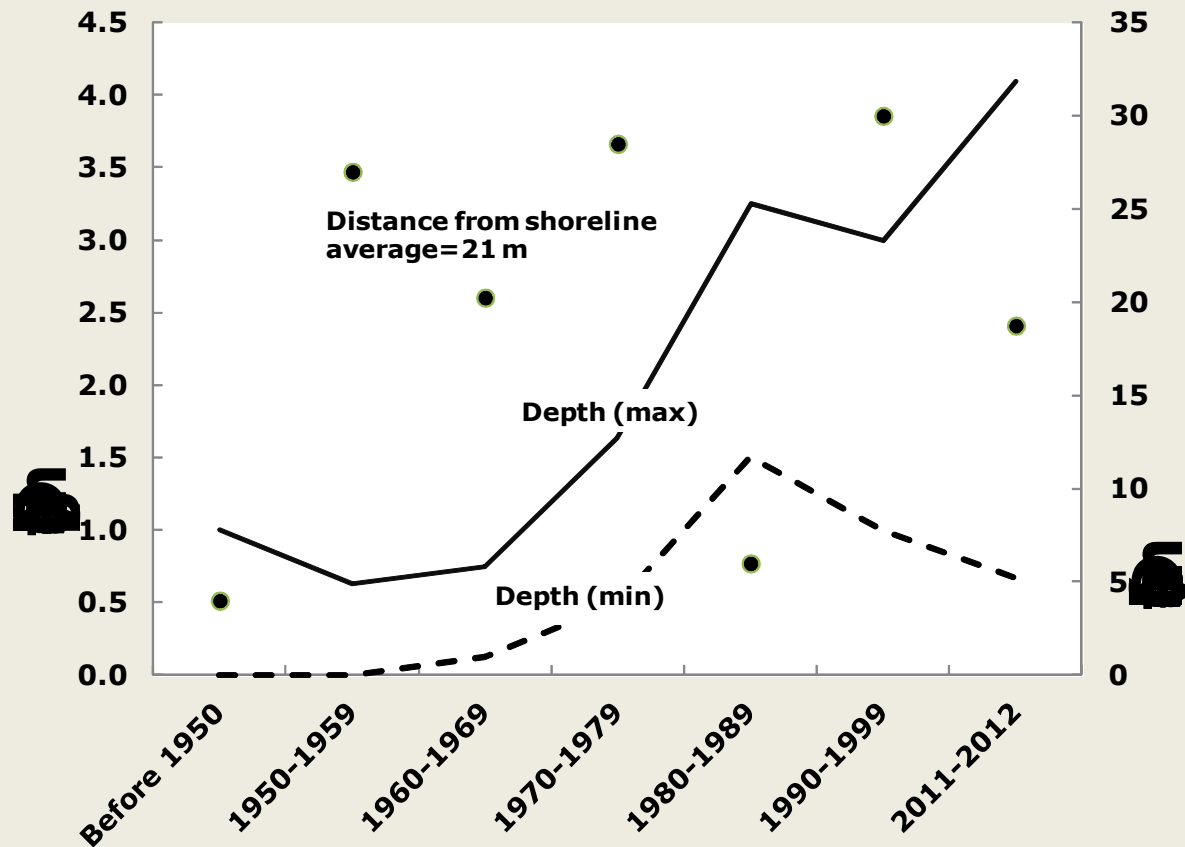
- questionnaire provided by Annadel Cabanban improved with collective experiences of M.P. Saniano and P.M.S. Yap who conducted similar discussion groups for their M.Sc. theses;
- extract information on decadal changes in amount and composition of gleaned catch.





Preliminary results: composition of catch

- Mollusks consist half of the gleaned catch, followed by crustaceans and echinoderms, i.e., benthos. Fish and others make up almost 20% of the catch, in general, but these are incidental catches.



