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THE SHELLFISH NETWORK
NEWSLETTER, WINTER 2009/2010

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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, a Happy New Year to everybody, and thanks to all you wonderful people who keep us supplied with articles and donations! Without folks such as Jean, Zelda, Myrna, and all the donors, we just couldn't keep going. We are still trying to get hold of at least one Gov't. Minister who will hear us out, but what with the financial mess and the terrible earthquake, they are all struggling to keep going at the moment. Our prayers and thoughts are with the people and animals of Haiti.

SHELLFISH

+According to the *Telegraph?* (no date) Pollution and habitat loss are wiping out one of the guardians of the world's river systems. According to experts, a sixth of all the world's freshwater crab species are now threatened with extinction. These crabs help to keep tropical aquatic ecosystems healthy by recycling animal and plant remains.

+But, of course, the mitten crabs, which are now living in the Thames and other rivers, are considered pests. An article in *The Ind.* 18. 1. 10 argues that these crabs are as big a pest as the grey squirrel or the rose-ringed parakeet. (Yet, since all these creatures were introduced by people or are the result of human travel, it seems rather hard to blame the creatures! OK, let's kill them because they are a nuisance to humans. The crabs probably came over as larvae in the ballast water of ships from the Far East. And we have cut down most of the trees that red squirrels

are able to live in. Parakeets were brought as pets for the pleasure of humans. But, no, now they are a 'pest' and must be eliminated. The writer in the Independent suggests we eat the mitten crabs. Perhaps we should eat everything else that we consider a nuisance. I can't stand the invasive 'musac' in shops. I'll eat the CDs! Am I weird or what? Ed.)

+The Archbishop of Canterbury joined Thanet's Greek community at a Blessing of the Seas on Jan. 10. Dr Rowan Williams was the special guest at the 46th annual religious event, during which the congregation also thanked the sea for giving up its fruits (sic) and looked ahead to a productive year of fishing. (I always find it strange that people look on God's creatures as food and happily eat them! Ed.) Source: *The Kent Messenger* 11. 1. 10 thanks to *Private Eye* 22.1 - 4. 2 10

+Thousands of dead crabs have been washed up on the Thanet coastline... Volunteer coastal warden Tony Sykes was the first to report the mass of dead velvet swimming crabs. Environment experts were mystified. Source: *ThisisKent.co.uk* 12. 1. 10 again thanks to *Private Eye* as above.

+Mantis shrimps, found on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, have the most complex vision systems known to science according to researchers at Bristol University. The animals can see in 12 primary colours, we see in only three, and they can distinguish between different forms of light to give a vivid three-dimensional image. Light-sensitive cells in the eyes of these shrimps perform similar functions to the electronic sensors used in DVD and CD players. Dr. Nicholas Roberts, lead author of the paper published in *Nature Photonics*, said 'It really is exceptional-outperforming anything we humans have so far been able to create.' He added '...how beautifully simple it is.

This...mechanism, comprised of cell membranes rolled into tubes, completely outperforms synthetic designs. It could help us make better optical devices in the future using liquid crystals that have been chemically engineered to mimic the properties of the cells in the mantis shrimp's eye.' Source: *Daily Tel.* 26. 10. 09 (But can they make more interesting TV programmes?

Judging by the amount of rubbish available now, I think we should employ some of these shrimps to design our entertainment! Ed.)

+Oysters were thought to have died out in the Firth of Forth decades ago, but specimens have

been found at a secret location. Scientists have described the discovery as hugely significant and insisted it could lead to future commercial production. (Here we go again! I would have thought the find was only significant to oysters, but how they are to make commercial gain out of it beats me – unless they intend to set up a pearl necklace business. Ed.) Source: *Independent* 6. 11. 09

+the FDA (US) are investigating about a dozen reports of norovirus-related illnesses from South and North Carolina consumers who ate oysters harvested from the San Antonio Bay. Source: *ProMED-mail* 7. 12. 09

+A particularly nasty piece in the *Wall Street Weekend Journal* 8. 11. 09 discusses a ‘lobster safari’ It says, ‘Lobster safaris, which give landlubbers the chance to pluck their own lobster dinner from the sea, are offered by several hotels along Sweden’s Bohuslän coast. In this area lobsters are known as ‘black gold’ in reflection of the price the king of crustaceans fetches on markets in Gothenburg and Stockholm.

