



THE SHELLFISH NETWORK
NEWSLETTER, WINTER, 2008/2009

NO 50

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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, here we are again, with a new hope and promise at least for the *peoples* of the world. A wonderful start. Now we need to look at the rights of animals. I too have a dream! There is a long way to go.

But you are all lovely people and I can't thank you enough for all the cuttings, donations, support and help you constantly give to our little marine friends.

Once again I have a message for you from **The Animal Blessing Service, Craigiebuckler Church, Springfield Road, Aberdeen. 14th June 2009 at 3pm.** Please support this if you are able.

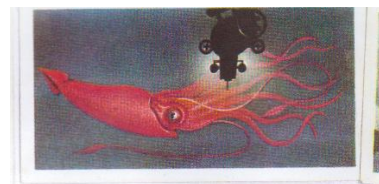
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

While many of the new laws of the EU are forward-looking, Greenpeace says that the 30% increase in the North Sea cod quota for next year was a 'farce' and could see the fishery face total collapse. But the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) says the plans are a 'step in the right direction' and welcomes the new efforts to reduce the amount of

fish caught and then dumped. As well as the increase in cod quotas, the agreement allows UK fishermen to land 32% more mackerel, 13% more North Sea plaice and 8% more monkfish off the Scottish west coast. Source: *Guardian* 19. 12. 08 +However, the EU wants to impose quotas on recreational fishermen limiting the number of fish they may catch. The move is designed to protect endangered species such as cod, ling, pollack and shark. The EU sets tight quotas on commercial fishermen for these species but there are no such restrictions on anglers. (In my opinion the restrictions don't go far enough! All recreational fishing restricted to Nil! Ed.)Source: *Sunday Times* 21. 12. 08

+Scottish Fisheries Minister Richard Lochhead met the new UK minister for fisheries, Huw Irranca-Davies and expressed his pleasure at meeting the minister together with those from Wales and Northern Ireland. He said they discussed priorities 'securing a successful outcome from the forthcoming EU-Norway talks.' Source: *Aberdeen Press & Journal* 23. 10. 08

+ But Richard Lochhead criticised 'draconian' proposals to shut down waters on the west coast of Scotland to trawler fishing. MSP Alasdair Allan said the initial proposals from the EC were totally unacceptable and could damage the west coast prawn fishery. (No mention of damaging the sea bed or the prawns"! Ed.) Source: *P & J* 6. 11. 08 +And following Animal Defenders International (ADI) campaign across Europe there is to be a revision of EC Directive 86/609 which goes before a European Committee in Brussels during the week of 20 Jan 09. This deals with measures to end experiments on primates. Other areas on the agenda include 'Increased protection for invertebrates.' (Fingers crossed! But don't hold your breath. Ed.) Source: *ADI press release sent from Vivisection Information Network (V-I-N)* 20. 1. 09



REPORTS

Following the Revision of the Directive above, the scientific opinion provided by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concludes: That 'The largest decapod crustaceans are complex in behaviour and appear to have some degree of

awareness. They have a pain system and considerable learning ability.’ As a consequence of this evidence, it is concluded that... ‘all Cephalopods and decapod Crustaceans fall into the same category of animals as those that are at present protected.’ It therefore recommends at 2.3.11 that ‘All Decapods should be in Category 1’ and so receive protection.

Category 1: The scientific evidence clearly indicates that these groups of animals are able to experience pain and distress. The Report goes on at Section 4.6 to state that the following methods amongst others of killing are likely to cause pain and suffering:

Any procedure involving the separation of the abdomen from the thorax or removal of tissue, flesh or limbs while the crustacean is still alive and fully conscious (including when in a chilled state).

Placing crustaceans in cold water and heating the water to boiling point.

Placing live crustaceans into hot or boiling water.

Placing live marine crustaceans in fresh water.

It goes on to say that, in terms of cooking, ‘the only method which would avoid pain and suffering would be electrostunning.’

