

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

THE SHELLFISH NETWORK
NEWSLETTER, WINTER 2007/8



NO 46

16 East Gardens
WOKING

Surrey GU22 8DP

info@shellfishnetwork.org.uk

www.shellfishnetwork.org.uk

01483 766 291



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, folks, here we are again, with a new year in which to hope. All my information is still held by the 'boys and girls in blue', but with the kind help of so many of you, I am able to get this newsletter out once again. But sadly there are over 200 of you for whom I have no addresses, so WHO ARE THE LUCKY ONES TO GET THIS? !!

After so many attempts, I have still been unable to get any positive news from the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), as although I

have sent them the very latest research into pain in invertebrates and particularly lobsters, they seem unable to comprehend that a nervous system and opioids signal the ability to feel pain. Perhaps this will be the year for shellfish! I will try to get a meeting.

LOBSTERS & CRAYFISH

According to the media, on 10th October, a 17year old girl attempted to liberate four lobsters in a supermarket (in Spain or Italy). Security guards blocked her on her way out and police arrested her. She spent two days in jail and is now under home arrest, accused of robbery. As she has countless previous records for similar actions, the judge seemed to have been heavy handed on her. Source: *Debbie, 15. 10. 07.*

*German police had to round up a cluster of crayfish after the crustaceans broke out of an Asian food shop and scuttled down the street in Stuttgart. A pedestrian notified the authorities after seeing the creatures crawling down the road. They had escaped by squeezing through gaps in the grating on their tanks and leaving by the shop's front door which was left ajar. (I do hope they shut the door on their way out-we wouldn't want anyone to get in and steal anything! Ed.) Source: *Independent 27. 10. 07*

*Hundreds of dead crayfish have been found in the River Waveney, near Beccles, over recent weeks. Amanda Elliott, Spokeswoman for the Environment Agency (EA) said tests confirmed an outbreak of *Aphanomyces astaci*, commonly known as crayfish plague. Measures are now being put in place to try to prevent any spread. Ms Elliott said: 'The affected animals are Turkish crayfish *Astacus leptodactylus*', also known as the narrow-clawed crayfish, an introduced species, which has

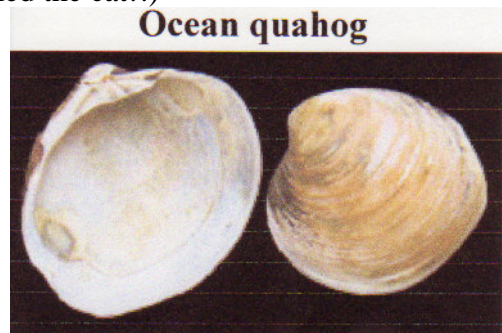
become established in the UK. Source: *ProMED-mail post (part of the International society for Infectious Diseases) 22. 10. 07*



LITTLE ONES

After about 530 million years, the oyster has at last revealed its secret curative properties to scientists and it is not only the aphrodisiac! French biologists who have been studying the way oysters produce nacre (mother-of-pearl), believe the process could be replicated to provide cures and preventative treatments for osteoporosis, arthritis and certain skin complaints. 'The key is biomineralisation,' said Christian Milet from the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. 'Humans and oysters share the capacity for self repair. A human bone heals, as does a cracked oyster's shell', he added. More than 4,000 years ago, the Maya people of Central America realised that nacre was extremely hard and durable and they used it to make false teeth, and in other cultures, paste made from crushed nacre was recommended as a beauty cream. The mollusc's high content of zinc, which in humans is required for the production of testosterone could be one explanation for the belief in the aphrodisiac quality of oysters. They are also rich in certain amino acids that trigger increased levels of sex hormones. Source: *The Ind. 30. 10. 07*

*The Arctica Islandica, sometimes called the ocean quahog or Icelandic cyprine, is a marine bivalve mollusc native to the north Atlantic ocean. Like all molluscs, it has a brain and nerve cords. By counting the rings on its shell, scientists have found that these beautiful and amazing creatures have been known to live over 400 years. Now a charity wants the scientists to carry out research on them to study the quahog longevity. Sadly, during one assessment process, the clam died. It will be difficult to find out exactly how long they can live if they die when taken from their natural habitat, the ocean floor. Source: Thanks to *Google Dec. 07* (I still don't see why we need to know exactly how long they live, but that is human curiosity, I suppose. BEWARE ! It killed the cat!!)