Apparently the hotel chef will prepare the lobster for dinner upon return from pulling the creatures (lobsters, that is, not chefs) from the sea while you relax in the sauna.

After describing the many ways of catching, cooking and eating the lobsters, the writer goes on to say: ‘Food like this doesn’t come cheap...’ (He’s right there! Many thousands of animals must be slaughtered during these safaris. That is thousands of lives. There’s nothing cheap about that. Ed.)

+Many of you will have read the article in the *Ind.* 21. 11. 09 about the crustastun. Now, obviously we want all creatures to be left alone and not caught, cooked or eaten. But as I have said before, this ‘industry’ is not going to go away suddenly or easily, so while the animals are suffering, it is up to us to do something about it. In the above article all the lobsters were boiled alive. Wouldn’t it have been better if they had died a quick and painless death instead of the horrendous one they suffered? This is why we are supporting the Crustastun and until the whole industry is history we will go on doing so. After all, this is really not about me or how I feel, but about the suffering of helpless animals. As a vegan I am appalled by the idea of killing, but as a humanitarian person I hope you will all agree with me that it is better that while they are dying we should care about their welfare?

You have every right to disagree, but I would like to hear your arguments. (By the way, I know the one about more people eating lobsters if they are killed without suffering, but that is only a tiny number. Most people don’t even think about it! Ed.) So congratulations to Simon and Charlotte for the care and time they have taken to create the possibility of a painless death for crustaceans. Incidentally, many chefs are delighted with the Crustastun!



+The European Commission is taking legal action against Ireland for failure to comply with legislation protecting shellfish waters. Source: *The Irish Times* 14. 01 04 (I don’t know the outcome of this. Ed.)

+Claims the oyster fishing industry in the Solent could be threatened by controversial plans to add fluoride to tap water round Southampton is being considered. Source: *Southern Daily Echo* 23. 11. 09

+And in the same paper tests were being carried out after a problem with a S’hampton sewage works which closed the shell fishing beds. The ban went on for three weeks after tests showed shellfish still contained high levels of the bacteria E.Coli. Source: *Echo* 5. 12. 09

+But the Solent’s once thriving oyster industry is on the verge of collapse, fishermen and scientists have warned. The Solent’s oyster beds could soon be barren. Experienced shellfish merchants and fishermen say mismanagement is to blame to explain why the oysters have stopped reproducing. (!). (Well would you bother if you saw your family and friends hauled off to be eaten? Ed.) But Terry Lankford, a shellfish merchant, blames the tiny underwater snail-like creature, called a tingle, which bores a hole into the oyster shell to suck out the flesh. Source: *Echo* 28. 10. 09



+A new species of crab that resembles a strawberry has been found on the coast of

Taiwan. Two little female crabs were found, measuring 1inch across. Their shells are red background with small white spots, just like a strawberry. Source: *Daily Tel.* 6. 1. 10

INDUSTRY

+An Oban-based prawn boat has a CCTV on board to monitor what gets caught. It is one of seven Scottish boats fitted with cameras in a £100,000 trial launched by Fisheries Minister Richard Lochhead. The skipper, Ian Smith, said: 'This is an interesting and exciting new initiative that is being tested. I am very keen to see how this can help us in the future. It will demonstrate clearly what we have been saying all along about the very minimal, if any, impact vessels like ours have on white-fish stocks.' The CCTV can be used as an effective tool to provide reliable catch and discard data. Source: *Aberdeen Press & Journal* 22. 8. 09

+Joe Borg, the EU commissioner tasked with finding the right balance between commercial fishing activity and making sure fish stocks remain healthy, said that rational exploitation of the seas can contribute to economic growth at the same time as conserving marine resources. (There must be an easier way! Ed.) Source: *P & J* 20. 5. 09

+More than 370,000 tonnes of fish worth a total of £395m were landed by Scottish vessels during 2008, according to the latest official figures. (No wonder the seas are being denuded of fish! Ed.) But Richard Lochhead warned that the figures were likely to be overshadowed by the impact of the economic situation since late last year and did not reflect the 'very real difficulties currently facing some of our fishermen'. Source: *P & J* 21. 5. 09

+The Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers (ASSG) event in Oban on 21st & 22nd October 09 featured an international panel of speakers, a networking dinner and a visit to the Scottish Association of Marine Science Labs to see the results of recent research. The main speaker was Sandy Shumway, a leading shellfish academic from the US, talking about the valuable role of shellfish in balancing the earth's ecosystem. (Not by eating them all, they can't! Ed.) Source: *P & J* 8. 9. 09

+A letter from Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) inviting fishing leaders to a gathering organised by DEFRA has worried the fishing industry that the anticipated discussion could mislead people

about the Scottish fleet. Scottish Fishermen's Federation chief, Bertie Armstrong said: 'The use of exclusively negative quotations from global statistics will cause two things to happen. First, the public will be misled into thinking that the description applies to all the UK's fisheries, which it most certainly does not. Second, it gives the appearance that the government is largely insulated from its responsibility to actively promote the sustainable harvesting of seafood.'

