

THE SHELLFISH NETWORK  
NEWSLETTER, SPRING 2007



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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.



Well, once again, tons of thanks to all of you for your support, articles and donations. I am beginning to wonder if we are a different species from other humans? I know of no other species with the capacity of common sense, and the ability for compassion, which is capable of such cruelty, not only to other species but also to its own! How can supposedly intelligent beings send a sick mother and her sick child back to a country where there is no medical help, when there is plenty here? Or send the flower of our youth to go and slaughter the young of another land with no possible solution? And how can intelligent beings slaughter creatures whose future is in the balance because of the actions of those 'intelligent' beings? I refer, of course, to the seal slaughter. The little knot of anger in my middle is getting larger by the day and I feel that we are living in dark times. The slaughter in the sea goes on apace and it is really up to us to express our anger (peacefully) over all this killing, not to mention that on land. By trying to help animals, we are termed 'terrorists' and treated as such, many given longer sentences than murderers or rapists. And trying to get a meeting with a minister is like trying to nail jelly to the ceiling. Well, I shan't stop!



SQUID

\*A report in the *Independent* 23. 2. 07 describes the colossal squid caught in the Southern Ocean by a New Zealand fisherman. It weighed 450 kg and was more than 15m long, larger than a sperm whale. A London bus is 8m long! Little is known about these large species of squid – giant and colossal – that live in the deep ocean, except that they must inhabit an exceptionally dark environment. They are probably fast swimmers and live on smaller fish and crustaceans. Deep-sea fishing has probably led to an increase in the number of giant and colossal squid being caught as accidental by-catch in nets, said the marine biologist Alex Rogers. It seems that colossal squid are not related to the giant squid. Colossal squid live at depths of 6,500 feet. It took two hours to catch the animal before freezing it. *The Daily Telegraph*, same date, also describes the squid and explains that its Latin name is *Mesonychoteuthis Hamiltoni*

ENVIRONMENT

\*Collapse of Arctic sea ice 'has reached tipping-point', so says Steve Connor, Science Editor of the *Ind.* 16. 3. 07. The collapse of summer sea ice has already affected the polar bear, which relies on it for hunting seals. However, the Bush administration has been accused once again of gagging US government scientists by getting them to agree not to talk about polar bears, sea ice and climate change during official overseas trips. A leaked memorandum issued by a regional director of the US dept. of the Interior states that officials within the US Fish and Wildlife Service will limit their discussion when travelling in countries bordering the Arctic region because of sensitivities about climate change. 'This traveller understands the administration's position on climate change, polar bears and sea ice and will not be speaking on or responding to these issues,' says the memo. Source: *Ind.* 10. 3. 07(Head in the sand, chaps. Wait till it's all gone over! Ed.)

\*The Green Pages Extra of *The Ind.* 18. 1. 07, looked at 'Troubled Waters', an article which discusses Britain's coastal waters and their treasures. Lundy Island is only three-and-a-half

miles long but its waters are teeming with jellyfish and sponges, basking sharks and reefs and an enormous amount of marine life. Rare long-clawed lobsters live on its sandbanks. Lundy is a no-take zone, the first of its kind in the UK, to reverse the problems caused by over-fishing.

\*Atlantic grey seals, bottlenose dolphins, minke whales, harbour porpoises and even orca are regularly spotted off the island of Mull.

\*The Dogger Bank is a large sublittoral sandbank formed in the southern North Sea by glacial processes and submergence through sea-level rise. It is the remains of a large landmass known as Doggerland, which existed during the last ice age. The *epibenthos* (animals living on the sea bottom) include crabs and fish, sponges, sea anemones and *bryozoans* (moss-like animals but each of which has its own alimentary canal). There is also a wealth of slow-moving animals such as snails, slugs, starfish and sea urchins.

\*Salcombe estuary in Devon stretches from Salcombe to the rocky peak of Start Point. Again teeming with marine life, this is an estuary that, however, lacks a river to feed it. Salcombe's most treasured organism is marine eelgrass. The beds of eelgrass are an important habitat for all sorts of creatures including seahorses.