This Report can be downloaded at www.efsa.eu.int

+From *Endangered Earth* 9. 10. 08 The Hawaiian monk seal, at the top of the list of the world’s most imperilled pinnipeds (fin-footed) is now being considered by the US federal government for more habitat protection, thanks to a petition filed by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), KAHEA: the Hawaiian-Environmental Alliance, and Ocean Conservancy.

And in response to the CBD lawsuit, the National Marine Fisheries Service has placed the Cook Inlet beluga whale on the federal endangered species list.

Source: *CBD* 17. 10. 08

+Thanks to a suit by the CBD and Desert Survivors, officials at the Fort Irwin Army base called a halt to a deeply flawed translocation project that’s been harmful to more than 1,000 threatened desert tortoises. The project, to push tortoises out of habitat where the fort intended to expand its tank-training areas, has so far resulted in the deaths of more than 90 tortoises. Source: *Endangered Earth*, *CBD* 16. 10. 08

+The *Endangered Earth* CBD report for 18. 12. 08 covers the US Fish and Wildlife Service proposal to protect more than 3.7 million acres of southwestern Alaskan coastline as federally protected sea otter

habitat. They also propose to protect seven penguin species: the African yellow-eyed, white-flipped, Fiodland crested, Humboldt, erect-crested and southern rockhopper . This is all good news, but, flouting the CBD lawsuit, the Interior secretary made permanent a ‘4(d)’ rule weakening protections for the polar bear.



+On 16 Jan. 09, CBD reports:

‘Though we’re famous for working on polar bears, wolves and whales, the CBD works just as hard to protect small plants and animals that few people will ever see. We think all creatures are equal and deserving of a chance to survive. (Secoded! Ed.) So we’re excited to report that our multiyear campaign to save the black abalone from extinction got a big boost when the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) placed it on the federal endangered species list this week. The black abalone joins the white abalone, elkhorn coral and staghorn coral as the only marine invertebrates among the 1,300 species protected by the Endangered Species Act. (US). All are endangered by global warming, and all won protection due to scientific petitions by the CBD.’

+From *A Special Report by The Economist*, 3. 1. 09 called ***Troubled Waters.***

‘All of us have in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean...and when we go back to the sea...we are going back from whence we came.’ John Kennedy. In the surface and coastal waters where 90% of marine life is to be found, the impact of man’s activities is increasingly plain. 90% of large predatory fish have gone, according to some scientists. ...Indeed, most familiar sea creatures, from albatrosses to walruses, from seals to oysters, have suffered huge losses....The killing of turtles in the Caribbean started in the 1700s. The hunting of sharks in the gulf of Mexico (45-99%, depending on the variety) got going only in the 1950s. Cod live in the bottom layer of the ocean. Trawlermen in pursuit of these and other groundfish like Pollock and haddock drag steel weights and rollers as well as nets behind their boats, devastating huge areas of the sea floor as they go. In the gulf of Mexico, trawlers ply back and forth year in year out, hauling vast nets that scarify the seabed and allow no time for plant and animal life

to recover. Wherever fish can still be found it is much the same story. Coral reefs, whose profusion of life and diversity of ecosystems make them the rainforests of the sea, have suffered most of all. Only about 5% of coral reefs can now be considered pristine.

About a third of CO₂ from fossil fuels is taken up by the sea, where it forms carbonic acid. The plants and animals that have evolved over time to thrive in slightly alkaline surface waters –their pH is around 8.3 – are now having to adapt to a 30% increase in the acidity of their surroundings. If the trend continues, as it will for at least some decades, clams, mussels, conches and all creatures that grow shells made of calcium carbonate will struggle.

