

THE SHELLFISH NETWORK  
NEWSLETTER, Winter 2004/5



NO 34

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Aims: 1) To increase public awareness of the fact that shellfish are living creatures capable of experiencing pain and stress.  
2) To stop the cruelty involved in, and eventually to bring an end to, the slaughter of shellfish for human consumption and other abuses.



At a time of such sadness and devastation it is hard to say Happy New Year, but we wish you all the best anyway.

And while you folks out there are still donating, supporting and generally being brilliant for the shellfish, and I know you will have given all the help you can to the disaster fund, you might like to help in any way you can to support the animals affected by this terrible tsunami disaster. I have a list of websites, e-mails and addresses for your interest. Thanks to every one of you. For further information, contact me – Julie.

<http://www.ivu.org> (International Vegetarian Union)

[www.flf.org](http://www.flf.org) (Food for Life)

[www.soidogfoundation.org](http://www.soidogfoundation.org) c/o 57/61 Laguna Golf Villas, Moo 4, Srisoonthorn Road Choengthale, Phuket 83110, Thailand

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Blue Cross of India c/o Dr. Chinny Krishna, 1-A eldams Road, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600018, India

Compassionate Crusaders Trust, c/o Mr Debasis Charkabarti, 1/13A Olai chandi road, Calcutta 700037, India

Visakha SPCA c/o Mr pradeep kumar Nath, 26-150200 Main Road Visakhapatnam 530001 India.

[anmlpepl@whidbey.com](mailto:anmlpepl@whidbey.com) (Animal People, PO Box 960, Clinton WA 98236 USA)

Wildlife S.O.S. ®  
D-210 Defence Colony, New Delhi – 110024 india

But here is a good news story. Rescued from the tsunami on the coast of Kenya, a baby hippo found comfort, snuggling up to a hundred year old turtle in a reserve of Mombasa. *Source: le Soir 6. 1. 05*

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Once again it has been a very busy season for us; for Joe and me here in the UK and Pippa working her socks off in Australia. Pippa has sent me some information from the Northern Territory of Australia Mud Crab Fishery Management Plan, which came into force on 29 November 1995. It is quite comprehensive and covers those crabs which may not be taken, such as 'berried' (egg carrying) female mud crabs, minimum sizes of catch and who may or may not hold a licence. It also describes the kind of pot that may be used to trap the crabs. Pippa has had meetings with various MPs and is building up a lot of interest in the welfare of shellfish. She has also been in correspondence with the Queensland Dept. of Primary Industries and Fisheries and the Australian RSPCA who are very supportive. Standards of welfare for shellfish are quite high in some states. Pippa keeps us posted constantly and is tireless in her efforts to help the creatures.



As you know, we sent in a written submission to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) concerning the draft Animal

Welfare Bill now being discussed, and gave an oral submission on the welfare of shellfish, including the concept of pain in invertebrates. We are delighted to be able to tell you that the Committee believes that a strong case has been made for the inclusion of octopus, squids and cuttlefish (the RSPCA submission) and of crabs, lobsters and crayfish (our submission) in the draft Bill's definition of 'animal'. This means that, if included, they will be treated as food animals and not as 'fruits of the sea'. Stunning before death would therefore be compulsory. (This may not seem much, but it is a huge step forward in terms of shellfish. They have never before been given any consideration. And we are hoping that, by including a 'pain' clause, all invertebrates will be given more consideration than in the past. All we can hope for at present! However, once thought is given to these creatures, it may spread. We can but hope. Ed.)

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We also had a very positive meeting with the Shellfish Association of Great Britain. There were about 16 members present and all but one were very helpful and interested in our proposals for the welfare of the animals. Again, a tiny step forward, but at least it's not backwards!

And on 30<sup>th</sup> November I was able to give a short interview on shellfish to the radio station Passion for the Planet, a health and environment focused radio. The interviewer, Chantal, was very supportive and asked all the right questions! Ed.



### TOYS AND AQUARIA

Formative Fun (remember Sea Monkeys?) is now trading under the name of Fun Junction and is selling Triops kits. Triops are crustacea that look like miniature horseshoe crabs. Their life expectancy is 20 to 90 days and grow from seed to about 3 inches. This is being sold for ages from 6 upwards. Please write a polite letter to Customer Services, Fun Junction Head Office, Paultons Golf Centre, Old Salisbury Road, Ower, Hants SO51 6AN, explaining that

although these creatures do not live very long, they deserve a better life than being a momentary plaything for children, who get bored very quickly. Again, as with the Sea Monkeys, the creatures are likely to be neglected and to starve. This is simply not the way to teach children to care for our fellow creatures.

