

**THE SHELLFISH NETWORK  
NEWSLETTER, SPRING 2010**

**NO 55**

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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.

**ANIMAL BLESSING**

+As usual this year, there will be an Animal Blessing Service to be held on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at Craigiebuckler Church Hall, Springfield Road, Aberdeen. All animals with their human companions welcome.

**CRABS & LOBSTERS**

+The Japanese spider crab has a claw span of 10ft and can live to 100. They are quite amazingly beautiful. Source: *Daily Telegraph*, 12. 2. 10

+Also enormous and beautiful is the giant box crab, *Paramola cuvieri*, which is the biggest crab occurring in British waters. It is normally found at depths up to 9,000ft, but there is a specimen, with a claw-span measuring more than a metre across in the Blue Reef Aquarium in Newquay, Cornwall. Matthew Keast, the Cornish fisherman who caught the crab said, 'It has weird eyes on stalks which look like bicycle handlebars and a strange pair of backward facing pincers.' (At least he didn't kill it and eat it, although it would be far better left in the wild instead of being gawped at by herds of spectators! Ed.) Source: *Independent* 22. 4. 10

+On *Zimbabwe State Television* it was stated that Robert Mugabi ordered 8,000 lobsters and 4,000 portions of caviar for his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday.

+Market traders in Blackburn are being told by their council to add drama to their stalls by such things as displaying live lobsters on their food stands. Chairman of the local traders' association, Chris Appleby said, 'A market down in London might have live lobsters. I can only wonder what the market for them is like around here.' (Selling live to the public is, of course, one of the things we are trying to end by legislation. Even experienced chefs are often loth to boil the creatures alive. How will the general public take the poor things home and then kill them? Ed.) Source: *Daily Tel.* 13. 3. 10

+Once again the poor old signal crayfish, the non-native species to the UK, has come under attack. In an otherwise excellent article in the *Southern Daily Echo* 3. 2. 10 on the problems of pollution of our

chalk streams, the crayfish is discussed as one of the problems. The animal was introduced to the UK in the 1970s as a 'food delicacy' but as usual, the greed of humanity has caused more problems and now the creature is being blamed. When will we ever learn?



**MARINE ZOOS**

+Following on from the box crab being kept at the Blue Reef Aquarium, and after a female trainer was killed by a captive killer whale, both the *Independent* 26. 2. 10 and the *Wilderness Society in Australia*, 16. 3. 10 are asking should animals be kept in captivity, especially marine animals used to swimming long distances. The question was also asked by The Times and Simon Ingram says, 'What you see when you visit an aquarium such as Sea World is not really a killer whale in all its majesty. To really see the creature, you need to enter its natural environment and watch it at large in the ocean. These whales are predators at the top of the food chain, often feeding on other marine mammals, but I have never heard of an orca – as they are also know – killing a human in the wild. Orcas are among the most intelligent of all marine creatures...they live a complex lifestyle, often moving in large, social groups across vast tracts of water. They are highly cultural animals whose 'dialects' of underwater sounds vary according to location and population...Source: *Times* 26. 2. 10 (The name 'orca' comes from the scientific name for these animals, *Orcinus orca*. Ed.)

+In Australia the Kimberley Humpback whale is hopefully being protected by the Camden Sound Marine Park. But it is thought that the park will be too small and offer too little protection for the largest population of Humpback whales in the world. An inadequate marine park coupled with the LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) development spells disaster for the whales. Source: *Wilderness Society* 16. 3. 10

+**Editor's note:** have you visited the Sea Life in Brighton yet? In spite of trying to make this an entertaining visit for young people and paying lip service to maintaining our seas, this is still a zoo and the animals are still in cages, however large. There is no privacy, no peace and little space to live a normal life. Do let me know what you think! You can have your say on our website:

[www.shellfishnetwork.org.uk](http://www.shellfishnetwork.org.uk)



Signal crayfish

**SEAS**

+A giant cluster of creatures believed to be related to Earth's earliest inhabitants has been discovered on the seabed off the west coast of South America. The discovery is part of a series of finds made since 2000

as part of the Census of Marine Life, a project by scientists from 80 countries to explore the largely unknown life which inhabits the oceans. The 'microbial mat' lives in a deep layer of seawater that is deprived of both light and oxygen and seems to have survived by 'eating' hydrogen sulphide and 'breathing' nitrates. It is thought to be descended from microbes which first evolved about 3 billion years ago, when there was no oxygen on the planet. Video cameras on board a submersible robot had been lowered into the deep ocean to explore the continental shelf off the coasts of Chile and Peru. Victor Gallardo, a Chilean scientist on the expedition said, 'It was like a big carpet of white grass with filaments sticking out and waving in the water. It is composed of a community of micro-organisms adapted to growing under extreme hypoxia, when there is little or no oxygen... It existed before the evolution of the first photosynthetic algae, which were able to convert carbon dioxide into oxygen.'

