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www.acorn-online.com/joomla15/index.php?...dgefield-columns&Itemid=769

Hersam Acorn Newspapers – Your local news source covering Southwestern Connecticut and Westchester County, New York

Fishermen the forgotten victims of un-Sound policies

Written by Chipp Reid
Sunday, 09 August 2009 06:19

It's not "Deadliest Catch."

There are no cameras, no film crews, no rock stars singing a theme song. For the few lobstermen working Long Island Sound, there isn't much of a future either.

The 1999 die-off that all but destroyed the state's once-thriving lobster industry continues to reverberate. When the die-off happened, Connecticut had the third-richest lobster grounds in the country, one worth \$40 million a year. It employed hundreds of people, fed hundreds of families, put clothes on the backs of hundreds of children.

Today, there are less than a dozen commercial lobstermen working the Sound.

Most barely earn a living but for fishermen such as Ken Tobin of Shelton, it's the only living they know.

"I can't afford to fish full-time," Tobin said. "There are too many costs with fuel going up like crazy, insurance, paying for deckhands and bait. It's just too expensive. The sad part is, it's what I do and I will keep on doing it until I convince myself there aren't any lobsters left."

Fishing has always been a family business. Tobin started fishing with his brother. Others inherited boats and traps from fathers or uncles. It isn't just the fishermen, however, that depended on the catch. Their families did, too. When the fishery collapsed, hundreds of families were suddenly left looking for ways to keep homes and food on tables.

The state and federal government did little to help. The state bought back lobster traps from fishermen, but at a fraction of what they made when lobsters filled those same traps. Scientific study after scientific study failed to find one main factor behind the die-off, further limiting what the fishermen could do. Without a definite cause, there was no way to compensate the fishermen for what they lost.

Yet, it wasn't just the fishermen that lost. It was all of New England. A way of life, one part of the state and region, is gone now, and isn't just the lobstermen that disappeared. The once-mighty fishing fleet out of Stonington is down to just a handful of boats. Scallop fishermen are all but gone. Even the oyster industry, the cornerstone of the state's remaining fisheries, is but a shadow of what it once was.

The question is, beyond those involved, who cares? Sure, there are some lawmakers such as Milford state Rep. Dick Roy, Norwalk Republican Larry Cafero and a handful of others that continually work to keep the fisheries alive, but who else? Where are the environmental groups? Why aren't Save the Sound, Greenpeace or any groups out there pounding drums, raising support and awareness to preserve a home-grown industry?

Fishing isn't the steel industry. There aren't Japanese or Taiwanese lobsters flooding the market. There isn't cheap labor manning the boats putting the old-timers out of work.

The real enemy of Connecticut's lobstermen and other commercial fishermen is indifference. As long as the beaches are open, as long as the bluefish still run, most people view the Sound as clean and healthy. The legislature, for all its talk of preserving the environment and creating jobs, has done little to protect commercial fishing. The one program in place to restore the lobsters — the V-notch program — nearly died in the latest budget wrangle.

It has to stop.

The state, from Gov. M. Jodi Rell down to each resident, must act to save the fishing industry, not simply because it's part of the past, but because it holds a promise of jobs for the future. If science can't pinpoint a cause of the die-off, it's time to listen to the fishermen — fishermen who saw the die-off happen. If federal agencies won't act to ban chemicals such as the pesticide malathion the fishermen say killed the lobsters, it's time for the state Environmental Protection Agency to step up and enact its own ban. And, if pesticide makers such as Scotts, or retailers such as Home Depot or Lowe's or Ace Hardware complain, the state should simply say, "Too bad."

The state constitution says nothing about Connecticut having a responsibility to corporations to sell any particular product. The state constitution says a lot, however, about the duty Connecticut has to protect the welfare of its residents and environment.

Any action is likely to be too late to help fishermen such as Tobin. The Shelton fishermen used to go out six days week and worked more than a thousand pots. Today, he goes at best once a week and has fewer than 200 pots.

"There are times when I don't even know why I keep doing this other than it's what I do," Tobin said. "Like I said, I'll keep fishing until I convince myself there's nothing left to catch."

If the state doesn't act, that day could be coming sooner than anyone realizes.

Chipp Reid, a former reporter for The Press and a longtime sailor, now works for the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25906811-5006787,00.html

THE South Australian Liberal Party has become embroiled in the collapse of Australian Bight Abalone, after the local MP revealed her husband had been contracted to supply stock to the embattled aquaculture company.

☰ Liberals caught up in sinking of abalone group | The Australian

Monday, 10 August 2009 10:45 AM

Liberals caught up in sinking of abalone group

Verity Edwards | August 10, 2009

Article from: [The Australian](#)

THE South Australian Liberal Party has become embroiled in the collapse of Australian Bight Abalone, after the local MP revealed her husband had been contracted to supply stock to the embattled aquaculture company.