Visible algal blooms known as red tides have always occurred naturally, but they have increased in frequency, number and size in recent years, notably since man-made nitrogen fertilisers came into widespread use in the 1950s. When these fertilisers and other nutrients reach the sea through rainwater an explosion of toxic algae and bacteria takes place, killing fish, absorbing almost all the oxygen and leaving a microbially dominated ecosystem. Each of these phenomena appears to be linked. Slaughter one species in the food web a chain of alterations is set off. Thus the near extinction of sea otters in the northern Pacific led to a proliferation of sea urchins, which then laid waste an entire kelp forest that had hitherto sustained its own ecosystem. If acidification kills tiny sea snails known as pteropods, the pacific salmon that feed on them may also die. Then other fish move in, preventing the salmon from coming back.



+ Another problem is that roughly a quarter of the ocean floor is strewn with ‘manganese nodules’, usually about the size of an apple, which contain not just manganese but also cobalt, copper and nickel. In the past five years China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, South Korea and a consortium of east European countries have all been awarded licences by the International Seabed Authority (ISA) to explore mining possibilities on the deep-ocean seabed. This dredging stirs up quantities of sediment that kills everything nearby. There are other ‘jewels’ of the ocean such as gas hydrates –white, sorbet-like compounds that usually consist of methane molecules trapped in a cage of water. There is also the discovery of the strange

variety of deep-sea life that is increasingly coming to light. Some is found near ‘black smokers’, vents that occur along ridges in the middle of the oceans where two plates are spreading apart. Here dissolved hydrogen sulphide comes out of the rock and suddenly cools, causing minerals to condense and create plumes of ‘smoke’. Life here gets its food and energy from the Earth, not the sun, such as sulphur-eating bacteria, scale worms and blind shrimps, though they have eyes on the back of their heads, and can mend their DNA even after it has been highly irradiated. And below the crust in these volcanic parts micro-organisms have been discovered that may offer clues to the origins of life. But much of the interest comes from medical researchers who hope the strange properties of some of these creatures might lead to new anti-carcinogens or tumour-reducing drugs. Some creatures are already being used in research, such as sea cucumbers which are harvested and minced up by French and American pharmaceutical companies.

About a third of the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere ends up in the sea. A vast amount of carbon is swilling about or sitting in the deep sea below 200 metres, where a biological pump pushes it round in such a way that any carbon atom entering the depths from the atmosphere will return to the surface every 500-1,200 years. The pump is driven by phytoplankton, the tiny plants that constantly convert sunlight and CO₂ into more plants, half of which die or are eaten by zooplankton. For the duration of its cycle, this deep-sea carbon is locked away. Short-term changes in the concentration are mostly affected by carbon in the atmosphere, carbon dissolved in the upper layers of the sea and the carbon in plants and animals on land. But now the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is higher than it has been for at least 365,000 years. As a result, the sea is 30% more acidic than it would have been without man’s new activities. The acidifying is having disturbing effects on mussels, oysters and other animals in coastal regions. Another worry is that eggs and larvae of some fish may be unable to survive in more acidic water and that creatures like squid will also die out. And the melting of glaciers, ice caps and polar ice sheets on land has the potential to account for a great deal. The Arctic has lost over 40% of its year-round ice since 1985, 14% in 2004-5 alone.

The winners in the newly polluted, over-exploited, oxygen-starved seas are simple, primitive forms of life, whereas the losers are the ones that have taken

aeons to develop. Algae, bacteria and jellyfish thrive while fish, coral and sea lions die.

(This Report is very comprehensive and covers a great deal more than I have room for here. If you would like a copy do contact me on our email. Ed.)