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Bedford Animal Rights Group is challenging Bedford's bid to bring the world's largest aquarium to the town. The National Institute for Research into Aquatic Habitats said the science centre will attract 2 million visitors a year. But there is a great deal of evidence now that fish suffer stress in aquaria. (A full report has been published by The Captive Animals' Protection Society, CAPS, PO Box 573, Preston PR1 9WW) If you have time, please write to Bedford County Council politely asking them to drop the idea of an aquarium.

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A fresh water aquarium and Fresh Water Life Centre is being planned at Drumkinnon Tower, Loch Lomond National Park by the Merlin Entertainments Group who run Sea Life Centres. Star attraction is to be a family of otters. It is quite likely that this will be a dumping ground for surplus otters for other 'attractions' and in a few years they will be looking for new homes for more of the otters which can't be released into the wild. The creatures are to be bred to lose their fear of people! Please write to Environmental Services, West Dunbartonshire Council, Council Offices, Clydebank G81 1TG. Also to Bill Dalrymple, C.E. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Headquarters, The Old Station, Balloch Roac, Balloch G83 8BF. Ask that the National Park authority do not co-operate with any live animal attraction at Drumkinnon Tower.

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And finally, to test your patience to the limit, the Rainbow Co-op store in Carlton Colville, Suffolk has installed a live bait machine outside for the use of fishermen. Apparently the store manager complained but was overruled by Head Office! Please write and explain that these poor little

creatures suffer horribly already, and this hardly fits in with the ethics that the Co-op keep telling us about. Jason Beattie is the Business Manager and David Simpkin the Area Manager. Head Office address is: Burch House, Saville Road, Westwood, Peterborough PE3 7PR.

### PRAWNS

An article in the *Telegraph Weekend*, 23/10/04, discusses how to buy prawns with a 'clear conscience'! It explains that tiger prawns come mainly from environmentally unsound methods, and goes on to say which can be eaten without upsetting environmentalists. It states 'There is so much to love about the spring-fleshed warm-water creatures'. (I agree. Let's leave them to carry on living and being lovable! Ed.) + But in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 18. 9. 04, an article states that 75% of the world's prawn stock is found in the UK, mostly round the Scottish coast. It is the mainstay of the trawling fleet on the west coast.



### CRABS, LOBSTERS AND CRAYFISH

'You will never make a crab walk straight' (Aristophanes, Greek playwright.) + In *Times Magazine* (?) 17/07/04, Gordon Ramsay says (about fresh crab on holiday) 'A good live crab will ...have extremely strong reflexes. A flaccid crab is a half-dead crab. And that's no good as the minute it begins to die, an enzyme is released that starts to break down the meat, making it wet and lacklustre.' He goes on to say how to cook and prepare it. Not good reading! + In another article in *The Times*, 21. 10. 04, a pair of hairy green mud crabs, crowned King and Queen of their kind at an annual seafood 'beauty pageant' (sic) in Hong Kong, has been auctioned for more than £14,000 – a reputed record for crustaceans. The winning pair may be stuffed rather than cooked! The money was donated to a women's charity.



John Andrews, a Mearns man, is alleged to have introduced North American signal crayfish (an alien species, dangerous to our own) into the wild. (See Newsletter No. 33) It is alleged that the crayfish could have spread into local rivers. The North Esk is a salmon-fishing river and the court heard that signal crayfish can dislodge salmon from shelters during winter, leaving them vulnerable to predators. But it seems that the crayfish were only released into the Drumtochty Estate ponds, and Mr Andrews walked free. *Source: P & J 17. 9. 04.* + Digby, the giant lobster, has been released back into the sea. Chef Geoff Dixon said, 'When you see something so magnificent you can't be the one to end it's life.' (So size does matter? Ed.) Digby was almost ten times the size of a normal lobster. Some lobster facts: they are mainly nocturnal. They eat other shellfish. Their blood is clear and they can shed or regrow claws and legs, devouring old shell parts. The biggest ever caught weighed more than 44 pounds. *Source: Daily Mirror 15. 10. 04*



### ENVIRONMENT

Shellfish growers are to press the Scottish Executive to spend millions of pounds to improve the quality of coastal waters, treating sewage waste. They claim that their industry has less environmental impact - (it doesn't say than farmed fin-fish, but this is the implication. Ed.). Doug McCleod of the Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers said: 'The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency has proposed a seven year capital plan to clean up discharges of sewage into coastal waters.' (Can't say I'd fancy eating anything from there at present, then! Ed.). *Source: P & J 16. 9. 04* + In a report the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) says that 2004 has been the most catastrophic breeding season on record for seabirds along UK coasts. It says that industrial fishing to supply fishmeal and oil is barely sustainable and imperils the whole marine food web.