\*The type of coral known as pink sea fan is plentiful in the reefs off Plymouth Sound.

\*The island of Unst is surrounded by ocean rich in life and the rocks are home to thousands of birds including puffins, rain geese and great skuas.

\*Many other areas are mentioned, including the Manai Strait which has rare animal species including many varieties of sponge which have joined with hydroids and the dahlia anemone. The Saturn reef is a living reef formed by the tube-building worm *Sabellaria spinulosa*. The reef is in the southern North Sea. Rathlin Island off the coast of Ballycastle in Northern Ireland teems with bird life. And the deep rocky waters are full of sponges and kelp. Off the north coast is the territory of the basking shark, common seal and sea cucumber.

\* *The Southern Daily Echo* 23. 11. 06 had a beautiful double page spread featuring the beautiful creatures that live in the Solent, including a spiny spider crab, Snakelocks anemone, a fan worm, a great scallop and the lightbulb anemone. But marine life is increasingly threatened by pollution and shipping vessels.

\**The WorldWide Fund for Nature (WWF) Living Planet Report 2006* discusses the marine environment, which covers almost 70% of the Earth's surface. This environment includes some

of the World's most diverse and productive ecosystems, but these have been adversely affected by human action over the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, populations of Southern Ocean species declined by about 30% between 1970 and 1998, while trends in the Arctic /Atlantic Ocean increased overall. The Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian seas saw average declines of more than half between 1970 and 2000, while trends in Pacific Ocean species remained stable overall. More than a quarter of Asia's mangrove cover was lost in the ten-year period preceding 2000. In South America, almost half was lost over the same period. Temperate and tropical species populations declined by around 30% overall from 1970 to 2003. The Report goes on to discuss water withdrawals. There are around 35 million km<sup>3</sup> of freshwater in the world, but nearly 70% of this is ice and about 30% is groundwater. Less than 1% of it fills the earth's lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands. Water use doubled between 1960 and 2000.

\* It seems that concern is mounting over marine life affected during the construction phase of offshore windfarms. There was a huge increase in numbers of abandoned and aborted seal pups when the Scroby Sands windfarm was being built and a Crown Estates report has confirmed that impact piling reduces the activity of harbour porpoises up to 15km from the site *Source: BBC Wildlife Nov 05 (Thanks to John Bannister, Guildford Environmental Forum Newsletter March 07)*

\*The UN Environment Programme estimates that there are 46,000 pieces of plastic floating in every square mile of the world's oceans and according to the Marine Conservation Society, the density of litter along Britain's coastline has increased by 90% in the past decade. *Source: BBC Wildlife Dec. 06 (Thanks again to the GEF Newsletter March 07)*

\* Marine biologists have called on the fishing nations of the world to end government subsidies of fishing fleets that are plundering the deep seas and permanently stripping the ocean floor of its unique lifeforms. Fish that live for more than 100 years and cold-water coral reefs that have taken millennia to form are being destroyed by the 'roving bandits' of the high seas that could not survive without government aid. *Source: BBC News 21. 2. 07 (Thanks to Debbie for that)*

\* We now have a wonderful newly designed website [www.shellfishnetwork.org.uk](http://www.shellfishnetwork.org.uk) thanks to Debbie and if you go on to 'links' there you will

find all the organisations who are fighting to defend our oceans. Julie.



### CRUSTACEANS

'The National Lobster Hatchery in Cornwall has secured more funding for its continuing work to preserve stocks for local fishermen' (So says the website of the Hatchery.) It goes on to say:

- Discover the lobster hatchery and its contribution to conservation and the environment (sic)
- Find out fascinating facts about the lobster.
- See how they are caught and find out about the lobster fishing industry in the West Country.
- Learn about the local fishing industry and its contribution to the local economy.