Scientists estimate that the mat extends to an area roughly the size of Greece. The mats have been found in other areas. Source: *Ind.* 19. 4. 10

+Marine scientists are reporting that a colony of sea lions, previously unique to the Galapagos Islands, has decamped 900 miles south-east to an island just off the coast of Peru in what may be another symptom of global warming. Researchers have found that the waters around Peru's Foca Island, where the sea lions have settled, have risen in temperature over the past decade from an average of 17C to 23C, roughly the same as the surface waters around the Galapagos. Source: *Ind.* 9. 2. 10

+Conservationists have launched a campaign to protect the seas around Britain, amid concerns that new laws will not stop the decline of rare species, such as the basking shark. The new Marine and Coastal Act will set up a network of marine conservation zones, but the Wildlife Trusts are worried that the legislation will not stop the destruction of delicate sea creatures such as the sea horses off the Dorset coast. (Sadly, fishing will still be allowed to a certain extent in some of these zones, so no fish is yet safe from human exploitation! Ed.) Source: *Daily Tel.* 20. 1. 10



+The explorer Pen Hadow is mounting a new expedition to the Arctic to research 'climate change's evil twin' – the acidification of the oceans caused by emissions of carbon dioxide. Source: *Ind.* 25. 2. 10

+In the US, the Environmental Protection Agency agreed to consider how states can curb ocean acidification. Nearly every marine animal studied to date has been harmed in some way by ocean acidification. Source: *Center for Biological Diversity* 18. 3. 10

+The BBC has been accused of 'exaggerating' the threat of global warming to the oceans in a documentary in February. *Britain's really disgusting food: Fish* has been accused by fishermen and the

seafood industry (there's a surprise! Ed.) of pushing 'cheap sensationalism'. James Wood from Seafish, an industry body, said: 'World fish supply has been boringly stable for the last 35 years.' But a BBC spokesman said: 'The programme gave a broad picture of some of the ethical issues in the global industry... As well as hearing from environmental groups, the programme featured a range of views, including a spokesperson from the UK fishing industry.' Source: *Daily Tel.* 2. 2. 10

+If Gordon Brown gives the go-ahead to make a coral atoll in the Indian Ocean, owned by the UK, a marine national park, Britain could have its own Great Barrier Reef. The Chagos Archipelago is the world's largest living coral atoll, covering an area twice the size of Britain. It is home to some of the most endangered animals on Earth, including the giant coconut crab, red-footed booby and silky shark. Source: *Daily Tel.* 28. 1. 10

+However it is alleged that the government's chief scientist and his wife have made £500,000 in the past year in a company overseeing commercial fishing that allegedly threatens the Chagos Islands' pristine marine environments. Conservationists claim that the company has been managing a fishery which catches threatened species including blue sharks and manta rays. A new report by Heather Koldewey, reports 'That the amount of bycatch is immense and there are species in it which are threatened.' Source: *Sunday Times* 28. 2. 10

+Coral reefs only recently discovered, some more than a mile deep, are home to a vast array of underwater life. Scientists claim that they are being 'systemically destroyed' by climate change and overfishing before they have been explored. The reefs are falling victim to ocean acidification and deep-sea trawling. The ones around the British Isles and Ireland, which can be home to squat lobsters, have already been extensively damaged. Source: *Daily Tel.* 19. 2. 10

+Australian scientists have discovered that sharks and manta ray fish regularly congregate at certain spots on the Great Barrier Reef to be groomed by smaller fish. Fish which would normally be their prey swarm all over them, removing dead and diseased tissue, mucus, scales and ectoparasites, according to a research team from Queensland's James Cook University. The smaller fish derive nutrition from the this behaviour, and the sharks have never been seen to snack on the little fish. The team watched for five months. The manta rays would remain perfectly still with their gills flared and their mouths open and sharks would hold themselves in an almost vertical position. Source: *Ind.* 10. 3. 10