LOBSTERS & CRAYFISH

+ Dominic Boothroyd grows lobsters in captivity and then lets them loose into the sea near Padstow, Cornwall. Mr Boothroyd is the manager of the National Lobster Hatchery in Padstow and says the fishery is worth an estimated £8million to the Cornish economy. He adds 'Each year fishermen harvest 11,000 tons and we export 90% of it.' During the 1980s lobster numbers began to collapse due to overfishing. The hatchery opened in 2000, with support from Rick Stein, Marks & Spencer, North Cornwall District Council and the EU. The hatchery is currently releasing 10-20,000 infant lobsters a year, and hoping to increase this number to 60,000. It will be four to five years before the lobsters grow to full size. (Go on, babes, walk your way to freedom. You've got five years ahead of you and the open sea. GO! Ed.) Source: *Daily Tel. Mag.* 20. 9. 08

+It seems that dinner for a typical Cape Town tourist means a visit to a restaurant where the food will be very good, more often than not European. This is another article in the *Tel. Mag.* 26.7. 08 and the picture is of two dead lobsters on a plate, lying on their backs with legs strewn around them. Distinctly unappetising and very sad! Ed.

+Yet another breeding programme is helping to reverse the decline of one of Britain's most threatened species, the white-clawed crayfish, and this has produced 300 young. The project, begun in 2003 by Natural England, the Government's conservation body and the Environment Agency aims to prevent the white-clawed crayfish from disappearing in England. The project started by ring-fencing native crayfish in the Yorkshire Dales to protect them from the American species which are both more aggressive and carry a plague. A stock assessment recently showed that more than 60% of hatchlings survived. (Don't be fooled. This is really not for the sake of the crayfish, but is an extra something to stuff in people's mouths! Ed.) Source: *Daily Tel.* 29. 12. 08



CRABS

+ In Birmingham at the end of November the BBC ran a Good Food Show and the Orkney Fishermen's Society (OFS) had a stand to 'plug the taste of crab'. It seems that crab is widely seen as a delicious delicacy in the UK but research shows that only 2% of the population have ever tried it. (2% too many! Ed.) OFS manager Steward Crichton said: '... We're certain that once they've discovered just how good it tastes they'll have the confidence to buy and serve it at home.' (Boiling alive and all? Ed.) Source: *P & J* 20. 11. 08

+After a poor sales effort because of bad packaging design, Richard Corner changed the design of his Seafood & Eat It and now sells 2,500-3,000 pots of crabmeat a week, under a deal with Waitrose. Richard Corner said it was 'an absolute dream'. (Dream, nightmare, all one to the crabs. Ed.) Source: *Daily Tel.* 4. 9. 08

+ Scientists from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) are studying the migration patterns of more than 4,000 crabs released in the Channel. The crabs are tagged, and if you find one when hunting in rocky seaside pools you could be entered into a government lottery paying out up to £1,000. Source: *Daily Tel.* 3. 10. 07

+ *The Sunday Times*, 5. 10. 08 produced a wonderful photo from an entry in the wildlife Photographer of The Year competition. It is of two arrow crabs, the male standing behind his pregnant mate to ensure that other males don't get any ideas. The crabs are standing covered by the spikes of the



long-spined sea urchins. (This is not the arrow crab. Ed.)

+ And underwater landscapes including the habitats of threatened species in England, will be open for viewing on the internet. A project by Google Earth features streams, photo galleries and stories from protected marine areas around the world. One of the sites users can view of Lundy Island, off the north Devon coast, England's only statutory marine reserve. Source: *Daily Tel.* 8. 10. 08

+Peter Fraser, senior lecturer of biological and environmental sciences at Aberdeen University has studied crabs and their sense of balance to provide

information to Nasa on the effects of low gravity. He says crabs have balancing systems similar to those of humans, and his research has provided data on the potentially dangerous side effects of space travel. He sent crabs on a weightless flight to simulate space travel. Prof. Fraser has also shown that the crab's balancing system carries information about the depth of water above the creature.