(Oh, how I hate that expression! They are **not** seafood, they are **animals**. Ed.) Source: *P & J* 16. 09. 09

+Fishermen on the west coast have queried the credibility of the information and research carried out by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES). It follows recommendations from ICES that the prawn quota should be cut by 50% because the stock was in danger of collapse. But following lobbying from the fishermen, the EC has proposed a cut of between 10% and 15% which fishermen believe means they can remain viable. Duncan MacInnes, secretary of the Western Isles Fishermen's Association said: 'We couldn't understand how ECES could reach this conclusion when landings of larger prawns are increasing, suggesting that the stock is strong...' (Doh). Source: *P & J* 31. 8. 09



OCTOPUS

+Scientists have found that octopi collect coconuts from the sea bed and use them as portable shelters. To carry the shells, the octopui developed a comical form of locomotion dubbed 'stilt walking'. Source: *Daily tel.* 15. 12. 09

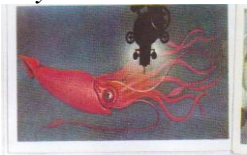
+Using tools makes the veined octopus one of the smartest animals on earth. Mark Norman, head of science at the Museum Victoria said that these octopuses are a relative of a snail, but they are not simple animals. Source: *CNN* 26. 12. 09

+Gordon Ramsay is at it again! Out octopus fishing in a boat from Cefalu he finally caught an octopus. The local fishermen told him how the Sicilians kill the creatures. So after he had kissed it he bit off its head. This is their way. 'Without hesitation, Gordon sunk his teeth into its bulging brain, while it flapped a tentacle in

protest. There was an impressive squelch and Gordon turned back to the camera with a smear of slime over his mouth, the happy victor of his self-appointed bush tucker trial. What a male!’ So writes David Sexton of the *Evening Standard* 6. 11. 09. (Well, that is certainly not the kind of male I would go for! Unless, of course, he meant the octopus, with its bulging brain. I wonder what kind of brain Gordon has, if any! Ed.)

+On filming humboldt squid, Martha Holmes described the 6ft animals flashing red and white both to confuse their prey and potentially to coordinate their attack. Jonathan Smith, a marine scientist said that they wanted to film them predating naturally. Film producer Neil Lucas shot Smith dropping down through the water while squid emerged from the darkness to investigate. The squid are know as ferocious killers, red devils, but Smith said, ‘...I could feel something very different from them. They will come and have a little feel, a little taste, and look at you with their big eyes. But there’s a level of intelligence there, rather than something scary. Not once did I feel intimidated.’ Source: *Tel. Mag. no date.*

+A delightful creature which looks like Dumbo the Elephant because of its big ear-like fins, is in fact a 6ft long octopod and lives more than a mile down in the mid-Atlantic. The creature was among 5,722 species recorded in the oceans, at depths where sunlight cannot reach, by the Census of Marine Life, a major international project surveying the oceans. Among the discoveries was an ‘indescribable catch of multi-coloured invertebrates, including corals, sea cucumbers and sea urchins living nearly a mile below the surface.’ Sources: *Daily Tel* 23. 11. 09, *Southern Daily Echo* 25. 11. 09



AQUATIC LIFE

+Following on from the above article was a piece in the *Ind.* 23. 11. 09, in which it says that scientists have revealed thousands of extraordinary creatures at the bottom of the Atlantic. Among these was a transparent sea cucumber, *Enypniastes*, which creeps forward on its many tentacles. In the photo, its intestines are plainly seen! The scientists also took samples of mud from the seabed and found that they

contained a surprisingly rich collection of fauna. Most of these animals are only a few millimetres in size and they live on the sediments that fall from above. At between 1.25 and 1.5 miles, the scientists found a bizarre, elongated orange fish-like animals called *Neocyema*, and another slow-growing fish living in complete darkness, called a rat-tail. It feeds on crustaceans. Specimens of microscopic animals called copepods, which live in the plankton, were found, but they were only able to identify seven of them. The rest appeared to be new to science, including one that shone like a jewel with a golden sheen when lit. Pictures of some of these animals were shown in the *Daily Tel.* 10.11.09

+Norbert Wu has spent the past 12 years taking images of the aquatic life in the Arctic ocean. He has captured images of the giant bell-shaped medusa or *jelly Desmomea glaciale*. And he also photographed emperor penguins ‘whizzing through the water like rockets.’ Alien-looking starfish and anemones carpeting the ocean floor were also among the films.