Industrial fishing catches millions of tonnes of small fish which congregate in dense shoals; species such as sandeels, sprats and anchovies. These are turned into meal and oil, much of it to feed farmed fish. The fish caught are a key part of the marine food chain, but the RSPB says we know little about the effects of industrial fishing. The report, *Assessment of the Sustainability of Industrial Fisheries Producing Fish Meal and Fish Oil*, was compiled for the RSPB by Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd and the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In addition the RSPB says that climate change is making matters worse, with some industrial fish species starving as the seas warm. Dr Euan Dunn, of the RSPB says 'the sandeels lack plankton, which are being scuppered by rising sea temperatures.'

*Source: BBC News 17. 9. 04.* However, the Fishmeal Information Network (FIN), an industry initiative set up by the Grain and Feed Trade Association, says that the report was unfair in its criticism. A joint statement by the UK Association of Fishmeal Manufacturers and FIN said the fishmeal sector fully supported responsible fishing (sic). 'It has a long and impressive track record – led by the governments of feed fishing countries – of implementing rigorous stock protection measures,' they said.

*Source: P & J 25. 9. 04*

+ Scientists also fear that global warming, which has led to the dramatic decline in stocks of krill (shrimp-like crustacea) is going to cause trouble for seals, whales and penguins, for whom this is the key food.

*Source: Ind. 4. 11. 04.*



+ The shipping industry Code of Practice requires ships to discharge ballast waters into oceanic waters that are a minimum of 200 metres in depth and 200 miles offshore. This causes the ballast to be mixed with the colder oceanic water, thereby limiting the ability of any 'alien' organisms to survive. But it seems that this is routinely ignored by shipping operators in order to save delays and money. A typical figure for large

container ships discharging into UK port waters is 1 million gallons per ship per discharge. The potential impacts were said to be one of the four greatest threats to our environment. Some alien invaders will compete with and potentially eradicate native species and examples were given where such events are already happening:

- #harmful algal bloom, some toxic, causing elimination of existing life forms.
- #shellfish suffering toxic poisoning in Southampton Water
- #interference with fisheries and local features
- #Chinese crabs burrowing into the banks of the Thames
- #cholera being passed from India to Sth America. This is not a problem for the UK yet, but a potential for the future as global warming takes effect.

*Source: BBC 'Countryfile', November 2004*

+ And, according to the *BBC News*, 10/10/04, farmers are being warned to take care over sheep dipping to prevent crayfish from being poisoned. Earlier in the year several thousand white-clawed crayfish were killed in two separate pollution incidents in the River Lyvennet and River Mind. Jonathan Shatwell, the Environment Agency manager for Cumbria said, 'These crayfish are very sensitive to a range of pollutants, including those released from sheep dipping and similar activities. Pollution from sheep dip is a national problem but in Cumbria prevention is especially vital because of the risk to the white clawed crayfish.'



+ There has been concern that a new anti-submarine sonar could harm marine wildlife and has cast a shadow over sea trials of the Royal Navy's most potent frigate. The controversy surrounds her long-range 2087 sonar, which pumps low-frequency noise into the ocean to detect enemy subs. Environmental groups fear the device could damage the highly sensitive hearing of whales and dolphins. Defence chiefs admit there is a 'potential' risk of harm to wildlife

but insist action has been taken to prevent it happening. *Source: the Journal Series, 28. 10. 04* (I was very concerned about this and wrote to the Defence Procurement Agency, Ministry of Defence, who responded with a very full explanatory letter and their CD of the Report on 'Sonar 2087 and the Environment'. The letter states that all Sonar 2087 operations have been closely monitored and have never been linked to any incident involving stranding of marine mammals. The letter also says that 'Should new evidence be found which suggests a link between the current method of deploying Sonar 2087 and a detrimental effect on marine life then we would, as a matter of course, consider what changes to the current mitigation measures should be made.' The letter was very polite and the Report comprehensive. I was impressed and delighted to have such a swift and useful response. Ed.)

+The 13<sup>th</sup> Convention on International trade in endangered species (Cites) summit in October included marine life. Controls were placed on sales of the humphead wrasses, a giant coral reef fish under threat from the live aquarium industry and from exploitation for food. Export quotas of caviar were also slashed. *Source: BBC News 14. 10. 04.*

+ And at the International Whaling Commission (IWC) annual meeting in July, among other issues, #the moratorium on commercial whaling was maintained, #the Southern Ocean Sanctuary was retained, #adoption by consensus of a Resolution highlighting the plight of the Western North Pacific Gray Whale, which is in danger of extinction and threatened by oil and gas development in its principal feeding area round Sakhalin Island, part of the Russian Federation, #adoption of a Resolution on a forward work plan for the possible completion of the Revised Management Scheme which keeps our key interest in play and makes no concessions to the pro-whalers, #adoption of a resolution highlighting the need for continued improvement in Whale Killing methods. *Source: DEFRA, with thanks to Preserve, the Isle of Wight Animal Preservation & Action Group*



+Greenpeace is running a campaign to help dolphins and porpoises which are being washed ashore in many areas, killed in fishing nets, the victims of bycatch. If you are interested in joining the Greenpeace fight, they can be contacted at Canonbury Villas, London N1 2PN.