Source: *P & J* 27. 6. 08

+According to Anthony Capella, the secret to eating well in Venice is to choose dishes that are from the lagoon: eels, duck, small fish such as cuttlefish, the vegetables that grow on the islands and above all, crabs. In the shallow waters around the island of Murano the small crabs are caught. Twice a year in spring and autumn, the young male crabs shed their shells and during this change the fishermen net the crabs and keep them in special tanks until they are soft enough to eat, skin and all. The live crabs are placed in a bowl containing beaten eggs, salt and grated parmesan: they feast on this for a few hours then, when they are sluggish from overeating, they are coated with flour, dropped into hot oil and quickly fried. (This is simply appalling. What kind of mindless barbarians can do this to living creatures? That kind, obviously. Ed.) Source: *Sunday(!) Times* 26. 10. 08

+ A haul of more than 100 brown crabs, thought to be worth up to £300 were taken from a secure cooler tank which had been keeping them alive at a farm in Lymington. A vehicle was seen near the farm in the early hours of that morning. It was described as an old maroon-coloured BMW or Mercedes. (Only the best for these crabs. I wonder how they managed to drive it, but let's hope they got away in time. Ed.) Source: *Lymington Times and Echo*, 18. 7. 08

LITTLE ONES

New machines that can take the tails off 120 prawns a minute could help to make processing (sic) more efficient and help to reduce costs, according to the Sea Fish Industry (Seafish). The fully-automated processors cost £80,000 each. Seafish manager Tom Rossiter said, 'It has been specifically designed and developed to tail prawns on board fishing vessels. Effectively releasing two crew members from a time-consuming and uncomfortable activity.' (Aaah, poor! Guess the prawns enjoy having their tails chopped off. Quite comfy really! Ed.) Source: *P & J* 19.11.08

+ Shetland mussels were described as the best in the world by leading French chef Jean-Christophe Novelli during a trip to the island and a tour of Blueshell Mussels farm, part of the Scottish

Shellfish Marketing Group (SSMG). Michael Laurenson, chair of the SSMG added, 'Jean-Christophe seemed impressed with our operation and quality and succulence of our mussels.' (Sounds obscene, somehow! Ed.) Source: *P & J* 20.10.08

+Water coming off the land into Morecambe Bay, Lancs is killing the shrimps because the rain is diluting the salt and the shrimps need salt to survive. Source: *Daily Tel.* 8.10. 08

+Ray Kutscher-Byrne was trying to shore up the river bank next to his house when he moved two tiny freshwater pearl mussels. He now has a criminal record. He had been granted permission to do the work and reported the mussels and put them in a bucket of water. Mr Kutscher-Byrne contacted his local fisheries board who passed on the information to biologists. They told him to halt the £20,000 conservation project. As there were no other mussels next to his land he continued the work. He was warned that he may have committed an offence and eight months later police charged him with disturbing the protected species. He appeared at Ayr Sheriff Court, where the sheriff admonished him, the lowest punishment available. Mr Kutscher-Byrne said, 'The irony is I am very committed to conservation work on my land and try as far as possible to protect the varied wildlife.' (And hunters seem to get away with breaking the law while little is done! Ed.) Source: *Daily Tel.* 30. 9. 08

+ A new initiative to pool together data on biotoxin test results from Scotland's scallop sector was launched last August. It is hoped that the pilot will generate awareness of the project and become the starting block for a UK-wide scheme for scallops. (Eh? Ed.) Source: *P & J* 12. 7. 08

+ When scientists put a shrimp on to a tiny treadmill (sic) they discovered that, relatively speaking, it could run faster than Paula Radcliffe. They found that the four-inch long shrimp could 'jog' at speeds of 66ft a minute or 0.75mph, and could carry on for three hours before needing a rest. (How did they know? Ed.) Prof. David Scholnick of Pacific University in Oregon said, 'These studies will give us a better idea of how marine animals can perform when faced with increasing pathogens and immunological challenges. Source: *Daily Tel.* 4.11.08



prawns

+ Barnacle fishermen, who harvest the percebes or goose barnacle which is found in Galicia and northern Portugal, work in teams of two, one holding a line and manning the boat, the other clambering onto the rocks, cutting a couple of handfuls of the creatures with a special tool and stuffing them into a net bag tied around his waist. He then swims back to the boat. The whole operation has to be timed to the rhythm of the swells to avoid the men being picked up and slammed back against the sharp edges of the crop they are trying to harvest. Anthony Capella says, 'Nothing illustrates the lengths to which man will go to satisfy his craving for unusual foods... This particular barnacle has a scaly shell that resembles a recently hatched dinosaur and a long webbed foot with which it clings to cliffs and which becomes thicker and juicier (sic) as the weather deteriorates.' Source: *Sunday Times* 21.12.08