(It doesn't mention finding out about the stress and pain the poor creatures go through when trapped, transported and cooked. Oh no, we mustn't let 'the people' see anything nasty must we or the poor dears might have nightmares! Apparently all the money the Hatchery receives from the visitors goes directly into supporting 'our vital marine conservation and research work'.Ed.) What on earth do they need to research? We now know quite a bit about lobsters, for instance they have several brains called ganglia, and a complex nervous system running down the underside length of their bodies. The Hatchery has discovered that:

- Lobsters taste with their feet
- They can be red, blue, white or even dark with yellow spots
- They have three stomachs
- They can live to be 100 years old.15. 1. 07

(What wonderful research this has all revealed! I wonder what other miracles of science they will come up with for our edification!)



\* However, research undertaken by staff at the NAFC marine Centre in Shetland has shown a high survival rate of velvet crabs which have been discarded from the local fishery. The study looked at whether discarding crabs was likely to result in mortalities and have an impact on the stocks. In

some areas around Shetland a relatively high proportion of small velvet crabs are caught in creels. These cannot be landed and have to be returned to the sea. The study revealed that velvet crabs are fairly resilient to capture and discard, with very few deaths recorded, although they are sensitive to exposure to air. *Source: Aberdeen Press & Journal 18. 12. 06* (How many humans could be lost overboard, with 'very few deaths recorded'? Ed)



The whole foods store in Maine, USA, has decided to start selling live lobsters and crabs because it has found a company that met its demands for how the animals should be treated. *Source: USA Today 12. 2. 07*

\* Fresh water crustaceans: Possibly the most abundant of macroscopic animals is the freshwater shrimp (*Gammarus pulex*). It can be found wherever there is respite from the current – in weedbeds, under stones and clinging to pieces of wood.

\*the most spectacular freshwater crustacean is the crayfish. It is like a lobster but is only 2-4 inches long and is an indicator of clean water. *Source: The River Wey Trust 1988*

\*A mussel found its way back to its seashore home after being put in the post. The creature was put in a padded envelope by Lynda Thornton after she found it among a bucket of shells her son had collected on a trip to North Wales. She posted the creature to marine geologist Mike Roberts, who took the mussel, which survived the 200km trip, to the beach. He said it must have thought 'water at last!' *Source: Metro 5. 3. 07*



### MARKET AND MENUS

Ingredients in the New England clambake 'combine all the best things in life' says Matt Rudd of *The Sunday Times 11. 3. 07*. He says you need half a pound of clams per person with amongst other things, lobster. He goes on to say: 'People have written whole books about how to pick the best lobster. The Bostonian foodie and occasional Maine resident Meg Jandl condenses it into a few words: "Small is beautiful. Everyone likes the pound-and-a-quarter, but I'd go for two smaller chicken lobsters – the pound-and-eighths. They're much sweeter. Make sure they're still wriggling

when you throw them on, but wrap them in cheesecloth first, so they don't scamper out again. The method of cooking is in a rock-lined sandpit with firewood. (So this combines the best things in life? Along with pulling the claws of kittens and wearing dead animals I suppose, Ed.)

\* Scallops with Saffron from *The Daily Tel.* 24. 2. 07. 8 to 10 prepared scallops rinsed under the cold tap, patted dry and sliced in half to create discs. The creatures are then put in a sauté pan of oil and butter and fried. (Doesn't bear thinking about! Ed)

\*Sunderland University researchers have discovered that marine snails off South Tyneside jump on to each other's mucus trails to search for food, leaving them more energy to reproduce.

Source: *Ind* 28. 2. 07

\*And from *Southern Daily Echo* 1. 2. 07 the chef interviewed that week was Gareth Bowen from Brookleys Bistro, Brockenhurst. His 'signature' dish is five-spice crab millefeuille with papaya and cumin tuilles. (Jolly good. Cumin what? I bet the crab feels proud. Ed.)

