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# Reviving kapis fishery along Panay Gulf

Aquaculture Department, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center

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# Reviving *Kapis* Fishery along Panay Gulf



Aquaculture Department  
Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center  
Tigbauan, Iloilo

## What is Kapis shell?

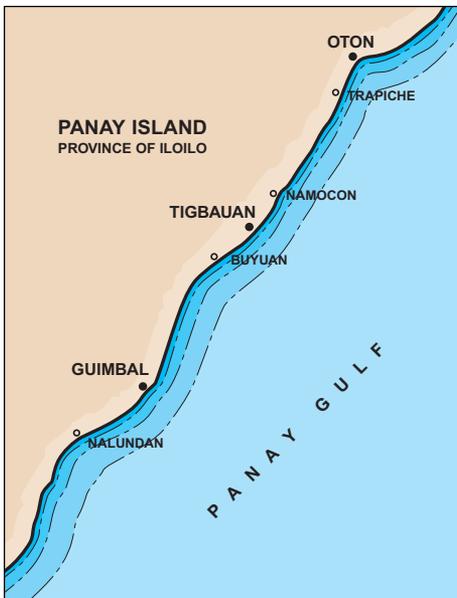
The *Kapis* shell (Scientific name: *Placuna placenta*; local name: *lampirong*) is a bivalve mollusk with translucent shells and a very small body. The only source of this shell is wild stocks that used to abound in the coastal waters of Oton and Tigbauan.

In the Philippines, *kapis* has great economic importance. Its shells are raw materials for shellcraft products and are exported to the USA, Japan, West Germany and other European countries. In 1991, *kapis* ranked fifth among the major fishery exports of the Philippines, raking in US\$ 35 M.



## About SEAFDEC-LGU project on Kapis shells

Being an open-access type of fishery, harvest of *kapis* shells was not regulated. In fact, it was over-exploited resulting to the depletion of natural beds. The last of the abundant harvests of *kapis* was in 1987 and disappeared thereafter.



Breeding sites of *Kapis* shells in Iloilo, west central Philippines

To revive the industry along Panay Gulf, the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center Aquaculture Department (SEAFDEC AQD) through the Technology Verification and Extension Section (TVES) collaborated with the Local Government Units of Oton, Tigbauan and Guimbal. The collaboration was very much welcomed by the three municipalities because it would also provide livelihood for the fisherfolks. Aside from having another source of food for the coastal communities, revival of *kapis* will also bring back the lucrative business of shellcraft manufacturers in Panay and consequently bring in dollars for the country.



Efforts to revive the *kapis* industry

Based on results of verification trials conducted in the coastal waters fronting AQD's laboratories in Tigbauan, *kapis* breeders from Himamaylan and Hinigaran in Negros Occidental were stocked in Namucon, Tigbauan in October and Trapiche, Oton and Nalundan, Guimbal in November 1999.



Recent sampling showed the occurrence of larvae and juveniles that may be harvestable by mid-2000. However, we discourage early harvesting until the year 2001, as we need these new stocks to grow and multiply until there is abundant supply in the areas.

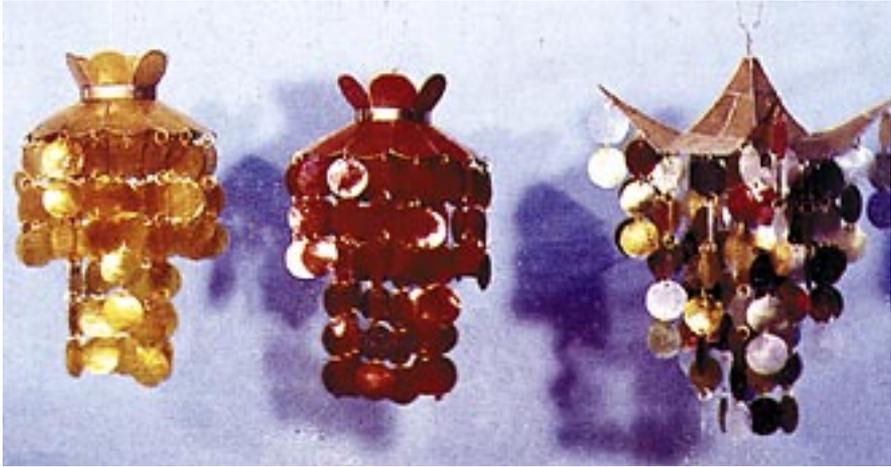


In view of these, SEAFDEC and the municipalities of Oton, Tigbauan and Guimbal are appealing for the cooperation of the coastal residents to protect the sites along Panay Gulf. Meetings and dialogues have been conducted with Oton and Tigbauan folks to enjoin them to guard the sites from destructive fishers (trawl, hulbot-hulbot, etc.) to sustain the stock enhancement program. Such program may also be replicated in suitable areas nationwide.

We must do our share.

Let us show our concern to help revive the  
*Kapis* shell industry in Panay!

Report to your nearest Bantay Dagat unit any activity harmful to the *kapis* stocks.



Uses of *kapis* shells

## Other information about Kapis shells

There are 27 natural *kapis* beds in the Philippines. The major sources are Sapián Bay and Roxas (Capiz); Oton and Tigbauan (Iloilo); San Miguel Bay, (Camarines); Hinígaran and Pontevedra (Negros Occidental); Mangarín Bay (Mindoro Occidental); and Pangil Bay (Misamis Occidental). *Kapis* shells are found in muddy or sandy-muddy substratum in shallow areas or up to 100 m deep. They thrive best in areas with bluish-soft mud (lab-no) or slightly sandy-muddy substratum. *Kapis* shells are filter feeders, and they need areas with high primary production devoid of macro-benthic algae and eel grass community.

Seedlings are usually collected during the 1st half of the year while bigger sizes and adults in the second half. They are usually found in bays, coves, and estuaries but not in sandy and or coralline areas.

*Kapis* shells can be cultured/transplanted in areas with the following physico-chemical parameters:

Water temperature	:	24.5 - 30°C
Salinity	:	18 - 38 ppt
pH	:	6.4 - 7.7
Dissolved oxygen	:	2.5 - 5 ml/l O <sub>2</sub> /L

The larvae are planktonic for about 14 days. Juveniles and adult *kapis* are benthic and sedentary. They are incapable of spatial movement since newly settled juveniles have only feeble locomotor capability. In view of the inherent inability of post juveniles to move substantial distances, transplantation of segments of the population of a crowded area to a less densely populated one is beneficial. Density should be limited to approximately 150-200/m<sup>2</sup> (1.5-2.0 M seedlings per ha) to allow normal growth and prevent overcrowding.

*Kapis* are gathered by handpicking in shallow areas. We strongly discourage the use of compressors, dredging and raking in deeper areas as these are destructive.

**Down with destructive fishing!  
Let's revive the *Kapis* industry!**

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