+ One of Britain's rarest seahorses has been spotted in The Solent by wildlife conservation volunteers. The creatures are camouflaged and about six inches long. They usually live in shallow water among weeds, but can survive depths of up to 100 feet. The seahorse is a protected species. Source: *Echo*, 14.5.08



+ Last year deadly jellyfish were washed up on a Hampshire beach. These were the infamous Portuguese man-o-war and it is thought that they are here to stay. Source: *Echo*, 15. 8. 08

+ More photos submitted to the Annual Small World Photomicrography competition have captured the most amazing creatures, including a sergestes larva (deep water crustacean) and a Nematode worm. Source: *Ind.* 10.10.08

MARINE BILL

+THE draft of a new marine Bill to protect our seas has been endorsed by a Parliamentary committee. Under the new Bill, the Secretary of State is required to designate Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) rather than merely empower them to do so. It will also mean that MCZs are developed as an ecologically coherent network of sites, rather than as isolated sites. In 2007, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trusts gathered more than 170,000 signatures in support of a Marine Bill, and presented them to the environment Secretary at the House of Commons.

(While this is really great news for marine life, it does nothing to prevent the cruelty involved in the

killing of creatures once caught. That is the next step. Ed.) Source: *Daily Echo*, 13.8.08

+ One of our members took the trouble to write to her New Forest East MP concerning the Bill. He is very supportive of the Bill.



ENVIRONMENT/SAFETY

+ Seagrass continues to be considered one of the most ecologically important coastal habitats. Hampshire and IofW Trust has been surveying sites to see how it has changed over the years and to monitor the changes. The use of scuba diving and underwater videoing allows the Trust to survey in greater detail than in the past, but records from trips to the shore are still valuable. Sometimes the seagrass is called eelgrass because of its importance in sheltering eels. It has also been called widgeon-grass, because of its importance to wildlife, proving food for wildfowl. Source: *Southampton paper* 8.9.08

+ This is also from *The Economist*, 3.1.09, saying that not only are marine fish species below or on the brink of falling below sustainable levels, but also a mass of discarded plastic swirls round in two clots in the Pacific, each as large as the United States.

+After Deborah Landvik-Fellner collapsed in the parking lot of her supermarket, no doctor could find out what was wrong with her. Then it turned out that for 12 years she had been eating a can of albacore tuna every day. It seems that mercury in tuna is still legal! Source: *EVANA USA* 10.11.08

+ And Japanese diners who enjoy eating dolphin meat are putting their health at risk. A study by two Japanese Universities found that residents of Taiji, a whaling town on the Pacific coast, who frequently ate the meat of pilot whale – a member of the dolphin family – have mercury levels 10 times the national average. Source: *EVANA* 10.11. 08

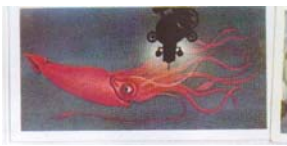
+Chilean Congress members have asked the Ministry of Public Health to declare a 'sanitary emergency in the south of the country' related to seafood poisoning due to *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*. Outbreaks of this illness tend to be concentrated along coastal regions during Summer and early Autumn when higher temperatures favour higher levels of the bacteria. 228 people were affected. Seafood most often implicated includes squid, mackerel, tuna, sardines, crab, shrimp and bivalves like oysters and clams. Source: Thanks *Bernie*, 23. 12. 08