CETACEANS AND PINNIPEDS

Dolphins, porpoises, and whales are cetaceans, which means fin-like forelimbs and no hind limbs. Pinnipeds are seals and they have finned hind limbs. Now we’ve got that sorted...

+According to a 600-year-old cookbook, porpoise was once on the menu for Richard 11. The recipe describes a sort of medieval risotto known as ‘frumenty’ made with wheat and saffron. The porpoise would then be cooked by boiling or roasting and added to the dish. Source: *Daily Tel.* 3. 12. 09

+Dolphins have been declared the world’s second most intelligent creatures after humans, with scientists suggesting they are so bright that they should be treated as non-human persons. Studies have highlighted how similar their communications are to those of humans and that they are brighter than chimpanzees. Research shows that dolphin brains have many key features associated with high intelligence. The researchers argue that their work shows that it is morally unacceptable to keep such intelligent animals in amusement parks or to kill them for food or by accident when fishing. Some 300,000 whales, dolphins and porpoises die in this way each year. (I would argue that no creature should be kept in amusement parks or eaten, brain size aside! Ed.) Source: *Sunday Times* 3. 1. 10

+And I think the following shows that they not only are intelligent, but have a great sense of fun. A bottlenose dolphin who tips over waterskiers, headbutts surfers to steal their boards and makes amorous advance on young women is creating havoc in a New Zealand harbour. Moko was celebrated for his youthful playfulness when he first appeared off the North Island. But since moving along the east coast to the resort of Gisborne he has transformed into a teenage tearaway. He 'mugged' two 12-year-old girls for their boards! Source: *Daily Tel* 9. 12. 09



Bottlenose dolphins. Sorry, can't rotate it!
 +The RSPCA is investigating the deaths of five grey seals, three of them beheaded, found by a passer-by on a beach at Whitley Bay, North Tyneside. All the seals were juveniles, the youngest only a few weeks old. One of the seals was tagged. Investigations by the RSPCA found that it was part of a study into the survival and reproductive success of seals by the Sea Mammal Research Unit, St Andrews, Fife. Seals are protected by law in England. Source: *Ind.* 16. 1. 10

+Former 'Baywatch' star, Pamela Anderson, wants to save the seals from the annual hunt on Canada's East coast. The Canadian-born actress has joined other celebrities who are taking part in a new ad campaign by PETA. Anderson was in town to launch her animal-friendly clothing line at Fashion Week. Among others also shown wearing the white T-shirts with a drawing of a baby seal were Sarah McLachlan, Kelly Osborn, Jennie Garth, Jorja Fox and Perez Hilton. (Good for them, we wish them luck with their campaign. Ed.) Source: *Huffington Post* 28. 10. 09

+A rescue centre in East Winch, Norfolk, has been inundated with three times the normal number of orphan seal pups. The pups are named after the businesses who sponsor the centre. Source: *Ind* 4. 12. 09

+Now Canada is taking its seal hunt to China, where the money is! Despite all the hubbub about the EU's sanctions on the seal hunt, Europe is a relatively small market for Canadian seal products, but China is a big buyer, with none of the uproar about animal rights. Source: *Globe and Mail* 12. 1. 10

+A trucker driving on a highway in South Australia received a shock when the small animal he saw was trying to cross the busy road was a 13pound seal pup. The pup was found, severely dehydrated, a few miles from the nearest beach and nearly 200 miles from the nearest seal colony. Source: *The Times* 10. 12. 09

+The shooting and killing of seals is not only allowed in Scotland, but the Scottish Government is blocking moves to give seals some legal protection. Rt. Hon. Alex Salmond MSP is the First Minister and he can be contacted at St. Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG. Please write and enquire about protection of seals.

WHALES

+On 19. 1. 10 *the Independent* had the most beautiful photo of a beluga whale in the Arctic waters of northern Russia. These animals visit the region every year to breed.