+Jane Owen, *Tel.* 27. 2. 10, visits Stingray City, just off the coast of Grand Cayman, the Cayman islands. She is told by the guide that the stingrays only sting if they are frightened or angry and they only bite or suck if they think we're squid chunks. She says that she is not normally disposed to screaming, but as a 6ft long stingray hurls its silky wet body out of the water to meet her, its friend is swimming up her back, while its extended family circles in the sapphire waters. 'Am I screaming. A lot.' Once back in the boat the guides point to two orange starfish, the size

of dinner plates, on the seabed. 'Neptune's bling,' they say. Everyone starts laughing and the terror ebbs away. (This is a beautiful piece of writing and I can send it on to anyone who is interested. Ed.) The rate at which the oceans are becoming more acidic is greater today than at any time since the age of the dinosaurs, which became extinct 65m years ago, scientists believe. The oceans are likely to become so acidic in coming centuries that they will become uninhabitable for vast swathes of life, especially the little-studied organisms on the deep-sea floor which are a vital link in the marine food chain. The reason for the acidification is because of the speed at which carbon-dioxide concentrations are rising in the atmosphere. This dissolves in seawater at the sea surface to form carbonic acid. The increased acidity of the water affects the amount of dissolved carbonate minerals that are available for marine organisms to use in forming their shells and hard skeletons. Dr Andy Ridgwell of Bristol University said, 'Unlike surface plankton dwelling in a variable habitat, organisms living deep down on the ocean floor are adapted to much more stable conditions. A rapid and severe geochemical change in their environment would make their survival precarious.' Source: *Ind.* 15. 2. 10

#### CORALS

The world's coral and coral-reef ecosystems are in crises. In just a few decades, scientists warn, these 'rainforests of the sea' and all their rich biodiversity could disappear completely.

While corals face numerous dangers, the main threats of global warming and the ocean acidification are the greatest. Scientists have predicted that many of the world's coral reefs could be lost within a few decades. Source: *Action for the Center for Biological Diversity* 25. 3. 10

#### SEALS

Alistair Darling, at the G7 finance ministers' meeting in northern Canada in February, was forced to make a decision. The nature-loving Chancellor was forced to decide between risking upsetting the local Inuit community, whose culture has seal-hunting at its heart, and outraging animal rights activists. Mr Darling chose the former – and ate the more politically correct dish of Arctic char, a type of fish. Musk ox and caribou were also on the menu. The waitresses at the dinner wore seal-skin hairpins. At an earlier talk the delegates sat on chairs upholstered in sealskin. Each was offered a 'goodie bag' of seal-skin vests and mittens. (Glad I wasn't there – but then, I don't think I could ever make minister, even though I am standing in the general election on behalf of the Peace Party. It would certainly not have been very peaceful at that talk! Ed) Source: *Ind.* 7. 2. 10

+The Canadian government has reacted furiously to the imminent EU ban on all products from commercial sealing. An article in the *Sunday Tel.* 11. 4. 10 reveals the bloody killing of the seals and the writer says that the cameras witnessed 'a slaughter process that nobody – not even the hunters – argue is pleasant to watch.' (PLEASANT? Good grief, it is hardly the word I would choose even to denigrate! Watching bloodthirsty tyrants slaughter innocent

creatures must be appalling and a sight to remain with the more compassionate of us for life. Ed.) +The *Ind.* 22. 4. 10 had a delightful picture of five sea lions playing in the sea grass beds off Little Hopkins Island, South Australia. The photo was selected by the International League of Conservation Photographers for its 'top 40 nature photographs of all time' collection. (More can be seen at [www.independent.co.uk/environment](http://www.independent.co.uk/environment). They really are worth looking at. Ed.)



#### CETACEANS

+Researchers at the University of Haifa's Dept. of Maritime Civilizations have said that extensive commercial fishing is endangering the dolphins of the Mediterranean Sea. The main problem is the competition between the Bottlenose Dolphin and the commercial trawlers which drag near the bottom of the sea. Source: *European Vegetarian & Animal News Alliance (EVANA)* 10. 2. 10

+Scientists have discovered that dolphins have the unique ability to turn diabetes off and on. Researchers have found that the mammal can induce the condition when there is little food around and turn it off when food is abundant. They believe it is a unique ability in the animal kingdom and results from the mammal's need to maintain high blood sugar levels to feed its big brain. This knowledge could lead to a breakthrough to a treatment and cure for the disease in humans. (Let's hope they don't start cutting up the dolphins in the hope that by doing so they can cure humans. I would have thought that, if the dolphins can do it, then our 'big brains' would have resulted in the same process. It begs the question, doesn't it? Ed.) Source: *Tel.* 19. 2. 10 and *several other papers*.

