

Abalone man back to jail

NIGEL HUNT

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SOUTH Australia's most notorious abalone poacher is off to jail again – this time with a record sentence for stealing the prized shellfish.

Nicholas Karagiannis, 56, has been sentenced to 18 months in jail with a 12-month non-parole period.

He has also been fined \$30,000 – the maximum allowable under existing fisheries laws.

The sentence is the harshest imposed by a South Australian court for abalone poaching offences.

Karagiannis, of Coorabie, near Ceduna on the state's far west coast, has been jailed twice before for abalone poaching offences.

In 1995, he was convicted and given a 12-month jail sentence with a three-month non-parole period.

Shortly after being released from prison he was again caught poaching abalone. He was convicted and given a 14-month prison sentence with a 10-month non-parole period.

Karagiannis' latest jail sentence followed a joint Fisheries and police operation on the west coast in June 2005.

As a result of that operation, he and two other men were caught with almost 2000 abalone worth more than \$35,000.

One of those men, Robert Hedley Miller, 19, of Croydon, has pleaded guilty to possessing a commercial quantity of abalone for the purpose of sale. He was placed on a two-year good behaviour bond.

In sentencing Karagiannis in Ceduna Magistrates Court on Thursday, Magistrate Terry Forrest said Karagiannis was motivated by the opportunity "to make a quick buck" and previous jail sentences had had no effect.

The third person apprehended during the operation is still before the court.

Fisheries manager of Compliance Operations, Paul Tatarelli, welcomed the penalty handed out to Karagiannis.

"A jail sentence for this type of recidivist offender was appropriate," he said.

"Penalties imposed by the courts for fish theft support the seriousness of this type of crime.

"A jail sentence acknowledges the impact this type of high-level illegal fishing activity can have on the long-term sustainability of fish stocks."

Besides the jail sentence, a vehicle, a boat, diving gear and camping equipment belonging to Karagiannis were also forfeited.

Mr Tatarelli said the success of operations such as the one that netted Karagiannis relied heavily on the public reporting suspicious activity.

He urged anyone with any information on illegal fishing to call the Fishwatch Hotline on 1800 065 522.



Virus expected to cost abalone industry

Wednesday, 07/02/2007

Abalone divers in south-west Victoria are forecasting a \$5 million loss this season, due to the spread of a herpes-like virus in wild and farmed stocks.

Ganglioneuritis is believed to have begun in an aquaculture facility in Portland and has moved east to Warrnambool.

Divers such as Peter Riddle are angry at the State Government's handling of the disease outbreak and says he is worried about the future.

"I think it's too late now, I think [it] doesn't matter what anyone says, the disease is in the ocean and I don't think we've got any way of stopping it," he said.

"It's half my income now and what we worry about is the following years, whether we are going to survive."

Fisheries Victoria says it is ensuring stocks are fished sustainably.

It says it closed the Portland facility when it was alerted to the outbreak to try to contain the disease.



Wildlife group urges guilt-free Chinese new year

Thu 8 Feb 2007 11:00 PM ET

BEIJING, Feb 9 (Reuters) - Chinese gearing up for traditional lunar new year banquets should think about what they eat as it could be an endangered species, a wildlife group said on Friday.

Buy sharks' fin, sea cucumber and abalone only if from sustainable sources as stocks are dropping, and do not buy a rare moss whose name means "get rich" in Chinese, wildlife monitoring network TRAFFIC said in an emailed statement.

"It's about being aware of what you consume, and the impact it can have on species and the environment," it quoted Timothy Lam of TRAFFIC in Hong Kong as saying.

"Some people are not aware of which species are under pressure of over-exploitation. Our advice is based on threats to wildlife and the environment from unsustainable trade and consumer demand," Lam said.

The group, a joint programme of the WWF and World Conservation Union, said that abalone was particularly under threat from poaching and illegal harvesting.

"Ask your supplier if their abalone has been legally sourced, regardless of the country it comes from, before buying," the statement said.