+ Scientists are saying that almost a fifth of the world's coral reefs are now dead. Climate change

and activities such as pollution, fishing and coral mining have led to the loss of 19% of reefs. Carl Gustaf Lundin, the head of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's global marine programme said '...As the carbon is absorbed, the oceans will become more acidic, which is seriously damaging a wide range of marine life from corals to plankton communities and from lobsters to seagrasses.' Source: *Daily Tel.* 11.12.08

PAIN IN INVERTEBRATES

+ As I have already mentioned, we are trying to get DEFRA to listen to our scientific arguments on pain and stress in invertebrates. The only 'humane' way of killing shellfish is by electrostunning, if they must be killed at all. The modern Crustastun is making very good headway and many large supermarkets and restaurants are keen to buy one of these articles. But it was as far back as the 1970s that Doctor John Baker designed a 'stunning' machine and he demonstrated the prototype which killed the creatures almost instantly. One of our members so kindly and amazingly sent me the original article from the *Observer Magazine* 28.3.1976 which discusses Dr Baker's work. You might remember that I went to visit Dr Baker's daughter some time ago and she most kindly allowed me to photocopy pages from his work diaries covering his invention. All this will go into the Network archives and supports the arguments which we and many scientists have promulgated that these and nearly all invertebrates feel pain. To be quite honest, it isn't rocket science! All these creatures have what are known as enkephalins which are pentapeptides involved in regulating pain and nociception (encoding noxious stimuli) in the body. The enkaphalins are termed ligands or endorphins and bind to the body's opioid or pain receptors. The argument seems to be whether a creature suffers if it doesn't expect noxious stimuli, or if it can't remember past bad experiences. So what about human babies or people with serious brain damage? Even if there is a question over invertebrates we believe that they should always be given the benefit of the doubt. Ed.



FISH AND INDUSTRY

+Conservationists have petitioned the EU to ban the practice of cutting the fins off live sharks and then dumping the sharks overboard to die. Europe is said to supply about 30% of the 100million sharks a year killed for the restaurant trade in Hong Kong

and mainland China. In the UK, sharks have an ally in Sir David Jason, who told the Shark Trust website: 'such huge numbers being caught mean that many shark species are facing extinction. Apart from the moral issue the practical one is that we need healthy oceans and sharks are vital components in marine food.' Source: *Daily Tel.* 9.10.08



The bluefin tuna, a fearsome predator, is prized for producing the world's best and most expensive sushi, but is facing extinction through overfishing by French and Spanish fleets, warn scientists. Although this species is able to accelerate faster than a Porsche, it has been unable to escape the giant nets and lines of southern Europe's tuna fleets. Researchers have described the management of the Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery as an 'international disgrace' and warn that the species is facing a population crash from which it may never recover. Source: *Sunday Times*, 19.10.08

+ Kelp or sea bamboo, spreads so quickly that it takes over the great white shark's hunting ground. It can grow to up to 50ft high. Although abalone feed on kelp, they have been poached almost to extinction so the kelp keeps on growing. Fur seals thrive on kelp, unlike white sharks. The great white is considered one of the most successful predators on the planet. It can't produce sound so it uses body shapes and movement to communicate. The shark eats cetaceans, squid, other sharks, sting rays and other bottom – dwelling big fish and can live for up to 60 years. Source: *BBC2 Mike Rutzen 'The Natural World' 2.1.09*

+Scotland's fishing industry has stated that it will underline its green credentials with the launch of an environmental policy statement. Key points highlighted in the statement include the industry's co-operation with marine scientists and efforts to improve monitoring and compliance. Source: *P & J* 9.10.08 (Hoorah I hear the fish shout! From now on all fishing will be green and we are doing our bit for the planet! Ed.)