+In the same paper on the same day, an article appeared which says that dolphins 'have long since been thought of as the most intelligent of animals and a new study has found their brains are second only to humans in size. (But since they don't make war and try to destroy the planet they are obviously much cleverer than humans. Perhaps size doesn't matter? Ed.)

+But, continuing this theme and that of marine zoos, see above, the paper adds another article headlined, 'INTELLIGENCE' and goes on to say that dolphins are too clever to be used as performing animals in theme parks and should not be forced to swim with people because the experience can leave them traumatised, according to experts. Lori Marino, a neuroscientist at Emory University in Atlanta, told the American Association for the Advancement of Science conference that the mammals' high intelligence means they can suffer psychological problems linked to being captured and confined. She said: 'Dolphins are sophisticated, self-aware, highly intelligent beings with individual personalities, autonomy and an inner life...' (I must say, this sounds like my cats as well. Perhaps it might be a good idea if we treated all creatures as intelligent beings with individual personalities...? Ed.)

+Pro-whaling officials have reacted angrily to news that a documentary about a gruesome annual dolphin cull in a remote Japanese fishing town has won an Academy Award.

'The movie is so full of lies that it is an insult,' said Hideki Moronuki, a former spokesman with Japan's Fisheries agency who was interviewed by the documentary crew. The movie claims that Mr Moronuki and thousands of others have been poisoned from eating dolphin meat containing high levels of mercury and later resigned from his post, both of which he denies. After receiving his Oscar for the film 'The Cove, which depicts the annual slaughter of about 2,000 dolphins, which are herded into a secluded cove and hacked to death, and saying that the town is poisoning its citizens with the mercury-tainted meat, Louie Psihoyos said: 'the Japanese press likes to present this movie, without seeing it, as about Japan-bashing, To me, this movie is a love letter to people in Japan. Source: *Ind.* 9. 3. 10

### ECOLOGY OF CHAGOS

+ David Miliband, Foreign Secretary, says that Britain is to establish the biggest marine nature reserve in the world, centred on the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean. The reserve, which will contain 55 tiny coral islands sitting in a quarter of a million square miles of the cleanest seas on the planet, and supporting a pristine ecosystem teeming with wildlife, will rival the Galapagos Islands and the Great Barrier Reef in ecological richness. It is likely that fishing and other forms of ocean exploitation will be banned in the area. Although the announcement was warmly welcomed by a coalition of Britain's leading environmental groups, it brought anger and criticism from supporters of the Chagossians, the islands' original inhabitants, who were forcibly removed en masse between 1967 and 1973 so that the largest inhabited island, Diego Garcia, could be used by the US as an airbase for strategic bombers. Roch Evenor, an islander who chairs the UK Chagos Support Association, described it as 'incomprehensible'. 'they will say that if you go there, you are not allowed to fish,' he said. 'How are you going to feed yourself? How are you going to get your livelihood?' David Snoxell, a former British high commissioner in Mauritius and deputy commissioner of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), the islands' official name, who is now the co-ordinator of the Chagos Islands All-Party Parliamentary Group said 'This is really quite shocking. I deplore the fact that the Chagossians have not been brought into this. It's as if they've been airbrushed out of the press release, and out of existence...'

The clash of opinions demonstrates how difficult it is becoming to weigh up the protection of the best remaining parts of nature, in a rapidly degrading world, against the needs and rights of people. There is no doubt that environmentally the case for protecting the Chagos Islands is overwhelming: its seawater is the least-polluted ever tested; its coral reefs are entirely unspoilt; its whole ecosystem, with its countless seabirds, turtles, coconut-cracking crabs, dolphins, sharks and nearly 1,000 other species of fish, is pristine. Sadly, after 9/11, Diego

Garcia assumed a new importance for the US, it is used as a base for bombing missions over Afghanistan. (You can be sure there is always a barbarous reason for humans to make an argument against saving somewhere. I am certain the Chagossians could find another method of feeding themselves, but the US? Gung-ho!! Ed.) Source: *Ind.* 2. 4. 10