+Happily the population of the world's biggest animal, the blue whale, is recovering at last after decades spent on the edge of extinction. They are reappearing in parts of the oceans where hunting once wiped them out. Marine scientists have recorded the animals roaming and feeding in the Pacific from where they had vanished for much of the past six decades. (Good news indeed! Ed.) Source: *The Sunday Times* 8. 11. 09

+Fort Bragg is a former timber town on the northern reaches of the California coast. When a blue whale was struck and killed offshore by the research vessel Pacific Star and drifted into an isolated cove, she quickly acquired her own story and a name, the Whale. Source: *Guardian* 29. 11. 09

+In response to a Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) legal action, the federal government (USA) formally proposed to protect 3,000 square miles of ocean for the critically endangered Cook Inlet beluga whale. That's almost two million acres. The Center has been fighting for the vanishing white whales of Cook Inlet for years, battling industrial development, oil and gas drilling, boondoggle (trivial, worthless) bridges and until recently, Sarah Palin! With a population between 300 and 400 animals, down from approximately 1,300 in the 1980s, this is great news for the whales. Source: *CBD* 1. 12. 09

+Japanese sailors in the Antarctic Southern Ocean fired water cannons at the self-styled

environmental ‘pirates’ in the annual, high-risk struggle over Tokyo’s controversial whale hunt. Seas Shepherd reported that it was fired upon with water cannons mounted on the Shonan Maru No 2, a ship which is part of the Japanese whaling fleet. Group founder, Paul Watson, said that his ship, the Steve Irwin, was then pursued for two hours by the Shonan Maru. ‘As long as they’re following us, they can relay our position to the whaling fleet so they can move if we’re approaching them,’ he said. Source:

Timesonline 17. 12. 09

+But in a further article in the *Tel. 6. 1. 10*, The Sea Shepherd claimed its 78ft protest powerboat, the *Ady Gil*, was ‘sliced in half, by the Shonan Maru 2. All six crew members were rescued and transferred to Sea Shepherd’s new Norwegian harpoon ship the *Bob Barker*. Paul Watson said the attack ‘seriously escalates the whole situation’. (There has been quite a lot of coverage of these incidents. Ed.)

+An interesting article from the *Natural History Mag. 11. 09* describes how Robert Pitman and John Durban sailed from the tip of south America to the Antarctic Peninsula in search of killer whales. The kind they were looking for, which potentially constitute a new species, prey on seals that live on and around the sea ice. They hoped to document one of their remarkable hunting techniques: sometimes as many as seven whales swim side by side to make a wave that washes a seal off an ice floe.

+And in *The Times 29. 12. 09*, an article describes how hundreds of holidaymakers witnessed the birth of a long-finned pilot whale as they struggled to rescue an entire pod stranded on a treacherous beach in New Zealand. About two thirds of the animals were saved by residents and holidaymakers who kept them wet in the low tide until they could be refloated in the afternoon. A dept. of Conservation boat had kept close to the pod to ensure that it did not return. They reported that the whales were at least 20 miles out to sea. Ingrid Visser, of the Orca Research Trust charity, watched the calf being born. ‘It was an amazing sight to see the calf pop like a cork out of the water. We had only just refloated the calf’s mother and once the calf was born the cow took it first to the group of whales nearest her, then to the other two. Within 15 minutes she had headed out to sea [where] the calf and the others followed her’.

+Blue whales’ songs to attract mates are becoming quieter, suggesting that their numbers

are increasing because of bans on commercial whaling, according to scientists.. an American engineer is using a little-known branch of mathematics to try to gain an insight into the songs of whales and dolphins. The singing ability of a humpback whale has long been known, but recent research indicates that the songs differ in dialects and follow grammatical rules that show a higher level of communication than first thought. ‘With a bit of investigation we may be able to show evidence of culture in a non-human species,’ said Mark Fischer, who previously worked on US Navy sonar and software, and is recording the mammals’ conversations. Sources: *Daily Tel 30. 11. 09 and*



11. 12. 09

MARINE AND COASTAL

+The Marine and Coastal Access Bill received Royal Assent on 12. 11. 09 to create the Marine and Coastal Access Act. The Act focuses on creating a new Marine Management Organisation, a new system of marine planning, a more efficient marine licensing system, a restructuring of inshore fisheries and the creation of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). Scotland and N. Ireland also have new Bills and all this is really good news for our seas. I will keep you updated on the new legislation.