\*Lisa Bower in the *Tel. Mag.* 3. 2. 07 explains how to open oysters (remember they are alive at this stage Ed) Hold the oysters flat side up in a cloth in one hand and pierce the joint at the pointed end of the shell with an oyster knife (sic). Keep the knife horizontal to the flat shell, moving it slightly from side to side as you push. Once you have loosened the shell, lift the top half away. Loosen the oyster in the shell using the knife, being careful not to lose any of its natural juice. (There is a lot more along these lines. Feeding jaded palates seems to be a necessity in these greedy and spoiled times! Ed.)

\*A disgusting ad. From *Lidl* – 'Canadian lobster, caught in the crystal clear waters of the North Atlantic,' and displaying 'lobster cutlery – lobster picks, lobster pliers and lobster cracker. This is reckoned to be a traditional gourmet treat.

\*And more from the *Telegraph Magazine* – how to cook crayfish. Fill a large pot with water ...boil for five minutes. Add the live crayfish...

Jonny Beardsall explains that Swedish crayfish parties are a marathon of aquavit, crustacean and yet more aquavit. (Anyway, it's all pretty disgusting, Ed.)



\*Three fishermen's associations have made a plea to the Scottish Executive, opposing proposals for a coastal and marine national park (CMNP) between Argyll and Skye. Mallaig and North West

Fishermen's Association (MNWFA) secretary John Hermse said, 'There are many existing initiatives dealing with the coastal environment that will be starved of funds if the park goes ahead. The Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA) said a convincing case had yet to be made for the CMNP. Source: *P & J* 11. 1. 07

\*Waitrose has become the first supermarket in the UK to launch a modified-atmosphere packaging (Map) which has been introduced by the Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group. Map is said to deliver mussels in peak condition sealed in an atmosphere designed to match that of the seashore where they were harvested. (Well, I've never heard of the seashore being sealed in an atmosphere, but then I don't get out much! Ed.) Source: *P & J* 27. 11. 06

\*The new chairman of the Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group is Michael Laurensen who owns Blueshell Mussels in Shetland (Perhaps he can advise me. He must know of such a place! Ed.) Source: *P & J* 9. 1. 07

\*However, two mussel farmers from Newfoundland, Canada, have visited Shetland as part of a wider fact-finding mission to Scotland and Northern Ireland. (These are the folks to ask. They'll know! Ed.) Source: *P & J* 5. 10. 06

\*Now here is one of the silliest bits of anti-environment I have heard in a long time. Dawnfresh, a seafood firm, will ship prawns caught in Scotland to China, to be part-processed before being sent back to the UK for sale. I knew this was happening in Greenland because global warming has made life difficult there, but SCOTLAND? Maybe sealing up the seashore has had some effect on the local population? Ed. Source: *P & J* 25., 9. 06

\*Oh, yes and Young's Seafood has cut 120 posts at its factory in Dumfries and Galloway and is moving the processing jobs to Thailand. Source: *P & J* 16. 11. 06



\* It seems that common whelks (buckies) from Shetland are older and larger than those from the south of England. The research was quite profound, but one person said that whelks were harvested more frequently south of the border, so they were able to live longer and grow larger in Scotland. (There must be more to it than that? Ed.) Source: *P & J* 20. 12. 06

\*Mitchell Tonks, chief executive of FishWorks restaurant was interviewed in the *Business Tel.* 4. 12., 06. When asked if there are fishy tales that are really myths he answered

‘Yes! Crabs have gills inside which are called “dead man’s fingers”. People think they will kill you if you eat them, but they won’t’. (OK, try them! Go ahead, try them! Ed.)

Lots more on cooking and eating live animals, but no room for now! Ed.

### SEAHORSES

These little creatures continue to enchant people, but in the *Ind. 2. 4. 07* there is an item pointing out that they are some of the world’s most endangered animals. Most of the world’s 35 species are in trouble, according to Heather Koldewey, London Zoo’s aquarium curator, who is Project Seahorse’s campaign assistant director. Seahorses have heads at right angles to the body and prehensile tails. They can change colour to blend in with their surroundings. They have no stomach or teeth. The male becomes pregnant, carrying the female’s fertilised eggs inside his body. Two species are found in British waters, the short-snouted seahorse, *Hippocampus hippocampus* and the long-snouted seahorse, *H. guttulatus*. Others include the Australian *H. whitei* or white’s seahorse, Big belly seahorse, *H. abdominalis* from New South Wales and the long-snouted seahorse, *H. guttulatus* from Turkey.