### JELLYFISH

+Venomous jellyfish swarms are moving into British coastal waters and can devastate fish farms. The mauve stingers – *Pelagia noctiluca* – are tiny but can cover thousands of square miles in one 'bloom'. They are normally found in the Mediterranean and Caribbean but rising numbers are reaching the Atlantic as sea temperatures rise and currents change. Although bathers swimming off the coast of Britain are not yet in any serious danger, the jellyfish are lethal to large fish. In 2007 a swarm of billions of stingers wiped out 100,000 salmon at a farm in Northern Ireland. (Poor things, what a horrible way to go, especially after the sad life they have led in their factory farm. Ed.) Source: *Daily Tel.* 8. 4. 10

+And rising temperatures in the southern Ocean could lead to jellyfish replacing penguins as the dominant species of Antarctica. Numbers of krill, which form an integral part of a penguin's diet, are falling. These invertebrates, about 6in – long, are also eaten by whales and seals, and are being replaced by copepods (or 'oar-feet', small shrimp-like crustaceans.). They are too small for penguins, but jellyfish thrive on them. Source: *Daily Tel.* 19. 2. 10



### VARIOUS LITTLE ONES

+Animals that do not depend on oxygen to breathe and reproduce have been discovered on the bed of the Mediterranean. Three species, 0.04in (1mm) long and resembling jellyfish in shells were found 2.2 miles underwater on the sea bed. They were discovered by a team led by Roberto Danovaro from Marche Polytechnic University in Ancona, Italy. Prof Danovaro said, '...It is a real mystery how these creatures are able to live without oxygen because until now we thought only bacteria could do this' Source: *Daily Tel.* 10. 4. 10

+Apparently theatregoers liked to snack on seafood during performances in Tudor times, according to archaeologists. It seems that the audiences also liked to eat crabs, cockles, mussels, periwinkles and whelks along with nuts and fruit. (Makes a change from deep-fried chicken and burgers I suppose! Although maybe we don't eat those during performances. It would certainly add to the general atmosphere. Ed.) Source: *Ind.* 29. 1. 10

+Native oysters are under threat from a sea snail called the tingle. This tiny sea snail bores a hole into the native oysters and sucks out their flesh. An article in the *Daily Tel.* 28. 1. 10 says that stocks of the oysters have fallen to dangerously low levels in The Solent. Fishermen and some experts blame the tingle and call it a pest. Apparently, at its peak 20 years ago, the oyster season in The Solent was worth £2million, with about 160 boats hauling in more

than 1,500 tons. Terry Lankford, a shellfish merchant based in Hythe said, 'The industry will collapse unless we make some changes immediately.' (How about – not going out and catching any more? Or am I just being silly! Ed.)

+But following on from that, one solution for consideration is to create a protected oyster harvest at a secret location in The Solent to help spawn a new generation. (I do hope they remember to tell the oysters. Fancy, if they don't turn up! Ed) Source: *Southern Daily Echo* 3. 2. 10

+The tiny 'scaly foot' snail, which lives on the floor of the Indian Ocean, has a shell made of three layers, which dissipates energy that would cause weaker shells to crack. Scientists believe this could help to develop better body armour for soldiers and make tanks more bomb-proof. The shell has an outer layer embedded with iron sulfide granules, a thick organic middle layer and a calcified inner layer. (I am sure the snail is delighted it can help humans in their warlike habits! Ed.) Source: *Daily Tel.* 10. 1. 10

+Sea slugs are found in salt water across the globe and glow in a wide variety of colours, warding off ocean predators. Photographer David Henshaw said, 'They come in a spectacular range of colours and shapes and they're very eye catching even underwater.' Source: *Daily Tel.* 19. 3. 10



+In March of this year thousands of starfish were washed up on the beach at Budleigh Salterton, Devon. Hundreds of thousands were washed up on the beach. Marine experts believe it is due to them being susceptible to high tides and storms after becoming exhausted spawning. (A photo shows the beach covered in the poor things. Ed.) Source: *Ind.* 19. 3. 10

### ENVIRONMENT

+Marine sanctuaries are at risk in Australia as the organisation 'Save Our Marine Life' says that on 16 May there will be an announcement that will see the release of oil exploration leases almost wholly within areas that may become marine sanctuaries. Also the risk of oil spill will become a factor. Accidents do happen, as we saw with the devastating West Atlas oil spill in the Kimberley last year. Source: *Save Our Marine Life*, 22. 4. 10

