

THE SHELLFISH NETWORK
NEWSLETTER, Summer 2007



NO 44

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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.



My very dear friends, things have been a little difficult of late so I have not been able to send messages to you or thank you for your terrific Support. All will be explained in the next newsletter, but for now we are up and running again. Thankyou for your patience.

Julie



CRABS AND LOBSTERS

In April a group paid more than \$3,000 to liberate 300 lobsters. 10 young people arrived at New Meadows Lobster Pound talking about the need for 'God's creatures' to be free, said owner Pete McAleney to the

Portland Press Herald. Source: *Associated Press*, 12. 4. 07 (thanks to EVANA USA)

*An Avant-garde theatre is under attack in Italy after police raided a Milan playhouse to save a lobster from being bludgeoned to death and eaten on stage. Following complaints from animal rights groups, the first-night performance of 'Incident: Kill to Eat' by playwright Rodrigo Garcia was broken up by police officers. During the play the lobsters is supposed to be suspended from a nylon cord and a microphone picks up the sounds of it squirming. (How sick do you have to be to write anything so disgusting, let alone want to go along and see it? Ed.) Source: *Guardian* 3.07 (that's all the info I have on this charmer. Ed.)

*From *Animal Times*, Summer 07, PETA: Purrs go to Sirius Satellite radio host Howard Stern for saying that being boiled alive is a horrible way for a lobster to die. The Co-host Robin Quivers added that keeping lobsters cooped up in tanks is also cruel.

*There was a campaign against The Halfway House Inn near Malvern some time ago where they were holding a 'Lobster Festival' After two attempts at holding the 'festival' in 2005, the pub gave up the idea due to relentless protest. This year, Stephen Croft, licensee of the Halfway House in Malvern was jailed in March for four months for drug crimes. (Not his year, but great for the lobsters. Ed.)

Source: *Malvern Gazette*, 29. 6. 07 (Thanks, Debbie)

*Another article from *PETA* 23. 6. 07: David Foster Wallace Considers the Lobster.

Wallace looked into the science on lobster pain and explains that lobsters do possess the parts of the brain that feel pain-both nociceptors as well as invertebrate versions of the prostaglandins and major neurotransmitters found in our own brains.

He goes on to say '[I]t takes a lot of intellectual gymnastics and behaviourist hairsplitting not to see struggling, thrashing and lid-clattering as...pain-behaviour. (But I rather doubt whether those who think cruelty is OK are capable of anything intellectual!

Still, Foster Wallace's article is excellent and can be found at

www.lobsterlib.com/feat/davidwallace/boiled.asp. Ed.)



*Lemmy the Lobster came from beneath the waves off the South-West coast, and lived in an old boiler at the bottom of the English Channel. He is almost one meter long, three times the size of a normal lobster and was caught by diver Chris Hovard. The caption says '...aggressive, ugly and massive', and, yes the picture of Mr Hovard certainly concurs with this description. The lobster is beautiful!

Having shockingly attacked Mr Hovard for daring to try to capture him, Lemmy was finally caught and put in a string bag. The poor creature, thought to be about 50 years old, has been put in a tank at Weymouth Sea Life Centre to be gawped at by mindless humans. Lemmy weighs 4.5kg, but the largest lobster ever caught weighed 20kg. The article, in *Metro*, 9.7.07 gives some lobster 'facts':

Lobsters can move as quickly as 5m per second when fleeing from danger. They can regenerate their legs, claws and antennae. They display 'handedness'. When young, the claw they use most develops into the crusher and the other becomes the pincer. As far as I know, this is all true, but the paper also goes on to say that they (the lobsters, not the journalists Ed) have no cerebral cortex, meaning they feel no pain!!! (This is, of course, nonsense, as the lobsters have several ganglia in place of brains and are just as capable as you and I are of feeling pain. In fact, nearly all invertebrates have nociceptors which react to aversive stimuli, and opioids which we also have and which are involved in pain recognition. Ed)

*King crabs can weigh up to 25lb, and their claw span can reach nearly 5 ft. The Norwegian red kings are huge
Source: *The Sunday times* 22. 4. 07

*A food writer for Aftenposten, Yngve Ekern has been charged with animal cruelty by the Norwegian animal rights group NOAH. He angered animal activists with his description of preparing crabs on the beach while his children were watching. He described throwing the crabs into hot oil after bashing

them on a cutting board, a process that didn't kill all of them. NOAH leader Siri Martinsen said 'showing how to boil living crabs is encouraging law-breaking. Crabs (in Norway) are also covered by the Animal Protection Act, and animals shall not be exposed to pain.'