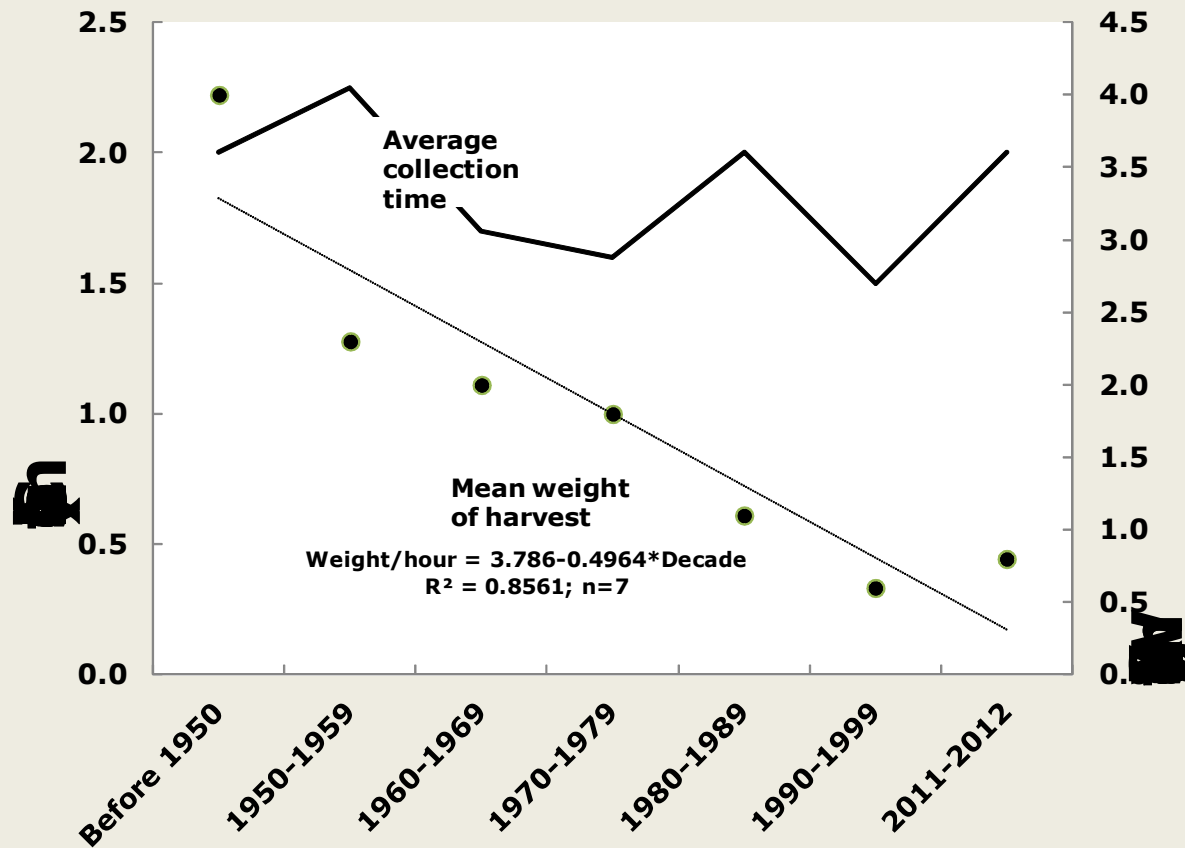
Preliminary results:

depth / distance from shore

- Responses indicated an increasing trend to glean not only on the exposed part of the shore bottom, but also in deeper areas where skin diving with a mask is necessary.

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Preliminary results: collection time and harvest

- Average collection time hovers between 1.5-2.5 hours. However, the associated weight per unit of effort of the harvest has considerably decreased over time.



Other results

- Mabineños consume their gleaned harvest;
- Very little is sold, and only when requested to target a certain species, e.g., cowry shells for decorative purposes;



Other results

- Before the 1960s, gleaning was sometimes the sole source of protein for families, notably those living in the mountains who do not have access to the sea;



Other results

- Increase in the capacity of gaining an income, e.g., from farming, ranching or expatriation, changed gleaning from a necessity to a recreational activity;



Other results

- Tourism contributed to the changes in the structure of the shoreline, which is perceived as the main factor in habitat loss and associated decrease in gleaned catch.



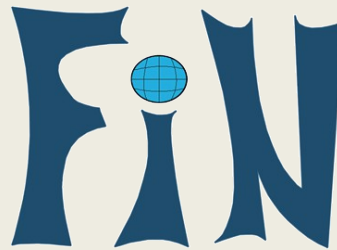
Other results

- In the late 1980s and early 1990s, intrusion of migrant fishers and tourists wetting their hands and feet to experience gleaning are among the factors singled out to cause an increase in the number of gleaners and thus causing the decrease in gleaned catch.



Acknowledgements

- The people of the 10 coastal barangays of Mabini, Batangas who patiently responded to our questions.
- Ms Aida Mendoza, the “bantay dagat” member who organized the community gatherings.
- Dr Cornelia E Nauen of Mundus maris who brought us to MARE.
- This is an scientific collaboration between the Sea Around Us Project and the Pew Charitable Trusts.



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