

THE SHELLFISH NETWORK
NEWSLETTER, Summer 2005



NO 36

Springside, Forest Road, East Horsley
Surrey KT24 5AZ

Tel/Fax: 01483 282 995

e-mail: info@shellfishnetwork.org.uk
www.shellfishnetwork.org.uk



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.



After a couple of spells in hospital (fine now), I have not been able to check on all the horrible advertisements using fish etc, or whether all the supermarkets are still selling live animals. Still, there is no harm in contacting them all again, politely asking if they have taken notice of our concerns! An easy way is simply to check the fish stalls etc in your local supermarket. Sainsbury told me that they would pass on my comments to their buyers and that they are '...confident they will take them into account for the future'. A letter from Tesco says much the same to one of our members. Contact me for any addresses of Head Offices if you want to write again.

You are still sending me loads of info, donations etc. so thanks to everyone. Keep the info coming!



I often find amongst children that caring for non-humans instils in them compassion for all living beings. I spent a day (one of several) at a primary school in my area where we had a rabbit/fish day.

1

Nothing could have been gentler than the way the children cared for Tango, the lop-eared rabbit. And they listened eagerly and answered questions on marine life with just as much care. This is the way towards a better world. There are so many caring young people, but when do they get in the news? Julie.



LOBSTERS, CRAYFISH AND LANGOUSTINE

+There are still arguments raging over whether shellfish feel pain. *The Aberdeen Press & Journal* 16.2.05 and *The Guardian* 8.2.05 published articles on the Norwegian findings, indicating that lobsters are not capable of feeling anything much, but having read the paper carefully, I find that there is still evidence that they may feel pain! So much for journalism. I also have 65 other papers on pain in invertebrates giving the benefit of the doubt to the animals. We are still working on getting shellfish, at least lobsters, crab, crayfish and molluscs such as octopus included in the Scottish and Westminster Animal Welfare Bills. A long hard 'haul', but we won't give up easily. + The Lobster Liberation Front (LLF) were responsible for cutting fishermen's nets. *Source: Independent, 21. 4. 05.*

+A particularly nasty piece in *Sunday Mail, Night & Day, 29. 5. 05*, - Tom Parker Bowles discusses the American Signal crayfish. He says it is 'fair game...the strutting job of the crayfish world' He goes on to say that Jane Grigson recommends attaching a rotting sheep's head to a piece of string, leaving it in a likely place then hauling it in, full of crayfish. 'They must always be cooked alive. I freeze them for 30 minutes to dull the senses before plunging them into boiling, seasoned water...' He adds 'The crawfish (American name for crayfish) boil is a messy, joyous affair; vast quantities are cooked in highly seasoned water, then emptied on to the table, ready to be ripped apart with the hands, peeled and sucked for every last sweet morsel of flesh.' (And we are termed 'extremists! Ed.)

+A Northern Ireland-based seafood processing company has transferred its Scottish scampi processing operations from Nairn to Inverness. They hope to increase the workforce from 6 to 40. *Source: P & J 31.3.-5*



CRABS

+A rare brown crab was found near Muckle Roe, Shetland, with an extra claw instead of one of its mouth parts. Experts realised that the extra claw was not functional. It seems that this can occur during regeneration when the cells which contain information required to grow a maxilliped (jaw-foot) are lost or mutated, and produce a claw instead. *Source: P & J 10.3.05*

+Felixstow Council has banned the traditional pastime of crabbing because of fears over health and safety. It says that children could easily slip and fall on the wet jetty where the Deben Ferry docks. *Source: BBC News 15.4.05*



SHELLFISH INDUSTRY

+The largest mussel farming business in Shetland has been sold to the Oban-based Isle of Shuna shellfish. *Source: P & J 17.3.05*

+Multimillionaire Sir Cameron Mackintosh has objected to plans to modify a shellfish farm because it would spoil the view from his Highland retreat. A mussel farm sought permission for two additional longlines at Ardingh Point in Loch Nevis. Andrew Aitchison, factor for Sir Cameron's Estates said that the latest proposals would intrude on local amenities and would be a danger to marine traffic. He said last winter's gales destroyed a significant part of the development and caused a danger to shipping. *Source: P & J 15.3.05*