\* A record number of these animals have been discovered in the Solent, the Hants and IoW Wildlife Trust has revealed. The seahorses are found in the seagrass meadows of the Solent, which makes a perfect habitat for the animals. *Source: Southern Echo 12. 1. 07*

\*But, sadly, it seems that it is a myth that they are faithful. They are, according to studies, both highly promiscuous and bisexual. (Good for them. Now tell the scientists to ‘go and study someone else and leave us in peace’. Ed) *Source: Daily Express 31. 1. 07*



### AQUARIA

Sadly the NIRAH project has taken its first steps towards construction. Nirah is going to be a water-based zoo for aquatic animals in Bedfordshire at Elstow. (So now, not content with gawping at land animals, we can all go and watch the aquatics swimming around in their [totally un natural] environment. Makes a change from watching mindless television I suppose! Ed.) *Source: East Anglia Animal Rights Coalition 8. 2. 07 (Thanks to Linda for sending that on)*

\*an investigation is under way into the deaths of three sharks which were moved to an aquarium in

Norfolk. The centre said the black tipped reef sharks deaths were ‘almost unprecedented in the Sea Life network, after over 100 shark transportations over the past 20 years’. Manager Nigel Croasdale said he was ‘deeply concerned’ at the loss. Something has clearly gone wrong (you can say that again! Ed) on this occasion and we are determined to identify this problem’. (Yeah, they died. Perhaps putting them in cages was the problem? Ed) *source: BBC News 25. 3. 07*

### SEALS AND ALL CETACEANS

Well, now we really come to the crunch. The Canadian seal cull. Even though lack of ice is killing thousands of seals, the cull will continue. *Source: Ind. 30. 3. 07*

I think the *Independent 2. 4. 07* says it all ‘CANADA’S CRUEL HARVEST’ David Usoborne writes ‘Pictures of seal pups drowning in melting polar ice have shocked the world. Yesterday campaigners reported they have seen survivors clinging to life. But in a few days’ time, the hunters will come and the pups’ brief struggle against so many odds will come to a bloody end.’ How can this be happening again? I well remember the fight we had during the eighties and Richard Adams coming to give a talk to our group with the good news that the seal hunts were to stop. Now the bloody killing is going on again. These people are simply not human beings as I know them. And it would seem that even in Britain, seal populations have plummeted over the past five years, falling by 40%. Global warming or an epidemic might be to blame (probably an epidemic of humans! Ed) *Source: Ind. 20. 1. 07*

*The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) in an email to the Shellfish Network, 13. 2. 07* explodes three myths that the sealers put out.

**1. The seal hunt is humane.** All available evidence, including veterinary reports and independent observations, indicates that each year tens of thousands of seal pups die in a cruel manner inconsistent with animal welfare standards.

**2. The seal hunt is closely monitored and well managed.** The seal hunt involves thousands of sealers competing for a limited number of seals during a relatively short period of time. Sealers are concerned with killing as many animals as quickly as possible instead of checking to see if a seal is dead before moving on to club the next one.

**3. The seal hunt is sustainable.** A recent study by IFAW scientists found that the current management approach risks depleting the harp seal herd by as much as 70% in the next 15 years. Seal catch quotas set by the Canadian government are much higher than government scientists’ estimates

of what is sustainable, and these quotas are then allowed to be exceeded. ( you can go to [www.stopthesealhunt.co.uk](http://www.stopthesealhunt.co.uk) to visit IFAW's campaign site.