+ I have a letter from the Japanese Embassy, in response to my questioning the eating of dolphins, and this says that '...dolphins are some of the precious renewable marine resources...with regard to cruelty, Japanese fishermen are careful to minimize suffering as much as possible and cause as little pain to dolphins as possible.' It goes on to say, 'I would very much appreciate if you would consider carefully the bigger picture and in particular examine the reality in your own country regarding what you eat daily, before criticizing a foreign country for its meat producing methods and food you may never have sampled.' This, of course, may be true, but I don't think it makes it right to eat any creature. However, once again, the letter was very polite and comprehensive. It did not dismiss my arguments out of hand as some replies from our own MPs have done on such issues as hunting or vivisection! Ed.



### FISH

According to *The Daily Telegraph, 18. 10. 04*, even fishermen are calling for EU ministers to halt the 'insane' slaughter of thousands of tons of small fish at sea as a result of perverse European Union regulations. Phil Dell, a skipper from Fleetwood, had spent 15 days showing government scientists that around 90% of fish caught are thrown over the side dead as 'discards' because of the nets the EU says must be used. However, DEFRA has done nothing about the issue since it was raised at the beginning of the year. The root cause of the problem is EU regulations, set by ministers last December, that say fishermen

must use nets with 80mm mesh and not 110mm mesh – which is usually used to catch cod – or forfeit five days a month at sea. Mr Dell took his trawler out to fishing grounds to demonstrate the extent of ‘discarding’. The net came up bursting with tiny juvenile plaice, way below the minimum landing size of 27cm. The net also contained lesser spotted dogfish, jellyfish, gurnards and a single lobster. Some 95% of the fish had to go back, dead, over the side. This was repeated, at the shadow fisheries minister, Owen Paterson’s, request, with the same results.

+ When five fishing boats were an hour off the Yorkshire coast, they received warning of severe weather. They decided to head for Whitby, but, since each had a catch of cod, they had, under EU rules, to give notice to the fisheries inspectors of DEFRA. The skipper of one boat rang the DEFRA, Edinburgh call-centre, only to be told that, under EC Regulation 4231/2004, the boats could not enter Whitby harbour for four hours (a provision designed for the convenience of officials). Since the tide would then be too low, the boats would have to stay out till morning. They were at severe risk, so made for safety anyway. If they had obeyed the law a dozen fishermen could have lost their lives. DEFRA issued a statement blaming the Edinburgh call-centre which ‘did not follow correct procedures’. But reading the Regulation 4231/2004, it ‘allows for no exemptions from the four-hour rule’. *Source: Sunday Telegraph 17. 10. 04*

+North sea cod stocks may now be so low they may never recover, said one scientist, according to the *Daily telegraph, 19. 10. 04*. The warning came as EU experts called for a ban on cod fishing in the North Sea, Irish Sea and west of Scotland.

+The numbers of North Atlantic eels are dangerously close to collapse, say the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, which researches North Atlantic marine life. American and Japanese eels face a similar fate. Scientists cannot explain the decline, but the effect of global warming on eels’ breeding could be a factor. Miran Aprahamian, a fisheries scientist with the

Environment Agency said ‘...there are several contributing factors, one being an increase in the Asian market over the past 20 years. Another is the increase in dams, preventing [the eels’] effective migration.’

*Source: Ind, 1. 11. 04.*

+Fish, believed to have been imported from Uganda by European fishermen in the 1950s are destroying Lake Victoria’s ecosystem by eating the smaller fish that kept algae growth in check. Despite generating large profits for fish factory owners, the Nile Perch will eventually leave the lake barren, as algae limits the amount of oxygen that it can absorb. A film, ‘Darwin’s Nightmare’, made by Austrian film-maker Hubert Sauper, tells the story of Tanzanian fishermen whose livelihood is close to being destroyed after the introduction of the Nile Perch. *Source: Times (?), 2., 11. 04*



If anyone is not on my e-mailing list, and would like to be added, please let me know. It is quicker and cheaper! Julie

#### To The Unknown

Hope far-flung yet to hand  
The dimension beyond us in sea or land  
The many believe the answer is clear  
With scientific conceit in their rule of fear

And daily we see new conceptions arise  
As if they can hold this prize  
But beyond the stars or ocean depth  
The secret dwells, us inept.

Some see this as their final hope  
While in other beliefs they grope  
And of late hidden in the life they daily kill  
Nor in their exertions will they be still

Years cannot counter this knowledge rare  
Nor their searches to end despair  
Before the present books to tear  
The mysteries are always there  
For memory of the living life of the seas or air.

John Amsden