*Over the past 5 years, the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) has investigated shrimp farms in eight countries, and their work has placed the issues firmly on the agenda of corporations and policymakers. In September, EJF was invited to visit the east coast of Brazil where a proposal for a shrimp farm the size of Heathrow would turn coastal forests into a virtual wasteland, destroying sustainable livelihoods and threatening marine habitats, home to endangered humpback whales and marine turtles. But because, so often, the promise of jobs and a better life deludes marginalized coastal communities into thinking the shrimp farming industry is

the answer to their problems, EJF's training for local human rights and environmental defenders, enabled them to create a film that shows, perhaps, 'it's all a lie'. Source:

web@ejfoundation.org, 27. 11. -7

*A report in the New Scientist states that experimenters at Queen's University, Belfast dabbed acetic acid on to one of the antennae of 144 prawns in order to find out if they feel pain. Each time, the creatures reacted by rubbing the affected area for up to five minutes. Robert Elwood, who led the team, insists this is evidence that they feel pain – something he argues is, in any case, likely, since pain enables animals to learn from potentially harmful experiences. (It's about time they learned not to go near scientists, whatever the reason for the experiment! Ed.) And, in any case, other 'experts' disagree. They point out that most animals possess sensors that trigger a response to irritants, and that pain needn't be part of that equation. (I like the term 'needn't'. So by sticking their hand in the fire, and pulling it out again quickly, pain 'needn't' be part of the equation? Jolly good, well done! Bet the prawns are pleased with both conclusions! Ed.) Source: *The Week* 17. 11. 07

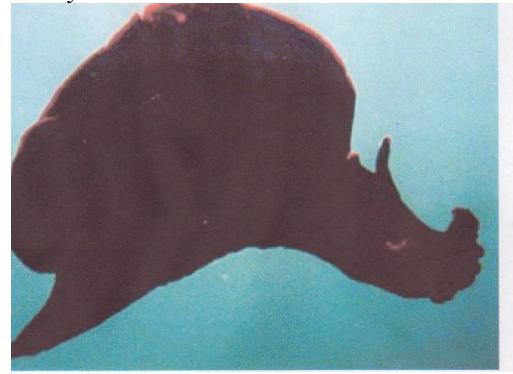


*For the first time since the mid-80s, prawns were due to be auctioned at the port of Fraserburgh, but the auction was cancelled, possibly because the fishermen did not want to be the first to use it. But the auction did go ahead the next day, with 52 boxes from the Banff-registered 'Gratitude'. A spokesman for the Fraserburgh Fishsalesmen's Association, said 'there were 1,000 boxes landed on Monday, but the fishermen did not want to use

the auction... [many] are happy at the prices they are getting anyway.' The port's fish market has just had a £1million refurbishment and landings worth just over £30million were recorded last year. Source: *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 5. 12. 07

BIG ONES

*A sea 'monster' which squirts toxic ink is invading British waters because of global warming, experts say. The sea slugs are 18in long and swim using 'wings' that make them look like an underwater bat. *Aplysia fasciata* can weigh up to 5lb, nearly double the size of native sea slugs. The slugs can be mildly toxic to humans, but are eaten in some areas of the world. Source: *Daily Tel* 27. 10. 07



*A giant claw dug out of a German quarry has been identified by a British scientist as that of an 8ft-long 'sea scorpion', which lived 400 million years ago. The *eurypterid* had a jointed armoured body, a pair of large 'paddles', eight walking legs and two front limbs with sharp claws. 'This is an amazing discovery,' said Dr Simon Braddy of the University of Bristol. 'We have known for some time that fossil records yield monster millipede, super sized scorpions, colossal cockroaches and jumbo dragonflies, but we never realised just how big some of these creepy-crawlies (sic) were. Eurypterids are thought to be the extinct ancestors of scorpions and possibly all arachnids. Sources: *Ind.* 21.

11. 07 and *The Guardian* in *The Week*
1. 12. 07 Also thanks to Anna.

'SCIENCE'

* The MOD is considering abandoning deep-diving tests carried out in Gosport which put goats into pressure compartments to produce levels of decompression sickness, after complaints from animal rights activists. Testing was suspended in March this year and now a committee of six experts is looking into less cruel alternatives, such as computer-modelling to simulate the effects of 'the bends', the sickness caused when divers rise to the surface too quickly.. the news comes after the French navy stopped its own live-test programme. Goats are used because their respiratory system is similar to that of humans. The animals that survived initial tests were often used in a series of painful experiments for up to five years before being culled and undergoing post-mortem examination of their spinal cords and brain tissue. Altogether 69 animals have been killed at the laboratory in Gosport, since testing started in 2001. An MOD spokesman said: 'A number of studies reviewing the need for further use of goats in this research programme are currently being undertaken'.