It also warned that shark populations were under threat from finning, a practice where fishermen just take the valuable fin -- used to make a soup served at auspicious occasions -- and dump the rest of the shark overboard to bleed to death.

Shark fishing groups, however, dispute that this is widely practiced.

As well as avoiding the black "facai" moss, eaten in the belief it will boost wealth, consumers should stay away from health tonics which contain threatened species, such as tiger organs, turtles and pangolins.

By doing this, "you can avoid having a detrimental impact on the planet's natural resources and (have) a guilt free Year of the Pig", the statement said.

Chinese are traditionally enthusiastic omnivores, and as incomes have risen in recent years consumption of everything from beef to civet cat and sharks' fin has grown accordingly.

The lunar Chinese new year starts on Feb. 18.

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Meeting hears claims of abalone virus inaction

Wednesday, 7 February 2007. 13:48 (AEST)

A crisis meeting in Port Fairy yesterday has been told not enough has been done to prevent the spread of a deadly abalone virus in waters off the south-west coast.

A leading abalone ecologist, Associate Professor Jeremy Prince, told the industry meeting that the herpes-like virus has killed up to 95 per cent of abalone in some wild abalone beds from Portland to Warrnambool.

He says it is now out of control and the Government response has been too little too late.

"On our opinion not enough is being done," he said.

"The aquaculture facility that gave rise to it has been allowed to start up again and we think that probably a green-lip herpes virus has been hybridised with a black-lip herpes virus and so is causing mortality in both species now.

"Once it's in the wild it's very hard to see what can be done to stop it."



[ABC Online](#)

Abalone disease may be travelling west. 09/02/2007. ABC News Online

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200702/s1844059.htm>]

Last Update: Friday, February 9, 2007. 3:03pm (AEDT)

Abalone disease may be travelling west

Divers in Victoria fear a deadly abalone disease is making its way to South Australian waters.

Testing is being carried out on abalone found west of Portland in western Victoria for the herpes-like virus that was identified 14 months ago.

The Western Abalone Divers Association's Harry Peeters says it appears the virus has travelled 40 kilometres west of its original site.

Mr Peeters says divers need to step up measures to prevent cross infection.

"There's nothing that can be done to stop it at this stage," he said.

"The virus is nature taking its course, there's very little at this stage that is known that can be done to stop it.

"We can try to prevent it being spread by human activity, but that relies very much on the goodwill of other users of the sea."

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7 tons of perlemoen seized

29/10/2006 18:45 - (SA)

Cape Town - Western Cape police on Sunday found seven tons of perlemoen (abalone) worth about R6.6m at Table Bay Harbour in Cape Town.

They were found in two freight containers that were re-routed from Hong Kong back to South Africa last week, after they were suspected of illegally shipping the mollusc, said superintendent Billy Jones.

"After inspection of the two containers today (Sunday) it was confirmed they contained about seven tons of perlemoen."

The SA Revenue Service and marine and coastal management in the Western Cape also helped in making the discovery.

SARS estimated that the haul had an estimated street value of R11m, said spokesperson Adrian Lackay.

Shipped as pilchards

Sunday's confiscation followed the arrests of two people in possession of eight tons of perlemoen at the V&A waterfront in September.

"As a result of (that) successful investigation it was then discovered that more freight containers containing perlemoen, allegedly packed as pilchards, already had been shipped out of South Africa on their way to Hong Kong."

No one was arrested and a case of illegal possession of perlemoen was opened, said Jones.



12 caught in perlemoen bust

08/02/2007 12:58 - (SA)

Johannesburg - Twelve people have been arrested and perlemoen (abalone) worth about R10m confiscated in Bronkhorstspuit on Thursday morning, Pretoria police said.

"Six Chinese and six Mozambicans were arrested, and we confiscated abalone worth between R8m and R10m," said inspector Paul Ramaloko.

The arrests were made on two plots in Bronkhorstspuit where the molluscs were allegedly processed. Other assets including cars were also confiscated.