+Interestingly, an open letter on fluoridation of the water supply in Southampton and surrounding areas, opposes the idea, saying that the children in the area have similar decay rates to the English average. It states that the American Dental Association recommends that formula milk for babies is reconstituted with fluoride-free water in order to reduce the risk of fluorosis. The letter is signed by a large number of organisations including Steve & Clive Mathews, Solent Oyster Fishermen! Source: *Southern Daily Echo* 26. 2. 10

### WHALES

+The International Whaling Commission (IWC) has published draft proposals for regulating whaling for the next decade. It would mean Japan's Antarctic whale hunt would fall in stages to less than a quarter

of its current size, but hunting would continue on the endangered fin whale. The draft is the latest stage in a two-year process aiming to find compromise between pro-and anti-whaling camps. It will be debated at the IWC's annual meeting in June. It has already been condemned by some conservation groups. Commercial whaling was banned globally in 1982, but Iceland, Japan and Norway continue to hunt under various exemptions, collectively targeting more than 2,000 whales each year. IWC chairman Cristian Maquiera said, 'For the first time since the adoption of the commercial whaling moratorium, we will have strict, enforceable limits on all whaling operations. But Clarire Bass, manager of the Marine Mammal Programme at the World society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) said, 'The fact that this proposal is even being discussed shows just how far out of touch the IWC is with modern values. It is entirely missing the point that blasting conscious animals with exploding harpoons is grossly inhuman.' However, others argue that the aim of completely banning whaling is unrealistic, and that a major down-scaling, combined with bringing it under international oversight, is a worthwhile compromise. (I'm sure the whales see it that way. Ed.) Source: *BBC News* 22. 4. 10

+However, Kevin Rudd, Australian PM has put Japan on notice to stop hunting whales by November or face international court action. Source: *Times on line* 20. 2. 10

+The conservation status of a group of killer whales off the west coast of Scotland is believed to be critical, according to emerging research findings from the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT). The 'west coast community', as it is known, is believed to consist of only nine animals. No live calves have been sighted since research began almost two decades ago. The group is the only 'resident' population found in British waters. Source: *Earthwatch* 20. 4. 10

+Anti-whaling ship the Bob Barker and a Japanese harpoon boat collided in icy Antarctic waters in the second major clash this year. The confrontations between conservationists and the whaling fleet have become increasingly aggressive. No one was injured in the clash which each side blamed on the other. The US –based group Sea Shepherd named the ship after the game show host who donated millions of dollars for the anti-whaling group to buy it. Source: *News articles*, 7. 2. 10

+And on *Yahoo News* 9. 2. 10, the Sea Shepherds exchanged water-cannon fire with a Japanese whaling fleet they were tailing in the Antarctic Ocean. A statement from the group said, 'The factory ship turned on their water cannons and were surprised when the Steve Irwin [the activists ship] responded with a more powerful water cannon that had a couple of the whalers diving for the bridge doors.

+A New Zealand activist who boarded a Japanese whaling ship in the Antarctic is being taken to Japan for questioning. Peter Bethune, a member of Sea Shepherd, had wanted to make a citizen's arrest of the ship's captain for 'attempted murder'. He had been detained on the Shonan Maru 2. Peter Bethune said the Shonan Maru 2 deliberately

crashed into the *Ady Gil*, destroying the hi-tech vessel. The whalers said the activists tried to tangle a rope in their propeller. Source: *BBC News* 17. 2. 10

+However, a lawyer for Peter Bethune says he will take a counter legal action against the Japanese over the sinking of the anti-whaling boat *Ady Gil*. Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*. 23. 3. 10

+But an article on *BBC News*, 26. 2. 10 says a century of whaling may have released more than 100 million tonnes – or a large forest's worth – of carbon into the atmosphere, scientists say. Whales store carbon within their huge bodies and when they are killed, much of this carbon can be released.

+On a happier note, there have been some wonderful pictures in the news of divers meeting with whales. Basking off the coast of Dominica in the Caribbean, one of the huge sperm whales allows snorkellers to stroke and play with it. This delightful photo was in the *Ind.* 8. 4. 10. Another one in the *Daily Tel.* 4. 2. 10 showed Andrew Armour and his wife being able to get close to one whale after they had first seen him as an injured calf. 'He came to our boat, perhaps seeking some comfort, but the most we could do was pet him' Andrew said. 'From then on he and another young female would approach us whenever they saw our boat. Now he recognises me swimming. I feel like he even knows my voice. I can get very close because we trust each other.'