The case against Ekern has been dismissed and instead referred to the Conciliation Board, but there will be repercussions. Source: www.aftenposten.no/english/local/article1836612.ece 19. 6. 07(Thanks again,Debbie)

*Christmas Island, known for its annual migration of 50 million bright red land crabs from the forest to the sea, and known as Kingdom of the Crabs, has relied for 100 years on the mining of phosphate, which is exported around the world as fertiliser. But the Australian government has announced a ban on any new mining, saying that there would be 'an unacceptable impact' on threatened species, including the rare Abbott's booby, a frigate bird and the pipistrelle bat. Prince Philip and Sir David Attenborough have encouraged the decision. The Christmas Island Phosphate Company had plans to bulldoze pristine monsoon forests in order to extract the phosphate deposits. Conservationists hailed the ban as a victory and said it would boost the island's tourist potential as 'the Galapagos of the Indian Ocean'. They said that the new mine would have killed up to 1.5 million of the crabs that inhabit the forest floor. Locals fear that the ban will create a mass exodus of the 140 mine employees, their families and dependent businesses who will be forced to leave. Source: *Daily Telegraph* 23. 5. 07

*Sadly, crabs are proving increasingly attractive to so-called 'health-conscious' diners. Crabs have low levels of fat and cholesterol and high mineral content (such as lead, mercury etc.etc.! Ed) and retail sales of crab in the UK have jumped 55% in a year to £6m, according to figures released by the Sea Fish Industry Authority. The article in *The Independent*, 11. 4. 07 adds 'Rising concern about pollution from food, and a growing appreciation of the fruits of the sea (sic), have boosted sales of locally-caught crabs...' (Well I never! I thought that heavy metals were causing brain disfunction, cancer and all sorts of other horrors. But since the article continues: 'Previously, you could only get

dressed crab or whole crab, but now you can get it in lots of different ways that are easy for customers to eat,' presumably the customers have become effected and need help in eating? This is a very sad state of affairs. What a pity the public has no desire to eat more compassionately! Ed.)



SHELLFISH AS FOOD

*'It's stimulating if you're a chef and you've got really fresh ingredients that you can't get just anywhere' says the manager of the 15th century Ty Mawr Hotel. With his business partner he went to pick up lobster, crab, sea bass and prawns fresh off the boat as a group of hotel guests had specifically requested four fish courses. The 'food' is local and organic (and since much of it is alive when collected, is certainly fresh. Ed.) Source: *The Telegraph Magazine* 31. 3. 07

*The lobster at Scott's in Mayfair costs £39.50 and you have a choice: grilled or thermidor. But in New England you pay less than half that. However, for the 'best lobster' people now go to Maine (the great lobster centre of the USA Ed.) and eat in what is known as a cabin, but in fact is really a shack. Writer Matt Rudd ways 'This is Nunan's Lobster Hut and it serves the sweetest, juiciest, freshest lobster on either side of the Atlantic and because it's a shack, you pay shack prices. It is, as they say...a steal (although I doubt the lobsters see it that way). (I doubt it too – but then I'm a poor, skinny vegetarian and don't live in the real world! Ed). Source: *The Sunday Times* 10. 6. 07

*Dockgate4 restaurant in Southampton hosted a seafood extravaganza serving shellfish to mark the start of the restaurant's 2007 gourmet evening calendar. Lobster bisque, local crab and lobster, clams, whelks, scallops, king prawns and oysters were all on the menu. Source: *Southern Daily Echo* 3. 5. 07