(Presumably the goats are happy to sacrifice themselves as they are obviously at war with goats from other countries. So that's all right then! Ed)
Source: *VIN 18. 10. 07*

*But the U.S. Navy want to put a training range for lethal mid-frequency sonar next to a key migratory route for endangered right whales, off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.
Source: *NRDC Action Fund 15. 11. 07*

*Scientists say that grazing fish must be protected to save Caribbean coral. The reefs are being smothered by algae and could soon be damaged beyond repair unless there is a campaign to protect the parrotfish that feed on the

plants. Coral reefs in the region have suffered from a range of environmental assaults over the past 30 years, from hurricanes and pollution to climate change. Source: *Ind. 2. 11. 07*

ENVIRONMENT

*more than a third of Europe's freshwater fish species face extinction because their ecosystems are being destroyed, the World Conservation Union said. Scientists say 200 of the 522 species of European freshwater fish are threatened by the rapid development of agriculture and industry over the past 100 years.
Source: *Ind. 2. 11. 07*

*The wildlife Trust says that a total ban on scallop dredging in Lyme Bay is the only way to protect some of Britain's rarest species of coral. The reef is being destroyed by heavy scallop dredging. Protected species such as the pink sea fan coral and the sunset cup coral are broken and killed by the heavy iron-toothed dredging rigs that are dragged along the sea bed. Chefs such as Rick Stein rave about the scallops, so demand for them has risen steeply. One Lyme Bay fisherman said that, in 2005, the number of dredging boats in the bay went up from 2 to 23. the results have been devastating. The reef makes up less than 10% of Lyme Bay, so there would still be areas available to dredge for scallops. Apparently, many livelihoods depend on the well-being of the reef (not to mention the scallops! Ed.)Even a lobster potter says that the long-term future has to be assured for the area! (I leave it to your imaginations for comment! Ed.)
Source: *Ind. 1. 11. 07*

*A dramatic decline in the ability of the Earth to soak up manmade emissions of carbon dioxide, and a corresponding acceleration in the rate of increase of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, have been detected for the

first time by scientists. The discovery that more CO₂ is lingering in the air rather than being absorbed by the world's forests and oceans has alarmed scientists who believe that it signals a potentially dangerous turn of events for the global climate. The much anticipated 'feedback' in the global climate, when increases in CO₂ in the air trigger further increases in atmospheric concentrations of the gas, has already begun to occur decades before many predicted. About half of the CO₂ emissions resulting from human activities are absorbed by natural 'sinks' on land and the oceans, but the new study shows that the efficiency of these sinks has fallen significantly over the past half century. A climate researcher at the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge said that stronger winds in the southern ocean, caused by global warming and the loss of the ozone layer, has resulted in more dissolved CO₂ in the deep sea being brought to the surface and consequently less CO₂ being absorbed from the atmosphere. Source: *Ind.* 23. 10. 07

*Climate change is continuing to progress in the Arctic, according to the first annual edition of an 'Arctic Report Card' issued by a US-led team of scientists. Observations indicated that the overall warming of the Arctic as a whole continued in 2007, scientists said. '...we are seeing some rapid changes in the Arctic,' said Richard Spinrad, assistant administrator for oceanic and atmospheric research at the Nation Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration which released the report. The most dramatic of these has been the reduction in the extent of summer sea ice, which at the end of the melting season in September 07 was at a record low – 23% below the previous record in 05. It was 39% below the average over the period 1979 to 2001.

On land, the annual surface temperature over areas north of 60°N was 1.0C above the mean value for the 20th century in 06, the scientists said. They added that species such as polar bears are under threat because their natural habitat on the Arctic sea ice is getting smaller every year. Source: *Ind*



19. 10. 07 (OK, this has nothing to do with the Arctic, but I thought it might like to get into the picture! Ed.)

*Rare species such as the sea horse and pink sea fan are being destroyed because of a delay by ministers in introducing a marine Bill, conservationists warn. Environmental groups fear that habitats are being destroyed by industry and tourism and believe legislation is needed to save them. Although the Government is obliged, under a convention signed at the 1992 Rio Earth summit, to establish protected marine areas by 2010, it has admitted in a White Paper this will not happen until 2020 at least. Creatures in peril are the tompot blenny (fish), the grey seal, the jewel anemone and the shoaling saithe, a relative of the cod. A spokeswoman for DEFRA confirmed that the Government aimed to publish a draft marine Bill in early 2008. She said the proposals would 'deliver modern, streamlined regulation, better protection for marine life, and integrated planning and management of seas and estuaries.' Source: *Daily Tel.* 8. 10. 07 (I bet the fish are delighted to be having a streamlined regulatory system in which to swim. However did they manage before humans came along? Ed)

*Overfishing and development are turning the Mediterranean into a marine graveyard. Pollution has all but wiped out species such as the Med.