+As the Scottish Parliament opened its first full debate on the new Marine bill for Scotland, animal welfare and seal research organisations published new research showing that fish farms can operate successfully without shooting seals. Responses from those questioned confirmed that there were a number of fish farms with seals in their vicinity that chose not to shoot seals, but focused instead on reducing the stocking density of fish cages and using effective anti-predator deterrents. Source: *Animal Concern, on behalf of the Seals Protection Groups 28. 10. 09*

+Australia’s marine waters cover double the area of the land. The marine waters are filled with amazing plant and animal life. Sadly, overfishing, oil and gas drilling, mining and pollution are destroying marine habitats, leaving them impoverished and on the verge of collapse. Source: *The Wilderness Society 17. 12. 09*

+And the Australian Government has committed to delivering a network of marine sanctuaries across the Top End Seas by the end of this

financial year and the Wilderness Society wants the government to ensure that this network is on par with the Great Barrier Reef Marine. The Top End Seas are the Timor Sea, the Arafura Sea and the Gulf of Carpentaria and they are one of the last relatively healthy tropical marine ecosystems left in the world yet less than 0.1% is protected in sanctuaries. They include endangered whales, dolphins, turtles, sea snakes and much more. Source: *Wilderness Society* 25. 11. 09

FOOD

+Inevitably, I have loads of cuttings on various methods of killing, cooking and eating our marine friends. Perhaps one of the most grotesque is from the *Tel. Weekend* 22. 8. 09 by Jasper Gerard who visits Sushi Hiro and Kiraku restaurants. He says: 'I'm turning Japanese, I think I'm turning Japanese, I really think so'. He goes on to describe one of the boxes of shushi at Sushi Hiro: 'We start with a box of sushi containing tuna belly, sea bass, salmon, turbot, sea bream, eel, surf clam, scallop, sweet shrimp, sardine, yellow tail, crab and salmon roe'. The Main course (!) includes octopus, bass, surf clam and turbot.

+Most of my anger results from the whining from the diners who complain that their dead animals have no flavour or are tough or some other 'disappointment'. Many years ago I was told that our tastebuds gradually die off so that is why things never taste as good as they did when we were children. As far as I am concerned, that is nonsense and all our food tastes wonderful. Perhaps its because nothing has died or suffered? I'm not being 'holier than thou', but if these sad people tried being vegan for a few years they wouldn't have to spend small fortunes on trying to rejig their tastebuds!

ANGLING

Another of my betes noirs is angling, especially when it is done for charity. Christchurch anglers helped net hundreds of pounds for a charity working to provide clean water (WaterAid) in third world countries. Now this is, of course, an excellent charity, but why kill innocent creatures in order to collect the cash? Surely there are other competitive ways?) Source: *Lymington Times* 24. 10. 09

+But here's an odd one! Scotland's first community marine conservation area in a scenic bay off the island of Arran is to ban fishing from about a third of Lamlash Bay under proposals to encourage the growth of scallop populations. Mr

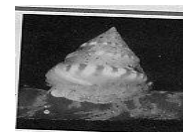
Lochhead (see above) claimed that preserving the island's marine heritage could help to attract more visitors to the area 'The proposals strike a balance between fishing and marine conservation,' he said. 'We will see fisheries management in one part of the bay, the safeguarding of the natural marine environment in the other...' (Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings! Ed.) Source: *The Times* 22. 1. 08 +An article in the *Daily Tel* 9. 11. 09 states that Britain's appetite for tuna is threatening to drive rare birds, including the albatross, to the edge of extinction. Tuna stocks in the South Atlantic and Mediterranean are among the most heavily fished in the world as demand rises for the cheap seafood. (sic)

+And finally, of course, I have many pictures of our brave heroes holding up large and beautiful fish of varying breeds, gasping and flailing (the fish I mean) while their captors look on, smiling. What gallant folk they are, hunting a creature that can't cry, has no arms or legs and lives in a different environment.

ENVIRONMENT

+An article (*no name or date*) describes how William Tempest, a fashion designer, has collected rare and beautiful shells since he was young. He goes on to say that the shell shop in St Ives is always worth a visit. (However, it must always be remembered that taking the shells denudes the natural beaches and also, because this is a thriving industry, many shells still contain their inhabitants before they are collected. It is better, as with all things, to leave well alone! Ed.) The same goes for pearls, which are taken by killing the oyster and removing the pearl.