+ A new prawn trawl net design has been launched on the market which is found to reduce significantly the bycatch of white fish. *Source: P & J 9.4.05* (Presumably it doesn't reduce the prawn catch? And don't be fooled, this is not because they care about the white fish, except to preserve stocks – and we all know why that is! Ed)

+ Strong gales and big tides in Scotland in April led to shellfish landing taking a slump. *Source: P & J 30.4.05* (Oh dear! Ed)

+The Scottish Tories have repeated their call for changes in the Scottish Executive's policy on amnesic shellfish poisoning (ASP) testing. But Rhona Brankin, deputy minister for health and community care told the parliament that the orders were required under European law and were put in place to protect consumers' health, as the presence of toxins in shellfish could cause problems. (You

bet they can! ASP is caused by domoic acid which is produced by marine diatoms and can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal cramps and loss of short-term memory. The effects on memory loss may persist. Ed.) *Source: P & J 30.4.05* But...the Food standards agency Scotland were forced to rethink on ASP. Tory health spokeswoman Nanette Milne said the move to end-product testing would avoid the closure of fishing grounds. She added: 'the livelihoods of shellfish fishermen and the future of Scotland's multimillion-pound shellfish industry were put at risk by procedures which closed huge areas around the Scottish coast for scallop fishing.' *Source: P & J 19.5.05.* (So, presumably, this matters more than the health of the consumers? Yes, of course it does, silly me! Ed)

+Shetland Smokehouse returned from the European Seafood Exposition in Brussels after winning the world's top seafood award. They won the award for their new line in non-dairy seafood paté! *Source: P & J 5.5.05*



+A new association is being considered which would represent the views of the UK whelk industry. All those involved in the whelk industry, from fishermen to processors are being invited to come along and have their say on whether they would like to form this association. *Source: P & J 13/25.5.05* (Surely whelks should form a similar association to represent their views? Perhaps the two could get together...Ed)

+Shellfish farmers have urged the Scottish Executive to take a look at its support for aquaculture in the wake of the latest job cuts in salmon farming. The Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers (ASSG) [sic] said the executive should support shellfish farming as a more sustainable alternative that was more suited to creating jobs in remote areas. *Source: P & J 14.5.05* (Isn't there something else people can do instead of turning from killing one set of creatures to another? Or am I just a dear little naïve white-haired old granny? Well, I am, though I'm not so sure about 'dear or little', but we won't go into that! Ed)



ENVIRONMENT

+The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution has called for commercial fishing to be banned in 30% of UK waters. It states that the sea should be treated in the same way as endangered land habitats and the policies which consistently give priority to fishing should end. But the European Commission has ignored the report and has dropped plans to create no-fishing zones.

Instead it gave priority to the economic interests of the fishing industry. Global demand for fish has doubled in 30 years and up to 78% of fisheries are now exploited to the limit. And yet these very same fish are contaminated by the pollutants we dump in the sea – mercury, dioxins, PCBs and other toxins. *Source: VIVA Life Spring 2005*

+BBC 2's programme 'Costing the Earth' investigated the safety of chemicals in the environment and how they could be altering the behaviour of wild animals. The little stickleback fish lives under constant threat from predators and many times a day it will have to decide whether it is worth breaking cover to get at food. Just how bold they are depends, it seems, on what kind of water they were brought up in. Alison Bell from Glasgow University has reared sticklebacks in water that contains tiny concentrations of a synthetic oestrogen – the kind of level of pollution that might be found in the environment. She found they were significantly more willing to take risks than those that were reared in pure water. This work is one of a growing number of studies showing that animal behaviour can be influenced by environmental chemicals. *Source: BBC News 29.4.05*

+From March 2000 to September 2001 110 samples of retail shrimp from six provinces of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam were collected and examined for the prevalence of Salmonella. Salmonella was isolated from 24.5% of the shrimp samples. The predominant serovars (distinguished by a common set of antigens) of the isolates were Salmonella Weltevreden, Salmonella Tennessee and Salmonella Dessau. *Source: Dept. of Vet. Medicine, Coll. Of Agriculture, Cantho Univ. Vietnam.*



'SEAFOOD'

