



The abalone of the Philippines

About 100 species of abalone are distributed worldwide, with the larger species generally found in temperate zones whereas smaller species are found in tropical and arctic regions. Ten species are commercially important, and mainly occur in Korea, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, United States and China. There are two common species reported in the Philippines, *Haliotis asinina* and *H. varia*. Of the two, *H. asinina* has the potential for culture due to its larger size and body weight. *H. asinina* is one of the priority species for study at SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department.

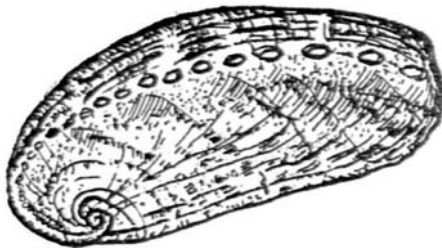
Haliotis asinina

Known as the donkey's ear abalone, ass-ear abalone or *lapas*.

Common in Tawi-tawi, Bohol, Panagatan, and eastern Samar.

Have broad, flattened asymmetrical shells, and large fleshy bodies. Its head is greenish, its marginal frill green with blotches of dark green and brown. Its foot is creamy with brown markings.

Live on the underside of corraline rocks during the day but comes out to feed at night.



Haliotis varia

Known as *lapas*.

Abundant in Cagayan and Capiz.

Shells have uneven spiral ridges, strong growth lines, radial folds and raised holes. These may also be mottled white and / or black. Heads and mantles are greenish while feet and muscles are whitish.

Found at 1-2 meter deep water (24-30°C, 32.5-35 ppt).



Abalone live in sheltered bays with good water movement and that are far from estuaries. Fishers harvest abalone by detaching these by hand or by hooks.

Abalone have blue-gray mother-of-pearls that can be made into buttons, buckles, inlays, ornamental ash trays, jewelry. The shell is used in traditional medicine. The viscera can be made into good quality glue.

Abalone meat is a highly priced delicacy, and is about 20% protein. It is usually processed (dried, canned in brine, smoked in oil, seasoned and roasted) or eaten fresh. In Panagatan, middlemen buy abalone from farmers at P60 per kg, dry the abalone, and sell these at a much higher price. - **MTC**

REFERENCE

Primer on abalone: its nature and uses. 1991. Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Research and Development. Los Baños, Laguna. 5 pages.