Cases of possessing and processing perlemoen without a permit have been opened and the 12 suspects, of whom one is a woman, were likely to appear in the Bronkhorstspuit regional court on Friday.

The arrests were made during an operation by the Pretoria police's organised crime unit and the Bronkhorstspuit police.

It started at 21:00 on Wednesday and ended in the early hours of Thursday morning.

SATURDAYStar

Perlemoen stock under threat from Asian syndicates

But government says plans are afoot to protect industry from poachers

February 07, 2007 *Edition 1*

Wendell Roelf

Shipped halfway across the world to Asia as a seafood delicacy, abalone has become a prized commodity for South African entrepreneurs as well as criminals who have poached the mollusc almost to extinction.

Known colloquially in South Africa as "perlemoen", abalone is so endangered that the government has drastically reduced the total allowable catch in the wild and attempted to encourage saltwater farming of the curlicue-shaped shellfish.

Once sucked from its hard shell, abalone has a soft but chewy flesh that is consumed in a variety of ways, but mostly steamed, grilled or, for the more adventurous, as a sushi dish.

Resembling a giant limpet and a distant relative of garden snails, it thrives only in oceans or special land-based farms that use seawater to cultivate the creatures.

Abalone's growing popularity in Asia, where it is a status symbol and reputed aphrodisiac, has spurred sophisticated smuggling rings, some linked to China's notorious Triad gangs, according to SA's Institute of Security Studies.

The amount of illegal abalone confiscated in SA has skyrocketed to more than 1-million shellfish from a mere 21 000 in 1994 when the country held its first democratic elections.

It is now common for police to pull over trucks, sometimes refrigerated, carrying illegal abalone on the roads of the Western Cape and Easter Cape provinces, where most of the delicacy is harvested.

"We've had good successes, especially towards the end of last year, where we seized huge quantities of abalone ... this is just the tip of the iceberg," said Captain Billy Jones, a spokesperson for the Western Cape provincial police.

But legitimate businesses also see a future in abalone farming in SA.

Production accounts for 60% of the country's aquaculture revenues. In 2006 it was worth more than R141-million and employed about 800 people.

"Abalone farming has the highest economic value as compared to all other farmed products and is the highest employer within the marine aquaculture sector," said Blessing Manale, spokesperson for SA's department of environmental affairs.



[ABC Online](#)

Man jailed for 18 months over abalone offences. 08/02/2007. ABC News Online

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200702/s1843561.htm>]

Last Update: Thursday, February 8, 2007. 9:03pm (AEDT)

Man jailed for 18 months over abalone offences

A man has been sentenced to a record jail term for a South Australian abalone-related fishing offence in the Magistrates Court in Ceduna.

Fifty-six-year-old Nicholas Karagiannis of Coorabie, west of Ceduna, pleaded guilty to a number of charges including the possession of a commercial quantity of abalone and taking abalone for sale without a licence.

He was sentenced to 18 months in jail with a non-parole period of 12 months and fined the maximum \$30,000.

It is his third jail sentenced for abalone offences.

A second man, 19-year-old Robert Hedley Miller of Croydon, was placed on a two-year good behaviour bond and the trial of a third person is continuing.

The charges follow a joint Fisheries and Police operation on the state's far west coast in June 2005, when more than \$35,000 worth of abalone was seized.

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[ABC Online](#)

Virus expected to cost abalone industry. 07/02/2007. ABC News Online

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200702/s1842308.htm>]

Last Update: Wednesday, February 7, 2007. 2:48pm (AEDT)

Virus expected to cost abalone industry

Abalone divers in south-west Victoria are forecasting a \$5 million loss this season, due to the spread of a herpes-like virus in wild and farmed stocks.

Ganglioneuritis is believed to have begun in an aquaculture facility in Portland and has moved east to Warrnambool.

Divers such as Peter Riddle are angry at the State Government's handling of the disease outbreak and says he is worried about the future.

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Fisheries Victoria says it is ensuring stocks are fished sustainably.

It says it closed the Portland facility when it was alerted to the outbreak to try to contain the disease.