+This time Tom Parker Bowles talks about crabs. He says '...always buy them live. You are looking

for claw-waving, fiery-eyed aggression, rather than a tired resignation to its fate... As for cooking them, I put them in a freezer for an hour to send them into a deep sleep. I prefer this to impaling their nerve cords with a skewer; it's apparently the best way to do it but I'm just too squeamish.' (Wuzza! At least he admits it! Perhaps he could cook something else instead? Marinated Tofu with seasonal vegetables, sauté potatoes...whoops, sorry, I'm off on vegan food again! Ed) *Source: Sunday Mail 20.1.05*

+An article in the *Daily Mail*, 5.3.05 by Mark Palmer describes staying at the Burj Al Arab, probably the most luxurious hotel in the world. He says, 'It's from the main atrium that you board a submarine when dining at Al Mahara, an underwater seafood restaurant where you practically share your spiced red snapper with a menacing-looking Black Reef shark and a charming Humphead Wrasse.' Suites (there are no 'rooms'), start at £785 a night. (30 thousand children died yesterday from poverty. And the day before that, and the day before that. And 30 thousand will die today. Ed)



+BBCi tells the public that the way to cook lobsters is by placing them live head first into a pan of boiling water. They reckon this is the standard way of cooking and that the lobster dies instantly. *Source: Viva! & vegetarian & Vegan Foundation.* Many thanks for pointing me in that direction. Since lobsters have a brain (ganglion) in their head section and one at each segment of the body, it is more likely that the poor creatures will suffer unspeakable agony before going into shock. It just doesn't bear thinking about. We send our Guidelines on the welfare of shellfish to all these outlets, but I'm not sure how much difference it will make until there is sufficient legislation to cover invertebrates.

+The Scottish businesses at Europe's largest seafood show had an exceptionally busy opening day in Brussels. The bulk of the 26 firms were on the pavilion, among the largest country stands at the show. 'They are displaying a range of wares (sic) from mackerel and herring to prawns and lobsters, said Joe Watson of *P & J* 27.4.05

+And in the *Mail on Sunday*, 1.5.05 Rick Stein tells how he turned sleepy Padstow in Cornwall into Britain's seafood capital and sparked a tourist boom. He goes on to say that the business is moving on with the next generation of the family. 'My son Edward is working in the deli doing all of the fish – he's so happy. (!) ...in charge of cooking all the crabs and picking the crabmeat out'

ADVERTISING

Many of you have pointed out that a lot of advertising uses such things as goldfish in bowls, eating lobsters etc. Every time you see this, please, if you are able, either contact the company involved and explain politely that it is cruel, or let me know and I will do same. The Thomson local has a cat looking at a bowl of goldfish, Renault show a goldfish bowl with a single occupant, and the bowl is on wheels. Orange mobile have large, bewildered and bored goldfish in glass cases in 'holes in the wall'. Pentax show a camera falling into a fish bowl. If you come across any, please complain. The same is often true of dentists and doctors waiting rooms. House of Fraser has glass cases dotted around with exotic fish in them. Let's get cracking and try to stop this. The seas are being bereft of wildlife as it is; there is no need for people to gawp at the poor little prisoners that are left!

+Some good news for a change from The Marine Connection – McDonalds in Sharm el Sheikh have ceased promotion of Dolphinella on their flyers. (see www.marineconnection.org)

+But, sadly, there was an article in, of all things, *The Ecologist*, May 05 on recipes for and cooking of crabs. First they describe these beautiful creatures, then go on to cook them as follows: 'Wash the crab and place in a large pan of fresh water. Bring to the boil and boil for approximately 20 to 25 minutes. Allow the cooked crab to cool slightly before picking the white meat from the claws and the brown meat from the shell.' There are several recipes and an advertisement for Mitch Tonks's cookbook and restaurants. Polite letters please to: Letters, The Ecologist, Unit 18, Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Road, LONDON SW10 0QJ

+Did anyone see David Dimbleby's 'A Picture of Britain', on BBC 2 on 18th of June? I wasn't able to see it, but after showing glorious scenery in Suffolk and beautiful paintings by Constable he suddenly introduced live crabs thrown into boiling

water. Anyone watching it with any sensitivity must have been shocked! (Thanks to Ann for that)



AQUARIA AND SEA LABS

+SEA Lab (Los Angeles) rescues and rehabilitates thousands of animals each year, including rays, octopi, moon jellies, sharks and eels. About 90% of the rescued animals are returned to the wild.