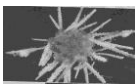
+Interestingly the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda had a wonderful shell collection. He was a diplomat, a Communist, an Nobel Prize winner and – a collector of shells! Source: *The Ind.* 3. 12. 09



+Conservationists claim that oil tankers sitting off Lyme Bay, a World Heritage coastline are an 'accident waiting to happen'. About 10 tankers, carrying around 1 million tonnes of crude oil have been sitting in the Bay. They were thought to be earning oil speculators £1m a day as they waited in a proposed Special Area of Conservation. Source: *Daily Tel.* 25. 11. 09

+Corals from tropical oceans are to be placed in deep freeze at a British zoo to preserve them for posterity as they face destruction from rising greenhouse gas levels. The decision follows research showing that most coral reefs will be largely dead by 2040, wiped out by a combination of rising temperatures and increasing acidity in oceans. *Source: Sunday times 25. 10. 09*

Carbon dioxide emissions are making the world's seas more acidic, with devastating effects on fisheries and sea life. Britain will be one of the nations hardest hit by the little-known process, which is occurring faster than at any time in the past 55 million years. New reports make it clear that the 'underwater time bomb' of ocean acidification – which cannot be reversed in less than tens of thousands of years – is likely to lead to a mass extinction of marine species if it is allowed to continue unchecked. But the problem receives infinitely less attention than climate change. Sceptics do not like to talk about it because it provides the clinching argument for reducing emissions. In fact, the process helps to ameliorate global warming, because the seas soak up about a quarter of all the carbon dioxide humanity emits, preventing it from going into the atmosphere to accelerate climate change. But this comes at a cost. The gas dissolves to make dilute carbonic acid, which sours the naturally alkaline sea water. The acid, in turn, mops up calcium carbonate that corals use to build reefs and which other creatures – including many of the plankton that form the basis of the whole marine food chain – use to make their protective shells. It also threatens to affect the balance and homing instincts of fish, destroy fisheries and shellfish cultivation and disrupt the oceans' natural processes for recycling nutrients. A report by Oceana, a campaigning group, says that Britain is the third most vulnerable country to the effects of acidification, after Japan and France. This is partly because its waters are host to one of the world's most productive fisheries and partly because the seas around the British Isles are both cold and especially saline, which makes them particularly prone to acidification. *Source: Daily Tel. 11. 12. 09*



FISH

The Norwegian School of Veterinary Science doctoral student, Janicke Nordgreen has studied nociception and pain in teleost (ray-finned) fish. Nociception is physiological detection of stimuli that can cause tissue damage. As consciousness is essential to feel pain, Nordgreen tested as well whether fish can be taught to solve a task as in humans it requires conscious attention. *Source: bignewsnetwork 18. 1. 10*

+Sharks that attack swimmers will be hunted down, shot in the head and sawed apart until their spines are severed, according to reports. Perth's Sunday Times revealed the methods for dealing with man-eaters approved by the Government of Western Australia. However, the WA Dept. of Fisheries was understood to say that the kill order would only be given in 'extreme circumstances' as a last resort where there was an immediate danger to the public. But the spokesperson, Ms Tina Thorne said that this is not an easy task as sharks have very small brains. (They're not the only ones! Ed.) But great whites, the species responsible for most fatal attacks, are protected and a special exemption from the law is required to kill one. (why not keep out of the water? It's not rocket science! Ed) *Source: Sky News 10.1. 10*

+10,000 starfish were washed up in Norfolk. They died and were spread over a quarter-mile stretch of Holkham Beach. *Source: Daily Tel. 9. 12. 09*

+Cornish sardines have been given EU protected status alongside Stilton cheese and Melton Mowbray pies. They are the 49th British food product (sic) to be recognised under the Protected Food Name Status programme, which is designed to preserve regional specialities. (I'll just bet they are over the moon! Will one of them go and collect their medal? Ed.) *Source: Daily Tel. 11. 12. 09*

+Ben Southall, a British charity worker, beat 34,000 competitors to land the coveted job on Hamilton Island in the Whitsundays, (a tropical island in Queensland) said to be 'the best job in the world'. But while alighting from a jet-ski while exploring he felt 'a small bee-like sting on my forearm'. Feverish and sick, he was diagnosed as having been stung by an irukandji, a jellyfish no bigger than a fingernail. He made a full recovery. *Source: Ind. 31. 12. 09*