+ The Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group (SSMG) announced a new managing director. Stephen Cameron was previously factory manager at fish-processing and marketing co-op Scot Trout. Source: *P & J* 29.7.08

+West coast fishermen are alarmed at the prospect of a 25% cut in total allowable catch (TAC) for

2009, suggested by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) The North Sea nephrops TAC is currently 26,144 tonnes, with the UK having much of the catch. Nephrops are the UK's most valuable species and the North Sea landings into Scotland in 2005 were worth £38.7 million. At present there is no restriction on catch and there are many boats fishing for prawns. (I think its time the prawns fought back! Ed.) Source: *P & J 10.9.08*

CETACEANS

According to MEP Diana Wallis (Lib) the proposed seal-trade ban is unworkable as it contains too many exemptions. She says it also harms 'fragile indigenous communities' of traditional seal hunters. 'I want to achieve better treatment of these beautiful animals,' she said. (the seals or the indigenous communities? Ed.) Frieda Brepoels, a Belgian centre-right MEP, who is drafting the environment committee's position on the Parliamentary report by Wallis, wants to toughen the Commission's proposal. She calls for a full ban on seal products with a limited exemption for Inuit communities. 'Only a total ban meets the widely demonstrated concerns of European citizens,' she argues. Finn Karlsen, Greenland's fisheries, hunting and agriculture minister, told European Voice that the proposal would have negative consequences for hunters in Greenland. (!) Source: *European Voice*. 22.1. 09

+ Joan Court, a stalwart AR campaigner for many years, was escorted from the Japanese Embassy by police after staging a sit-in protest against commercial whaling. Joan took part in a Sea Shepherd Conservation Society peaceful protest in March 08. Asked what drives her, the former nurse and child protection officer said, 'Intense love of animals – I do not like to see creatures exposed to suffering.' Sea Shepherd protesters, were marking the start of an International Whaling Commission summit. Japan wants the ban on commercial whaling to be lifted. (Thanks to Quaker Concern for Animals.) Source: *Cambridge Evening News no date*.

+Although the number of North Atlantic long-finned pilot whales is unknown and they are listed as 'strictly protected' by the convention on the conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, every year in the Faroe Islands, around 2,000 whales are driven ashore and cruelly slaughtered. For centuries the Islanders have hunted pilot whales, driving entire schools into killing bays where they are speared or gaffed from boats, dragged ashore and butchered with knives.

Although the Islands are a protectorate of Denmark, they have their own Government and regulations governing the pilot whale hunt or 'grind' as it is known. The Islanders have no subsistence need for whale meat, and much of the flesh is left to rot and be dumped. It cannot be exported, as it is polluted with heavy metals and other toxins and therefore cannot meet EU health standards for human food. According to Faroese legislation it is also permitted to hunt certain species of small cetaceans including bottlenose dolphin, Atlantic white-beaked dolphin, Atlantic white-sided dolphin and Harbour porpoises. The latter are killed with shotguns. It is well known that whales are sensitive, social animals with highly developed nervous systems. They have a profound capacity to suffer distress, terror and pain. Source: *email 5.11.08* (If you have ever seen a film of this massacre you will never forget it – adults and children standing in a sea of red and holding up unborn foetuses in victory. I wonder if these people are of the same human species as myself. Ed.)

The right whales that winter along Georgia's (US) coastline will soon be protected by a new federal speed limit on large ships. But some shipping industry representatives have challenged the scientific studies underpinning the rule, which will lapse in five years if it is not renewed by federal regulators. Source: *the Atlanta Journal-Constitution 5. 11. 08*



Seals swimming in the Solent are to be fitted with satellite mobile phones to help researchers better understand the life and travels of the mysterious mammals. Harbour seals were first spotted off the south coast just a decade ago and they have since flourished, but scientists admit they know very little about their movements or feeding and breeding habits. (How much do seals know about the feeding and breeding habits of scientists, I should like to know? Ed.) The seals, also known as common seals, bask on sand or mud banks near the high water line when the tide is out and at high tide they hunt for bottom dwelling fish such as flounders. Source: *Daily Echo, 15.10.08*

+ However, in the same paper the article goes on that the seal colony had better be on the look out because the killer whales are increasingly being found off the south coast of England. The whales are also known as Orcas. Some good news at last, the Orcas are doing well. Hoorah!