Source: Animal People, May 05

+Captive Animals Protection Society (CAPS) have brought out an aquarium report which has caused the aquarium industry to panic. The Report reveals huge damage to animal health and welfare created by these aquatic zoos.

+CAPS is also continuing to raise objections to London's proposed £80 million aquarium at Silvertown Quay's and has been successful in their campaign to stop the Solomon Islands from the export of dolphins to aquaria.

+Marine Connection has also encouraged Egypt to ban the import of marine mammals to the dolphinarium at Sharm el Sheikh. *Source: Release, (IOW) Summer 05.*

+And Tony Moore of Fight Against Animal Cruelty in Europe (FAACE) condemned plans for a sea life centre in Southport. He said that the aquarium would force marine life out of its natural habitat. He added 'there is no justification for an aquarium, when we have such wonderful video footage of marine life. Aquariums take many of their animals out of the wild and there is a constant need to replace them. Not only does this bring stress to the animals, surely this must be the least appealing out of all the proposed uses of the site.'



FISH

I must tell readers about this strange but true little tail. Well done to the writer!

'Arriving at a southwest national coach-station's busy booking office, I was concerned to see a small Fish-tank with several Fish, in a corner amid chairs, national bus advertisements, leaflets, bustle and banging-doors. I expressed my dismay regarding the unnatural conditions causing fear and distress to the unfortunate Fish, to the counter-clerk.

'On a later occasion I again despaired at the deteriorating conditions for the closely-confined

Fish, and protested at the booking counter. The person responsible for the Fish and tank had left the Company. I emphasised my concern at the neglect the Fish were suffering.

'A subsequent visit now showed a very murky tank without - it appeared - Fish. But I looked through the polluted water, and to my surprise and alarm, a little brown 'rugged-face' Fish was struggling through the murk to the front of the tank. It looked directly, and desperately, at me. Clearly it had been overlooked or abandoned to die alone in appalling conditions. My even stronger response was yet again made at the booking counter. I feared the worst for the abandoned little orphan.

'On my consequent visit to the booking-office, I immediately saw the tank was missing. Two chairs in its position. Fortunately, I found myself attended by a lady clerk one ahead of the queue. I asked, in despair, about the little Fish abandoned in the miserable Fish tank. She smiled and quietly said, 'I HAVE IT'! I expressed my relief and gratitude on behalf of the little fish. She told me 'It is quite safe in a tank with my other Fish; healthy and happy. When I return it will be the first to come to the front of the tank to greet me.'



+ 'Fly-fishing is the new rock'n'roll. So say celebrities such as Eric Clapton, Chris Tarrant and Mike Atherton, who join Ian 'Beefy' Botham in a new TV series to explain why they love the reel life.' Article by Moira Petty in the *Daily Mail Weekend*, 18.6.05. Eric says, 'It's so different to what I do for a living...' (Certainly it is, it's what he does for a killing. Ed.)

+ A Federal appeals court has decided to uphold an earlier decision requiring the operators of five federal dams on the Snake and Columbia rivers to release spills of water to help young salmon on their journey towards the Pacific. The salmon runs have been blocked by the five dams, which generate hydro-electric power. It is estimated that about half the salmon that attempt the journey are lost because of the dams. Source: *Independent*, 23.6.05

+ A banned dye linked to cancer has been found in organic salmon sold at Morrisons supermarket. The farmed salmon contained malachite green and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) said the presence of the banned chemical at any levels in

fresh fish was 'unacceptable'. Source: *Sunday Times*, 5.6.05

+Overfishing has seen numbers of cod in the North Sea drop so low that a crisis is now predicted that will mirror that of Newfoundland's Grand Banks in 1981, when the fishing grounds closed and thousands of fishermen lost their livelihoods. It seems that Birds Eye does not use North Sea cod for its fish fingers, but cod from responsibly managed (according to the Marine Conservation Society) fisheries in Russia, Norway and Alaska. Source: *Daily Telegraph, Weekend Supplement*, 4.6.05 (Has anyone tried 'nonfish fingers'? Much healthier, since they don't contain any toxins, chemicals, heavy metals. fish...Ed.)