\* Animal welfare and conservation organisations are proposing new legislation to protect seals in Scottish waters at a March meeting of the Scottish Seals Forum. A paper, The Conservation of Seals Act 1970: The case for a review, will be presented to the Forum, calling for the introduction of a new Protection of Seals Act. *Source:*

[news@advocatesforanimals.org](mailto:news@advocatesforanimals.org). 1. 3. 07

The European Parliament has passed a resolution to ban seal imports, but unfortunately this is only one of three institutions of the EU. There is the Parliament (MEPs), the Commission (bureaucrats) and the Council (Ministers from each of the member states). All three have to agree in order to have a ban in place. The Commission has said it would not put in place an immediate ban but it has asked a team of vets to examine the evidence and to make recommendations. The commission will then decide how to act based on the findings of this study. This is a very complex process and will take some time to achieve.. IFAW is therefore asking the UK government to consider action at a national level. *Source: IFAW 19. 3. 07*

\* But we must remember that it is not only seals which are being slaughtered. Japan is set on returning to commercial whaling in spite of the ban by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and *Labour Animal Welfare Society (LAWS) latest journal, Impact, Feb. 07* has an article on Iceland's whaling. It says: 'Iceland's recent decision to resume commercial whaling after a 20-year hiatus has been met with international condemnation, with many countries believing that their whaling is illegal. Twenty five countries, including the UK, have expressed their opposition to the decision. But the Icelandic government awarded Icelandic whaling companies a quota of nine fin and thirty minke whales to be taken during the current whaling season along with a further 39 minkes for 'research'.'

Japan is also culling dolphins, a tradition stretching back centuries. Now protesters are trying to end this 'way of life' (death! Ed.) *Source: Ind. 6. 1. 07*

\* An amusement park in the Dominican Republic, called Ocean World Adventure Park has been trying to import a dozen bottlenose dolphins captured in the Japanese drive fishery. The international effort to end the Japanese drive fisheries is led by the Save Japan Dolphins Coalition. *Source: In Defense of Animals, 1. 3. 07*

\*Marine conservationists have called for permanent protection of one of the UK's most important colonies of dolphins which is being threatened by a boom in the North Sea oil and gas exploration. Experts from the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) fear that expansion of the off-shore drilling industry is threatening to drive away these bottlenose dolphins. *Source: Ind 3. 2. 07*



(sorry, it's a whale! No dolphin photos yet. Ed)

\*A rare grampus dolphin, rescued after it swam into an Italian port, seems to be dying of a broken heart after the woman who reared it like her own child was murdered. The dolphin, named Mary G, will not eat and is being attended by vets. 'Expert' Sauro Pari says "From a strictly scientific point of view we absolutely cannot assert that the two facts are connected. But there is no doubt that her grief for the death of Tamara is great. *Source: Ind. 20. 2. 07*

\*(And now the good news! Ed.) Hope is rising that the endangered Irrawaddy dolphin can be saved in India after a survey showed numbers had increased in a vast, brackish lagoon in the east of the country. Increasing tourism presents fresh problems for the 110-strong population. *Source: Ind. 29. 3. 07*(But that's it. Good news is at a premium this time! Ed.)

\***Cetacea Defence** has announced the launch of World Whale and Dolphin Day, June 30<sup>th</sup>. If you want to get involved or for more information go to [www.cetaceadefence.org](http://www.cetaceadefence.org) (under 'captivity')

\*the US Navy has plans to conduct mid-frequency sonar training exercises off the West coast that seriously endanger the welfare and lives of whales and other marine creatures. Although the California Coastal Commission announced that they would only approve the training exercises if the Navy agreed to take precautionary measures that would minimize the potential, the Defense Department issued an official exemption that allows the navy to go ahead with their sonar training exercises in direct violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) for another two years. This is the second time the Navy has placed itself above the law. They say more time is needed for environmental studies because they believe there is not enough scientific evidence linking underwater mid-frequency sonar exercised to the dozens of whales that have fatally or near-fatally stranded themselves on beaches since the Navy began using the technology. Yet whales exposed to high-intensity sonar have been found bleeding

from the eyes and ears, with lesions in their organ tissues. The Navy has chosen to deny that the actions put the survival of numerous endangered whale species in serious jeopardy. *Source: In Defense of Animals 25. 1. 07* (It's a bit like saying there is no scientific evidence that death while walking across a motorway is caused by traffic. There could be all sorts of causes! Ed.)