*Sadly, I have lots more along the same lines. So many restaurants now think of shellfish and fish as 'fruits of the sea' and are quite happy to believe that they feel no pain. Quite frankly, if beggars belief that people can watch as a crab or lobster tries to claw its way out of boiling water, or see the froth foaming from a crab's mouth as it is being de-brained' and although I can go to bed happy in the knowledge that nothing has died for me to eat, it doesn't make it any better to know that millions of innocent creatures suffer horrendous deaths simply to satisfy the jaded palates of greedy humans. Comments such as 'The Cornish crabs are huge – real bad boys' and 'To tackle your crab, you are given an old wooden hammer, pliers, prodders and an apron' *Telegraph Weekend* 7.4.07 really express how mindless and uncaring so many humans seem to be. You really only have to substitute 'kitten' for crab or 'puppy' for lobster, and you can see how so many people have been brainwashed into thinking that eating cold-blooded or invertebrate creatures is quite acceptable. The strange thing is that Zoe Williams, in *Stella Magazine*, 25. 3. 07 is able to express concern for pigs, but hardly in the most compassionate way. She says: 'Middle White is the new Gloucester Old Spot. Poor pigs – you'd think they suffered enough without the indignity of going in and out of season like handbags.' And one chef has devised a seafood dish that diners must eat while listening to the sound of crashing waves on an iPod! Source: *Business Tel.* 17. 4. 07

So, enough of my ranting – onward and upward (or sideways, as my crab-loving friend says) Ed.

*You will all be aware, by now, of the fact that Tesco is selling live turtles and frogs in their Chinese stores. If you haven't done so already, do write to complain (politely, as I know you will), to:

terry.leahy@tesco.com or

customer.service@tesco.co.uk explaining

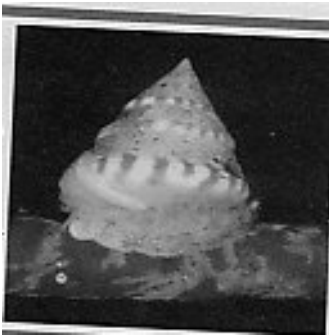
that although these creatures are cold-blooded, they are still capable of feeling both

pain and stress. (Thanks to Linda for the info. and to VIVA! Care for the Wild and Turtlesco.

ALL THE LITTLE ONES

*rocky reefs are our most colourful and varied marine habitats. The very best of these reefs should be selected as Marine Reserves for the future. Divers talk of neon, frilly sea slugs or conger eels. The reefs throng with life. The pointed topshell (also known as the mermaid's nipple!) is just one of an army of grazers that depend on rocky reefs. Another grazer is the sea urchin. This has an intricate five-toothed jaw called 'Aristotle's Lantern' which it uses to pick algae off the rocks. This jaw is so strong that some species can nibble their way through concrete and iron. Source: *Naturalworld Spring 2007*

*The Cayman Islands are losing their coral reefs at a rate of 50% of hard corals in 10 years. Cruise ships are the biggest vessels to use the area regularly and their chains cause a lot of the damage, says John Bothwell, a research officer with the Cayman Islands' environment department. Source: *Daily Tel.* 12. 5. 07



*Irene Arpayoglou in PETA's *Animal times, Spring 07* describes how, working as a hatcher biologist at a large shrimp-farming company in Florida, one day saw an alligator wander onto one of the ponds. The creature was caught and 'hog-tied' by a worker. A trapper was called out to 'take care of her' even though the farm was 30 miles from the nearest town and the alligator could have been relocated. She was left lying in the sun for hours until the trapper arrived. Irene stayed with her hosing her down. After the trapper left, Irene drove home thinking how much she hated him for killing this beautiful animal. Then she thought, 'How am I any different? I kill shrimp for a living and they are animals too.' From that day on she hasn't eaten meat and left her job for a teaching job where she

tells her students about the cruelty that food animals suffer.

*The native Colchester oyster, which has a flat circular shell unlike the slipper-shaped rock oyster, has been grown off Mersea Island since Roman times. The shellfish take up to five years to mature. Source: *Independent,* 28. 4. 07

*Inadequate labelling means it is impossible for a consumer to calculate the food miles of many products. Canadian prawns go to Iceland to be packed and then sent on to the UK. Haddock caught in the Atlantic is shipped to Poland, packed and sent to the UK. Welsh cockles are sent to Holland and back again. Cornish sardines are sent to Brittany then back again. Scottish prawns are shipped to China and Thailand, processed and sent to the UK. So information printed on 'food' labels about 'country of origin' can often be confusing or misleading thanks to a maze of different rules. Source: *The Sunday Times* 20. 5. 07