In an article on the demise of the bluefin tuna in the *Telegraph Magazine* (no date), Charles Clover reports on how the high demand for the tuna has left both the fish and a 3,000-year-old way of catching them on the brink of extinction. He explains 'The bluefin is the zenith of evolution among fish. It can accelerate faster than a Porsche, swim 60km an hour, produce millions of eggs and live for 20 years.' One spokesperson stated, 'If the bluefin was a mammal not a fish, people would say, "Oh my God, we are destroying it, it is becoming extinct," but because it is a fish they do not care.' And the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) has also yet to confront scientific evidence that the Atlantic bluefin population can no longer be separated into distinct management units for the eastern stock and the western one: some tuna are now known to migrate from one side of the Atlantic to another and there seems to be a proportion that stay in mid-Atlantic in the breeding season.



+ On one day of the Anti Angling Week, after eight years of angling, one angler decided that he would no longer inflict unnecessary pain on fish and packed up his equipment to join the protest! Other anglers soon left too, with their consciences kicking into action. Thanks to Nathan of the Hunt Saboteurs Assn. (HSA)

+ In *People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals* (PETA's) Summer mag. There is an excellent page

on *The Hidden Lives of Fish*. Such things as 'Oxford University's Dr Theresa Burt de Perera has discovered that blind Mexican cave fish...construct "mental maps", which help them detect changes in their surroundings – a task that defeats some "higher" animals...'

+ An article by Michael McCarthy in the *Independent* 28.4.05 says that the albatross, massacred by commercial fishing, now faces extinction. A long-lining fishing vessel can put out 80 miles of lines barbed with tens of thousands of hooks. It is now believed that across the oceans of the world, no less than a billion long-line hooks are baited every year. The birds swoop down to the bait, are caught by the hook in the beak or throat, dragged under, and drowned.

+ Also near extinction is the Lamprey, an eel-like fish that used to be the food of kings. They have roamed Scotland's rivers for millions of years, but pollution and over-fishing have cut their numbers to such an extent that many of their natural habitats may have been wiped out. *Source: Independent, 4.5.05*

+Conservationists are also calling for sharks to be taken off the menu in Britain's restaurants, saying they fear for the survival of the 450 million-year-old fish. The fish is portrayed as a healthy alternative to meat by the seafood industry, and this means that an estimated 270,000 sharks are killed every day to satisfy consumer demand. The good news is that Asda has removed shark meat from 190 stores after a sustained e-mail campaign by Bite-Back, the shark protection charity. *Source: Independent, 13.4.05*

+ And in *The Daily Telegraph*, 23.6.05, an article by Roger Highfield states that a parasite capable of wiping out species of fish in Europe, notably salmon, trout and carp, has been discovered by scientists. The infectious disease is carried by the topmouth gudgeon (a small type of minnow), and, though it leaves its host fish unharmed, it kills other species by destroying internal organs. The disease has already stopped the European sunbleak minnow from spawning. A scientific team is now assessing whether the parasite has played a role in the decline of the rudd, crucian carp, brown bullhead, bitterling and gudgeon.

+ Lastly, on fish, demand from Asia is blamed for the demise of baby eels, once a cheap, aphrodisiac delicacy on the French Atlantic coast. Ecologists have appealed to the French government and the European Commission to ban fishing of the eels,

known as *pibale* or glass eels, before they slither into oblivion. *Source: Ind., 13.4.05*



PORPOISES ETC.

During April the corpses of more than thirty porpoises were found on beaches stretching from Northumberland to Lincolnshire. Two were shot in the head – at least one with a high-powered rifle. The head injuries on a number of other porpoises suggest that they were beaten to death by someone wielding a heavy implement. Police believe that the killers may be fishermen who accidentally caught the live porpoises in their nets and slaughtered them. *Source: Animals Advocates, 14.4.05*

+Shell has agreed to move its marine oil pipeline away from the only known feeding grounds of the last 100 Western Gray Whales off the east coast of Sakhalin, Russia. *Source, IFAW, 9.4.05*

POEM

The Secret Shores

Well crusted and hidden
By terror ridden
Creeping and leaping
In sands or depths weeping.

Armoured and ready
Human device they cannot stand steady
To dark waters ridden
By an unseen hand bidden

On shoreline or waves dancing
Their many selves for the lancing
On sands far apart for
Devouring human store

Them in torture stripped bare
Well-boxed in their despicable fare
Now the wavering weeds or reeds
Flowering gone from the seas, flowering wild life
from which came our seeds.

John Amsden K