Monk seal and the loggerhead sea turtle. According to the UN Environment Programme, every year 650million tons of sewage, 129,000 tons of mineral oil, 60,000 tons of mercury, 3,800 tons of lead and 36,000 tons of phosphates are dumped into the sea. Water extraction is said by scientists to be among the most serious threats to dryer parts of the Med. and major and frequent oil spills, such as those from a ship off the Spanish coast in January and a war-damaged Lebanese power station in 06, kill thousands of marine mammals. The Med's flora are under threat from pleasure boats, whose anchors drag on the seabeds and upset the ecosystems. The Posidonia sea-grass meadows, which are the reproductive site for hundreds of species, are torn apart by tourist vessels' heavy anchors. The Med has also become one of the most dangerous place for species such as sandbar sharks and rays. Source: *Ind. 17. 11. 07*



Loggerhead turtle

WHALES ETC.

According to the *Sunday Times*, 16. 9. 07, the northern right whale, which once ranged the Atlantic from Britain to America, is on the verge of extinction, with only 400 remaining from a population that may once have numbered hundreds of thousands, scientists have found. The animals has been protected from hunting since the 1930s, but now scientists have found the reason why the population of these creatures has failed to recover. They are dying, usually in agony, after being hit by ships or tangled in fishing gear (often lobster pots) off America's eastern coast. 'Humans are still killing

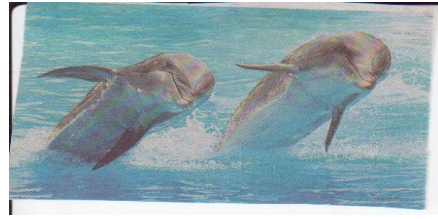
whales,' said Michael Moore of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution on America's eastern coast, who carried out the research. 'Fatally entangled whales can die very slowly over months or even years. This is an extreme animal welfare issue as well as a serious conservation problem.' Many of the remaining animals bear serious scars from being tangled in fishing gear, usually lobster pot moorings

*The Yangtze River dolphin is one of the oldest on earth, the last survivor of a family that split from other dolphins 20million years ago. But the last definite sighting of one was four years ago and in 2007 it was declared extinct. The last Yangtze River dolphins are too old to breed. The river is badly polluted in places and the Three Gorges Dam may have been the last straw. This dolphin is the first large mammal to be declared globally extinct for 50 years. Source: *Ind. 20. 12. 07*

*Mark Glover of Respect for Animals was filming seals being killed when he was arrested and faces a fine of \$100,000. Canada's prime minister defended the cull, saying seal numbers had tripled. Mr Glover said: 'The Canadians were getting fed-up with the level of cruelty we were filming.' He added: 'the word went out and we were all arrested. The regulations are very straightforward, you cannot go within 10 metres of sealers killing seals. There was no reason for us to be within 10 meters and we weren't.' Amber Valley MP, Judy Mallaber, is campaigning for the European Union to take tougher action against the killing of seals. Canada's Fisheries Ambassador, Loyola Sullivan, said people had been earning a living for centuries from the annual hunt and in some coastal communities it counted for 35% of their income. (I wonder what wonderful things they do for the

other 65%? Ed.) Vets had indicated that seals were killed in an acceptably humane manner (sic) equal to, and in cases better, than practices of killing domestic livestock in abattoirs around the world, he added. (Strange, I didn't know that abattoirs clubbed and hacked to death the livestock! Funny way to earn your bread, all this killing and brutality. Perhaps we humans should start considering the lilies of the fields, or at least the soya beans? Anyway, as Mark has produced a large amount of evidence showing that he has not broken any law, the case has been postponed until May. We are all thinking of Mark and hope all goes well for him and the intrepid team. Ed.) Source: www.news.bbc.co.uk 14. 10. 07

*The Solomon Islands are to export 28 live dolphins to Dubai, four years after a similar shipment to Mexico sparked an international outcry, when the Island banned the live dolphin export trade in 03. But Robert Satu, director of Solomon Islands marine Mammal Education Center and Exporters Ltd, who was involved in the exports to Mexico, claimed the ban was illegal and won a court ruling earlier in 07 allowing the exports to resume. At least nine of the dolphins (bottlenosed) sent to Mexico died. In August, the Fisheries Minister, Nollen Leni, said the government would encourage the capture and sale of up to 100 dolphins a year for the 'lucrative' live trade. He noted that water parks were prepared to pay tens of thousands of pounds for a trained dolphin and said he would lead a government delegation to Dubai to seek more buyers. Lawrence Makili, the Earth Island Institute's pacific director said alerts would be sent to tuna buyers across the globe to boycott Solomons' tuna if the dolphin shipment proceeds. Source: *Ind* 17. 10. 07