*Chinese shrimp trawlers off the coast of Jingsu province, near the mouth of the Yangtse River pictured from space, show 'mudtrails' which are evidence of the disturbance to the sea bed habitat caused by trawling. Nature Magazine claims that this is one of the most damaging activities on Earth. Bottom trawling has been likened to clear-cutting a forest merely to hunt its game. The trawls and dredges kill bottom-living creatures and reefs which are not their intended target. The satellite pictures show trawlers fishing at a density of about 15 to the mile. Birds feed on the unwanted by-catch dumped overboard. Scientists say that the sediment churned up smothers any creatures living on the sea bed, causes over-enrichment of algae and may even cause 'dead zones'. Source: *Daily Tel,* 11. 5. 07

***SEALIFE FIGHTS BACK** (Ed!) From the Costa del Sol to the French Riviera, an infestation of jellyfish is forcing seaside resorts to set up defences, repel the invaders and protect the tourist industry. Source: *Sunday Times* 24. 6. 07

*Triops (tiny shrimp) are being sold in bookshops again. I have written to the shop involved and they are checking on this. (Ed.)

*Until the 20th century, New York and oyster were synonymous, according to Mark Kurlansky, author of *Cod and Salt*, which is

about the effects the world's first 'mega-city' had on the profusion of oysters which the first settlers found in the Hudson River. The estuary of the Hudson River had 350 square miles of oyster beds. Until the English and the Dutch began to harvest them by the million, the intertidal and subtidal waters were an Eden for *Crassostrea virginica*, the American oyster, the only species which grows on that coast. They are often so big that Thackeray said that eating an American oyster was 'like eating a baby'. (Had he done so, do you think? Ed) In 1860 some 12million oysters were sold in New York markets and were eaten alive by rich and poor. By 1889 the area's oyster beds were producing 700 million oysters a year. In 1930, the year of the Chrysler Building, the oyster beds were shut down because they were a danger to public health. The cause was sewage and the dumping of rubbish and industrial waste in the estuary. Whole slums were felled and dumped in the Hudson, according to '*The Big Oyster: History on the Half Shell*'. A few oysters are back now that the waters are clearer, but there are too few to filter the water clear as they once did. Source: *Daily Tel.* 29. 6. 07

SCIENCE

*Once the world's fourth largest source of inland water, the Aral Sea has shrunk to a third of its original size in five decades because the Soviets diverted the rivers for crops. But the sea is staging a comeback. The water that was left became highly salinated and the 24 species of freshwater fish died out. But with a loan from the World Bank to the government of Kazakhstan the salt-saturated steppe are being turned into water again, with vegetation spreading on the shoreline. But the water that is left in Uzbekistan, where the government appears to be more interested in prospecting for oil and gas deposits, the water that is left is so salty that the sea cannot even sustain ocean-going fish. Source: *The Ind.* 10. 4. 07

*Waste from industrial pork factories in the USA contains nearly 400 toxic poisons, including heavy metals, antibiotics, hormones, deadly biocides, pesticides and dozens of disease-causing viruses and microbes, according to *Robert F Kennedy, Jr in Crimes Against Nature, Penguin 2005.* 'Millions of tons of this fecal marinade...

leaks... into waterways or aquifers, or volatilizes into the air. Hog factory contaminants have also fostered outbreaks of a previously unknown microbe, *Pfiesteria piscicida*, in the US coastal waters.

Pfiesteria, 'the cell from hell,' kills millions upon millions of fish and causes postulating lesions that won't heal, severe respiratory illness and brain damage in humans who handle fish or swim in the water'

*Seagrass beds are a natural crèche for young sea life, and the 'des res' for the seahorse.