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[ABC Online](#)

Meeting hears claims of abalone virus inaction. 07/02/2007. ABC News Online

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200702/s1842305.htm>]

Last Update: Wednesday, February 7, 2007. 2:48pm (AEDT)

Meeting hears claims of abalone virus inaction

A crisis meeting in Port Fairy yesterday has been told not enough has been done to prevent the spread of a deadly abalone virus in waters off the south-west coast.

A leading abalone ecologist, Associate Professor Jeremy Prince, told the industry meeting that the herpes-like virus has killed up to 95 per cent of abalone in some wild abalone beds from Portland to Warrnambool.

He says it is now out of control and the Government response has been too little too late.

"On our opinion not enough is being done," he said.

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"Once it's in the wild it's very hard to see what can be done to stop it."

THE STANDARD

MERRI VIRUS CHAOS

EVERARD HIMMELREICH

February 7, 2007

AUSTRALIA'S abalone stocks are on the brink of devastation, experts said yesterday as they revealed most of the Merri Marine Sanctuary's abalone have been wiped out by a deadly virus.

Marine biologist Dr Jeremy Prince and Port Fairy abalone diver Peter Riddle had trouble finding any of the prized molluscs alive in the marine sanctuary around Warrnambool's Middle Island when they were diving there on the weekend.

Dr Prince, who is working with the Western Abalone Divers' Association, said he and Mr Riddle found hundreds of empty abalone shells in the sanctuary - probably only a fraction of the actual toll.

Dr Prince said evidence supported the theory that a herpes virus killing the abalone was "hybridised" and was probably created in a hatchery on an abalone farm.

He estimated the abalone mortality rate in the Merri sanctuary as high as 95 per cent and said it would take 10 to 15 years for stocks to recover.

"It will spread throughout Australia on some time scale," Dr Prince said.

"I do not see any way we can effectively control it."

The virus has ravaged abalone stocks along the coastline from The Craggs, west of Port Fairy, to Killarney and Warrnambool in the past year.

Dr Prince estimated the abalone virus had already killed off about 200 tonnes, worth up to \$7 million, of abalone near Killarney.

Dr Prince said hatcheries were creating hybrid abalone, mostly between green and black-lipped abalone, to gain better growth rates and other attributes.

The normal strain of herpes generally caused chronic disease rather than killing the prized delicacy, Dr Prince said.

"The best hope is that it (the virus) will evolve back to the normal pattern of herpes," he said.

Dr Prince said a reappearance of abalone near Port Fairy was a "reaggregation" by survivors of the virus rather than a recovery of the population.

He said one way of spreading the disease could be the use of abalone guts as bait by people fishing for the reef fish known as sweep.

Dr Prince said anglers should not use this type of bait while the virus was unchecked.

Fisheries Victoria fisheries management director Jon Presser said experts believed the virus was endemic in the wild abalone population, but it had not had a large impact before.

"Why it has emerged to this extent we do not fully understand," Mr Presser said.

"We do not understand how it (the virus) is moving - whether it is through the water column or through other sea animals."

Mr Presser said his department was focused on developing quick tests to determine how and why the molluscs were dying.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the Western Zone Abalone Divers (WADA) Association in Port Fairy yesterday discussed further reducing the western zone's abalone harvest quota because of the virus.

The zone's annual quota was reduced in September by 25 per cent to 164 tonnes.

WADA chairman Len McCall said the continuing death toll meant the zone's quota for the next season was also likely to be reduced.

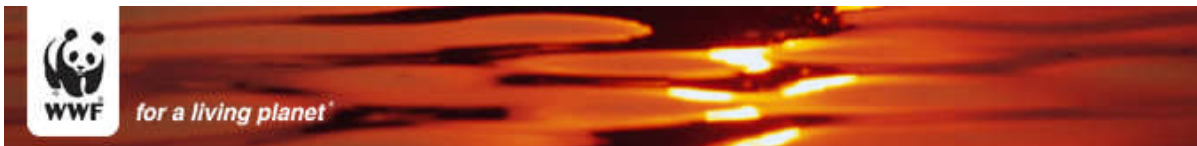
The western abalone zone extends from Warrnambool to the South Australian border.