*The Italian government has given approval for a liquefied natural gas terminal to be installed on a huge ship anchored 12 miles off the coast of Livorno, in Tuscany, in the middle of a whale and dolphin sanctuary. Alessandro Gianni, the director of marine campaigns at Greenpeace's office in Rome, said: 'There is no legal procedure by which to classify an area of sea as an industrial site. They have simply fudged that question, declaring the area to be industrial. LNG is very cold and if the pipe were to break and the gas to end in the sea there could be a very big explosion.' He also said that constant discharge of concentrated chlorine bleach is another hazard to the delicate marine environment and that discharges from the plant would be 'a river of chlorine bleach going vertically down to the sea floor and killing everything in its path.' Minutes of a pilot committee seen by The Independent indicate that only one member of the committee was in favour of it. Opponents have launched 11 legal cases challenging the proposal. Source: *Ind*. 29. 10. 07

*Along with five others, TV star Hayden paddled out on a surfboard in an attempt to reach a pod of dolphins to stop them being driven into a nearby cove and killed. But the six surfers, from Australia and the US were intercepted by a fishing boat before they could reach the dolphins. The fishermen used the boat's propellers to block their way and at one point struck out with a boathook. Panettiere, who is a keen surfer and a committed marine conservationist and supporter of the campaign to save the Japan dolphins, said, 'It was really

frightening. Some of us were hit by the boathook. But in the end all we really worried about was the dolphins. It was so incredibly sad. We were so close to them and they were sky hopping, jumping out of the water to see us. More than 22,000 dolphins are slaughtered by fishermen in Japan every year. The hunt continues despite worldwide condemnation. Source: *Bernie, Sky News 2. 11. 07*

*The humpback whale was spared from extinction in 1963, one of the first whales to be protected. (writes Michael McCarthy of the Independent). Now a new fleet has set out to start hunting it once more. They are the whales that act like dolphins, leaping right out of the water. They have enchanted millions and they are the ones the Japanese are now off to kill. Not content with harpooning minke whales, fin whales, sei whales, Bryde's whales and sperm whales, all unnecessarily, all in the face of hostile world opinion and all in the laughable guise of 'scientific research', the Japanese whaling fleet has set off to hunt the best-love whale of all, the humpback.

Facts: Male humpbacks are up to 48 ft long. Females are up to 50ft long. They can weigh up to 30 tons.

Humpbacks eat up to one and a half tons of krill and small fish such as herring every day. Female humpbacks give birth every two or three years. waters Humpbacks are found in every ocean. Humpbacks that feed in Antarctic waters south of Cape Horn, and travel north to breed off Colombia and Costa Rica, make the longest confirmed migration of any mammal. Source: *Ind 19. 11. 07* (this article is very long and passionate. Do contact me if you would like to see the whole thing. Julie)

*And in the *Telegraph, 13. 11. 07* there is a feature by Nick Squires on the same story. He writes about

Migaloo –an Aboriginal word for 'white fella', the only known white humpback whale, who may be targeted by the whalers during the hunt.

In the *Ind, 20. 11. 07* there is a further long article by Jerome Taylor entitled 'Battle of the Southern Ocean' and which explains that the Sea Shepherd conservation Society will stop at nothing to protect the humpbacks. Because the Nisshin, one of the whalers, had a fire on board, nothing to do with the Sea Shepherd, the Japanese government branded Paul Watson and the Sea Shepherds 'terrorists'. (This word is branded about far too much. If you try to save a non-human from the machinations of humanity you are termed a 'terrorist'! This in spite of the fact that the Animal Rights Movement has, quite rightly, never killed or maimed anyone in all the years it has been going. Ed)

*Happily, the Japanese have abandoned the humpback hunt after international outcry. *Ind. 22. 12. 07*

MOVING

*Now the seas are moving
An ocean of unsounded
Mystery in the movement
Of the changing seasons*

*Swelling or shoring, grooving
The tides rising in ice and snow
grounded*

*Chiselled in the curvaceous
Groovement
Perhaps of man's mind now
With no reasons*

*The life within them a new
And perhaps deadly awakening
Far flung and then strange
Then perhaps man's humanity
Forsaking*

John Amsden