### FISH

\* (No, I was wrong! Another bit of good news. My, we are doing well this time. Ed.) Britain is planning to set up a string of marine conservation areas where commercial fishing will be banned up to 200 miles from the coastline. The proposals for what could become marine national parks will appear in a white paper to be published by Ben Bradshaw, the fisheries minister. The legislation will extend the areas covered from 12 to 200 nautical miles from the shore. Once law, a powerful new Marine Management Organisation (MMO) will designate the zones in which all fishing and other activities, including oil wells, will be banned. The aim is to create areas where creatures ranging from tiny corals and shellfish to the largest basking sharks can flourish, recreating the complex food chains that have been destroyed by industrial fishing. Bradshaw says: '[this] will at last enable us to manage our seas properly, including protecting marine life (sic), while allowing development where appropriate.' A spokesperson from the Marine Conservation Society said that Britain is way behind countries such as Australia, which has turned 200,000 square miles of the Great Barrier Reef into a 'no take' zone where fishing is banned. New Zealand has 28 such protected zones, while the US has established dozens along both its Atlantic and Pacific coasts. *Source: Sunday times 11. 3. 07*

\*However, fresh water angling seems as popular as ever. In the Freshwater Angling section of the *Southern Daily Echo 25. 1. 07*, Greenridge Farms golden peg money is ensuring big turnouts. The jackpot is £768. The article includes photos of beautiful fish gasping for oxygen and asks readers to send in their 'Big Fish' photos. (So macho. Doesn't it make you proud? Ed.)

\*In the *Telegraph Review, 3. 2. 07* there is an article called MatheMagic which is supposed to encourage children between six and twelve to enjoy mathematics. It appears to deal with four fish bowls place one on top of the other, the lowest largest and the top the smallest. Each has fish in it. I can't make out what the magician is doing, but he

is waving a cloth around. This might encourage the children, but it won't do much for the fish!

\* A shark, unchanged since prehistoric times and rarely seen by humans has been found alive in shallows off the coast of Japan. It is called a 'frilled' shark because of its distinctive gills. These sharks live up to 3,000 ft below the surface and so are rarely seen alive. The shark, which was a female, was in a poor condition when it arrived at the Awashima Marine Park in Shizuoka, south of Tokyo. Experts think it came to the surface because it was sick or weakened because it was in shallow waters. The creature died hours after it arrived at the park. *Source: Daily Tel. 25. 1. 07*

### GENERAL

\* Seaweed is already a key ingredient in glue, paint and cosmetics. But it could also play a vital role in the search for sustainable energy, reports Julia Stuart, in the *Ind. 1. 2. 07*. Red seaweed or nori is one of several types of red algae eaten and is used in Japanese sushi and is the simple most valuable marine crop. Other types of red algae are used in food manufacturing to make yoghurt, chocolate milk and desserts. Giant kelp is a brown seaweed and usually found in colder waters. It is used as a stabiliser, emulsifier and binding agent in toothpaste, soap, icecream and processed meat as well as for textile printing. It is harvested in California, Mexico and Chile. Knotted wrack is harvested in Ireland and Scotland for making alginic acid. Chlorella is one of 8,000 species of green algae of which about 800 are marine and is grown and sold as a health supplement. In Japan it is eaten and extremely nutritious, being a complete protein and rich in beta-carotene and also a range of vitamins and minerals. Scientists are now looking at seaweed to replace hydrocarbons. *Source: Ind. 1. 2. 07*