+According to another article in the *Daily Tel.* 6. 2. 10, the pitch of the blue whale is changing and nobody knows why. Blue whales – the largest creatures to have lived – are now singing at increasingly lower frequencies all over the world.

#### 'FOOD'

Strange that an advertising feature in the *Co-op Magazine* (no date) extols the virtues of 'Wild Alaska Seafood.' It states that Alaska is one of the last great wildernesses on earth. Civilization (sic) has only encroached on about 250 square miles of Alaska's 586,400 square miles. The rest is uninhabited pristine wilderness. With over 3 million lakes, 3,000 rivers and 34,000 miles of coastline, Alaska is the greatest fishing region in the world, producing stocks known for their abundance and variety. '*Alaska Seafood is wild, building up firm lean flesh swimming freely in the icy Pacific off the coast of Alaska, feeding on natural marine life.*' (Funny, I thought they said the place was uninhabited. Wildlife doesn't count then, only humans, the 'civilized' variety of life! Ed) This article is produced by the Marine Stewardship Council. Some stewardship!

But then, continuing the subject of the seas, in the same magazine comes 'Save Our Seas'. And an article saying 'the state of our oceans is a major cause for concern. We must act now to stop fish stocks declining before it is too late. It goes on – 'We all love to eat fish...' Really? Then 'As one of the UK's top sustainable retailers, The Co-operative is an active campaigner in the battle to ensure sustainability of our oceans and seas and to protect all marine life.' (But fish are also marine life. This reads to me like double standards. Ed.) The article continues arguing that marine reserves are a must.

(But what about the Alaskan fish stocks? I really feel that the Co-op needs to get its act together. Ed.)

+California's renowned sushi restaurant, The Hump, found itself at the centre of an explosive culinary scandal. A New York Times report claimed that chefs at the restaurant were under investigation for allegedly serving endangered whale meat to high-end customers. When the dishes were DNA-tested, it turned out that they came from Sei whale, a threatened species. One waitress said 'Most of the top sushi restaurants in this city, and around the world, will serve whale, if you just ask. It is part of Japanese culture, and quite easy to get hold of. How else do you think we got it delivered?' For the angry animals rights lobby, that's one question that can't be answered soon enough. Source: *Ind.* 11. 3. 10

+An article in *Radio Times*, 6-12 March 2010 says that it is still possible to buy seafood with a clear conscience (sic). Charles Clover continues, 'Stocks of cod in the Atlantic are pretty much fished out, but certified Pacific cod is an ethical choice.' (I have to admit that I am still puzzled about the use of the word 'ethics' when choosing which animals it's OK to kill and which not. Ed.)

#### A BIG THANK YOU!

+Before I forget, I would like to say once again a big thank you to all who send in cuttings and donations. I simply couldn't write the newsletter or keep the Network going without you all and your kind support. An extra special thanks goes to Mr McAlpine whose generosity has made it possible for me to create and have printed a wonderful new leaflet on diseases in shellfish, just to counteract the constant pressure on the general public who are constantly being told how good seafood is for you! You are all wonderful. Julie

#### FISH AND FISHING

+Scientists have discovered that fish can remember things for up to five months. They can learn to avoid predators after being attacked once and carp that have been caught by fishers avoid hooks for at least a year. Source: *care2.com* 26. 1. 10

+In January, Hampshire's fishing industry took a hit as frozen lakes and ponds put paid to regular business and many lakes around the county were forced to close. Julian Aldridge of Everton Grange Lakes said, 'When the lake freezes over it is totally unfishable. Numbers of people using the lake are often lower at this time of year but it is often when you get the best fish.' Source: *Southern Daily Echo* 9. 1. 10

+Anglers reeled in nearly £500 for the Haitian earthquake survivors during a 24hour fishing match at Romsey's Broadlands Lane. Debbie and Peter Beale said, 'We plan to do another match for Help for Heroes in October.' (There must be another way, instead of yet more killing. Ed.) Source: *Echo* 22. 2. 10 (And tons more on fishing, but no more space. When will it end? Ed.)