The quota reduction has had a big impact on the incomes of abalone licence holders as well as the abalone divers and others working in the industry.

And some south-west abalone farms have had to completely destock because of the virus.

Port Fairy's Sou'West Seafoods is expecting to reduce the working hours of staff because of the reduction in abalone supply.

This story was found at: <http://the.standard.net.au/articles/2007/02/07/1170524134907.html>



South African abalone to come under international trade controls

06 Feb 2007

Cape Town, South Africa – South Africa has taken a decisive step towards stemming the illegal harvest and trade of its endemic abalone populations by listing the species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The proposed Appendix III listing, which comes into effect on 3 May 2007, requires all future international trade consignments of South African abalone (*Haliotis midae*) — more commonly known as perlemoen — to be accompanied by CITES documentation.

“The CITES listing has the potential to reduce illegal harvest and trade in this valuable and sought-after marine mollusc,” said Markus Bürgener of TRAFFIC. “However, the listing alone is unlikely to secure results and much will depend on the support provided to customs and CITES officials in all countries through which the product is traded.”

Perlemoen is one of three abalone species that can only be found in South African waters. The meat is a highly valued delicacy and considered to be an aphrodisiac in some East Asian countries. Its shells are also sought after as ash-trays, soap-holders and food receptacles.

Illegal exploitation of abalone in South Africa is believed to be the most criminalized wildlife trade in



South African abalone (*Haliotis midae*).

© Rob Tarr / Marine and Coastal Management

Africa today. Continued illegal harvest and trade could result in the fishery becoming no longer commercially viable, and may cause the closure of the legal fishery and with it hundreds of jobs.

According to TRAFFIC, poaching of perlemoen has seen the legal catch be reduced from 430 tonnes in the 2002/2003 season to 125 tonnes in 2006/2007.

“We are concerned that over-harvesting is threatening the conservation status of the species and could impact on the intricate balance of associated marine reef systems,” Bürgener said.

While South Africa is the only country to have listed an abalone species on CITES, he noted that many other abalone exporting countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, are also attempting to address poaching and illegal trade.

The majority of abalone harvested in South Africa is exported to East Asia, with Hong Kong the major importer. Other major destinations include Taiwan, China and Japan. Poached abalone is frequently smuggled into the neighbouring states of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland, from where it is exported.

Although no abalone species are either commercially harvested or legally traded through these countries, Hong Kong import data have revealed imports of dried and frozen abalone from all three countries. Poached abalone is also traded through Namibia and this poses enforcement challenges since there are legal commercial aquaculture operations in Namibia producing and trading in perlemoen.

Despite efforts by the South African government to address the poaching problem, the international nature of the trade means that there is a need to secure the assistance of other countries. This is most effectively achieved through the CITES listing.

“We welcome the Appendix III listing of abalone as an attempt to cut the illegal harvesting of this precious marine resource,” said Dr Rob Little, WWF-South Africa’s Conservation Director.

“Apart from enhancing the sustainability of the abalone stocks, it is critical that the millions of Rands lost to the illegal poaching of abalone is turned into valued foreign revenue.”

END NOTES:

- A CITES Appendix III is a list of species included at the request of a CITES member country that already regulates trade in the species and that needs the cooperation of other countries to prevent unsustainable or illegal exploitation. International trade in specimens of species listed in this Appendix is allowed only on presentation of the appropriate permits or certificates. CITES Parties can unilaterally list a species in Appendix III at any time. The listing would automatically enlist the necessary assistance of consumer states in monitoring and regulating the trade in abalone. Such a listing would require all consignments of the South African abalone species to carry CITES documentation and would be beneficial to both the aquacultural and wild-harvesting industries. Customs officials in countries of import would only permit consignments carrying CITES documentation to enter the country.

- TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, is a joint programme of WWF, the conservation organization and IUCN - The World Conservation Union.

For further information:

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AHN All Headline News

Second Shark Attack In NSW

February 5, 2007 6:06 a.m. EST

Sally Grover - All Headline News Contributor

Lismore, Australia (AHN) - An Australian surfer has become the second victim of a great white shark attack in as many weeks.

New South Wales surfer Matthew McIntosh was bitten on the leg by a white pointer while riding a body board on Sunday.

The attack comes after an abalone diver escaped from the jaws of a shark 1000 km away from the latest attack at Shelley Beach.

McIntosh underwent microsurgery on his leg at Lismore Base Hospital and is expected to make a full recovery.

His friend and surfing buddy, Craig Harris, told the Nine Network, "I heard him scream, saw a bit of blood in the water and I knew I had to try to help him as much as I could."

According to reports, out of 15 great white sharks spotted off Australian coast lines each year, only an average one is fatal.



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NEWSTRACK - SCIENCE

Published: Jan. 9, 2007 at 2:03 PM

Panel proposes aquaculture policies

FALMOUTH, Mass., Jan. 9 (UPI) -- Strong environmental standards, incentives and funding are needed to site and regulate offshore U.S. marine aquaculture, an independent panel said.

The U.S. Congress should enact legislation to ensure environmental standards are in place, the Marine Aquaculture Task Force said in a news release. The federal government also should provide funding and incentives for research and development of technologies for sustainable marine aquaculture.

Aquaculture -- the farming of fish, shellfish and aquatic plants -- accounts for nearly half of the seafood consumed worldwide.

The task force -- organized by the Falmouth, Mass.-based Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Lenfest Foundation -- examined the risks and benefits of marine aquaculture and developed policy recommendations.

The task force recommended that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration take a lead role in planning and regulating the industry.

Offshore aquaculture has an advantage over coastal fish farming because excess feed and waste can be removed naturally, the panel said.

The panel noted environmental concerns, such as which species should be farmed and where, and what level of discharges could be safely absorbed by the ocean. Some researchers said they were worried that domesticated fish could threaten natural stocks

View Report. [Sustainable Marine Aquaculture: Fulfilling The Promise; Managing The Risks](#) (PDF; 2.88 MB)

Source: Pew Charitable Trusts

From [press release](#):

http://www.pewtrusts.org/pdf/Sustainable_Marine_Aquaculture_final_1_07.pdf

Elephant herpes virus

EEHV - Elephant endotheliotropic herpes virus

Cutaneous papillomatosis

African elephants:

This virus causes skin lesions with pinkish color on the trunk, head and around genital openings such as vulval lymphoid patches, pulmonary nodules, and/or localized skin papillomas, among otherwise healthy [african elephants](#).

Asian elephants:

EEHV causes fatal haemorrhagic disease, attacking endothelial cells, (blood vessels, heart and similar organs) among [asian elephants](#) and has become a dangerous problem lately, and it has killed several young or newborn captive Zoo elephants, since the first case 1995 in Washington Zoo. (Washington:1995, Springfield, Zürich:1998,1999,2003, Rosamund Gifford:2003) but also semi-adult bulls (11 yrs) has died. (Berlin Zoo:1998)

Out of 32 infected animals between 1995 and 2003, three survived after treatment.

The virus seems to spread from immune, otherwise healthy [african elephants](#) to [asian elephants](#), and asian elephants can not develop anti-bodies. There might also be a second strain, supposed to be lethal for [african elephants](#).

Younger elephants has died very fast, in several cases within 24 hours after the first signs, but there are examples of cure, after a rapid treatment of famciclovir (Rotterdam Zoo) although a risk for reinfection remains. (Flamvir 500 mg/70 kg body-weight, 3-4 weeks)

It is possible to screen the DNA blood samples for EEHV but has only worked in post mortem condition. There are speculations that there is a connection with stress and the Herpes virus sudden death of baby elephants

Mixture of african and asian elephants should be avoided in the future.