:But the seagrass beds are threatened by (yes you've guessed it! Ed.) fishing, pollution and disease around the UK. They urgently need stronger protection through Marine Reserves. Cuttlefish, pipefish and sticklebacks also live in these beds. Source: *Naturalworld Spring 2007*

*And like the seagrass, maerl, a slow-growing seaweed which forms a 'living gravel' on the seabed, provides a home for more than 500 other species. These beds are damaged by trawling and dredging and some have already been lost. Maerl is the Breton word for a small group of unusual seaweeds that lay down calcium carbonate in their tissues. This trait is also known in algae, and a well-known example is coral weed, the pale pink, crunchy turf in sunlit rockpools. Maerl, however, consists of free-living nodules. Source: *Naturalworld Spring 07*

*An Antarctic mission has found 700 new species. They are in the world's most hostile environments – the pitch-black, freezing extreme depths of the Southern Ocean surrounding Antarctica. The creatures, ranging from crustaceans and molluscs to carnivorous sponges and free-swimming worms, have been discovered on a series of expeditions exploring the deep waters of the Weddell Sea. 585 new species of crustacean were found. 'What was once thought to be a featureless abyss is in fact a dynamic, variable and biologically rich environment,' said Dr Katrin Linse, a marine biologist from the British Antarctic Survey. This is the first step to understanding the complex relationships between the deep ocean and the distribution of marine life. Expedition leader, Professor Angelika Brandt said that the Antarctic deep sea was potentially the cradle of life of the global marine species. Source: *Ind.* 17. 5. 07



*Scientists may have seriously underestimated the speed at which Arctic sea ice will melt in the coming decades. Researchers have found that the sea ice, which is essential for polar bears to hunt seals, is melting far more quickly than the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has predicted. The IPCC predicts that the summer sea ice could disappear by 2080, but US scientists from Colorado suggest that the loss could occur 30 years earlier if current melting rates are maintained. Source: *Ind.* 2. 5. 07

*A research ship has begun a project around the Galapagos Islands that will highlight the importance of marine plankton in the fight against global warming. The ship is on a 'voyage of recovery' to 'seed' the oceans with iron in the hope of stimulating blooms of phytoplankton, the microscopic marine plants that soak up the energy of the sun to convert carbon dioxide into organic matter. Plankton play a critical role in maintaining the carbon dioxide balance of the oceans and the atmosphere. Source: *Ind.* 3. 5. 07

POLITICAL

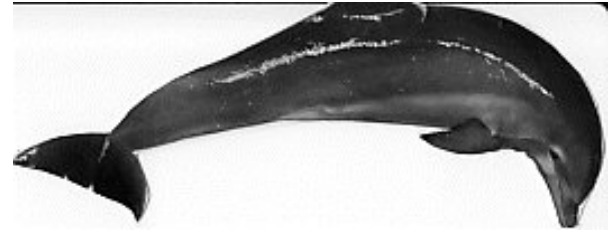
*World Charter For Cetacea
A Universal Declaration of Rights
To view more on protecting Cetacea go to
Cetacea Defence

cetaceadefenceuk@yahoo.co.uk

*The Captive Animals Protection Society (CAPS) has tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM) calling on the government to introduce legislation prohibiting the keeping of cetaceans (whales, dolphins, porpoises) in captivity. 26. 4. 07

*At the International Whaling Commission (IWC) meeting at the end of May, Japan's proposal for coastal commercial whaling was defeated, and a proposal reaffirming the importance of the commercial whaling moratorium passed. And at the meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), proposals by Japan and Iceland to review all great whale species and to review fin whales, respectively, were defeated by a

large margin. Source: *Humane Society International* 18. 6. 07



*However, Japan has vowed to press on and kill 50 humpback whales later this year in defiance of conservationists and anti-whaling nations. Britain joined New Zealand, Australia and other 'like-minded nations to condemn the plan in Anchorage, Alaska, where the annual conference of the IWC opened. Japanese whaling ships intend to kill the humpbacks in the Southern Ocean whale sanctuary as part of its 'scientific whaling' programme. The ships will also hunt hundreds of minke, sei, sperm and fin whales. The humpback is classed by most environmentalists as one of the planet's more imperilled species, but not by Japan's Fisheries Agency. 'We don't see it as endangered,' said Joji Morishita, Tokyo's alternate IWC commissioner. 'Our surveys suggest that in some areas humpback stocks are increasing.' (Well, they won't much longer if they continue being hunted! Surely it is a position of joy that they are increasing, not a reason for killing them? Ed.) Source: *Ind.* 30. 5. 07

THE HOPELESS SECRET

In the seas and oceans
Where life is secret
But now too known
That we cannot forget

Its decimation
The shame of nations
Grey dust and death
From human predations

The story is an old one
Not new as we pretend
And whatever hope we send the deep
We cannot transcend to this end.

John Amdsen