\* **'Discovering these new ecosystems was like being a member of a *Star Trek* crew and finding a previously unknown basis for life on another planet.'** So said Peter A. Rona, professor of earth sciences at the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences of Rutgers University in New Jersey, US on exploring the deep Atlantic Ocean. 'At first all we saw was the silt that coats the ocean floor. Then something a little bigger than a poker chip caught our attention. Under a magnifying glass, a distinctive pattern of black dots appeared in our photograph. The dots were evenly spaced and arranged in crisscrossing rows, forming a perfect six-sided figure that resembled the centre of a

board of Chinese checkers.’ No one knew what they were. At first it was thought they were corals but eventually every major group of marine invertebrates had examined the photographs and all drawn a blank. I put an article in a scientific journal and a letter came back from Adolf Seilacher, a palaeontologist at the University of Tübingen in Germany. He is an expert on classifying and interpreting traces of life, such as the trails left by worms – that are preserved in ancient marine sediments. “Your pictures were a real thrill to me,<sup>2</sup> he wrote. “Hoping that you have in the meantime received my reprint, the perfect identity with the trace fossil *Paleodictyon nodosum* of my paper is beyond any doubt.” The paper described a fossil form preserved at least 50 million years ago in sediment so f the deep-sea floor, said that we had stumbled across evidence that a creature presumed to have been long extinct was actually still alive today, which were now exposed on land at various sites in continental Europe. However, when we sieved some samples of sediment looking for a worm or other organism, the sediment passed through the sieve and left nothing behind.’

Rona dived again in 1991. He says: ‘The dive was breathtaking... we landed next to chimneys that poured forth turbulent clouds of black smoke and swarmed with shrimp.’ They then glided on over the seafloor and began to see hexagonal patterns on the surface of the sediments. A further dive in 2001 to film the Mid-Atlantic ridge covered photographs of thousands of these hexagonal forms. And 25 years after the excited letter from Seilacher, in 2003, Rona dived again. With a hose the surface sediment was blown away and within seconds the hexagonal pattern of tiny holes on the sediment surface disappeared and a hexagonal network of tubes or tunnels emerged, exactly like those in the fossil form. ‘The living form on the seafloor and the fossil form that live on the seafloor more than 50 million years ago were indeed one and the same. The deep ocean had served as a sanctuary, a place where *paleodictyon* had lived on for an unimaginably long time.’ The full story of this exciting research can be read in *Cosmos*, issue 11

### ACTION

The UK charity Care for the Wild is calling for a national consumer boycott of Tesco stores over live turtle sales in China. The store is also selling live tortoises, frogs and fish. Tesco’s Customer Service Manager Gillian Kelly says, ‘We are aware that this may be one of a number of habits and tastes

that do not translate easily to western culture, and that some people in this country may find them difficult to accept. We believe, however, that it would be wrong to impose our values on other countries, regardless of local feeling, attitudes and traditions.’

However, CWI’s Chief Executive, Dr Barbara Maas points out that turtles are a luxury food, not a source of protein for the poor. To find out more, contact Claire Palmer, Programme Officer tel: 01306 627 900 or email

[Claire@careforthewild.com](mailto:Claire@careforthewild.com)

Tesco and Sainsbury are also selling live mussels. Please contact both stores and ask them not to sell live animals to the public. Tesco is advocating microwaving the poor creatures.

Tesco :

Sir Terry Leahy, Tesco Plc, Tesco House,  
Delamare Road, Cheshunt, Herts EN8 9ST

Sainsbury:

Customer Relations, Sainsbury Head Office, 33  
Holborn, LONDON EC1N 2HT

### POEM

Far and away

The surging quietitude

Of the ocean’s grave:

Uproarious or ice –strewn

Rippling, wavering

The bitter savour known

When man only knew his lands

The sea’s secrets never to understand

Or lost in the sands.

Far and away

And in the strands life hovers

Is spent or flees to the

Blue depths known only to

Another life of monsters or demons,

It was said, to seafarers,

Adventurers of the dead.

So far but nowadays

The waves bounding boundaries

Bound more tales than we do own

And our cruelties are one on our shoulders alone

Far and away.

John Amsden

Don’t forget that John has written a book of poetry £1.50 and will be on sale at our stand at the next Vegan Festival in August. We look forward to seeing you there.

All the best from the Shellfish Network team, Julie.