Liz Penfold, who has held the state seat of Flinders since 1993, taking in ABA's base at Elliston, said yesterday that she had also met the company's chief executive several times and had supported its application to set up an offshore abalone farm.

"I met with Andrew Ferguson and said I would do all I could (to help) because we needed the jobs very badly, and the business was badly needed for Elliston," Ms Penfold told The Australian. "I went to one of their initial functions in Adelaide to show support ... Since then I haven't been to anything, haven't been invited to anything."

Geoff Penfold, a former accountant, now manages Port Lincoln-based onshore abalone growing company Southern Australian Seafoods, which has had contracts to supply ABA.

Ms Penfold, a shareholder in SAS, said the company had been contracted to supply \$200,000 worth of stock to ABA but had not yet handed it over.

Yesterday she admitted to initially having concerns about ABA's plans to farm abalone offshore, including its funds being sourced through a managed investment scheme, and the viability of growing abalone in rough open seas.

Opponents to the company setting up at Elliston were concerned about the impact of any breakdown in equipment on the environment, how it would affect the nearby Australian sea lion colony and whether it would impede the migratory path of whales.

"When Australian Bight Abalone came along and proposed to do in-sea abalone, while it's rough out there I certainly didn't have any concerns about the sea lions or the whales," Ms Penfold said. "(But) we were all hopeful that the technology was there and we would see a successful in-sea aquaculture industry."

ABA went into voluntary administration last month and sacked 27 staff, leaving 1200 people who invested a total \$43.8 million in limbo.

The Australian last week revealed the company's extensive contact with the Labor Party, thrusting the South Australian government into the debate over the growing influence of lobbyists and cash for access to premiers and ministers.

ALP fundraiser and lobbyist Nick Bolkus is a director of ABA, and Premier Mike Rann was a one-time guest speaker at an ABA function. Mr Ferguson has also met several senior state ministers.

ABA is continuing to operate its aquaculture leases and licences.

A Primary Industries and Resources SA spokesman said yesterday that the administrators were hoping to sell the operations to keep the company running.

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Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:42 PM

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www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25899049-2702,00.html

THE collapsed aquaculture company that has drawn the Rann government into the national debate about the growing influence of political lobbyists has been challenged about the accuracy of information it provided on the number of abalone dying before maturity.

 Doubts on abalone firm's death rates | The Australian

Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:29 PM

Doubts on abalone firm's death rates

Michael Owen, Pia Akerman | August 08, 2009

Article from: [The Australian](#)

THE collapsed aquaculture company that has drawn the Rann government into the national debate about the growing influence of political lobbyists has been challenged about the accuracy of information it provided on the number of abalone dying before maturity.

Concerns have also been raised over whether Australian Bight Abalone's leases -- initially granted for research purposes -- should have been approved by the South Australian government for commercial activities.

The process under which ABA received its commercial licences fell under the spotlight this week as the fallout from explosive corruption revelations in Queensland spread across the country.

The South Australian government is now embroiled in a fierce public debate over the growing influence of political lobbyists and cash for access to premiers and ministers.

An investigation by The Weekend Australian has revealed several links and private meetings between ABA chief Andrew Ferguson, Premier Mike Rann and several of his senior ministers.

ABA's collapse has left 1200 people, who invested \$43.8 million in the company, in limbo. Its 27 employees are now redundant.

The revelations come amid industry concern about how ABA's aquaculture leases, each with corresponding marine abalone farming licences, were converted by the state government from pilot leases to development leases, and then to production leases. The process of converting the leases, which is approved at ministerial level and does not require public consultation under the state's Aquaculture Act, was undertaken and completed within one year of ALP fundraiser and political lobbyist Nick Bolkus, a former Labor senator, being appointed to the board of ABA as a director on July 1, 2007.

"There was some opposition and then, all of a sudden, the whole consultation process was shut down and ABA were given commercial licences on what were previously leases set aside for research," a source said.

"Later, divers that used to go up there would say 30 to 40 per cent of abalone had died, yet the company was claiming the lowest mortality in the industry. There were problems with growth rates and sale prices -- everything about it was misleading."

Mr Bolkus said the board had been concerned about the mortality rates, and undertook an investigation.

"That was never an issue until the last few months," Mr Bolkus said. "We had been getting reports from an acclaimed local company as to the mortality rates and we were satisfied that things were under control. At the end, the advice we got as a board was that it was a matter of feed, and we were taking steps to address that."

Former director Peter Woodhead, one of the company's founders, whose retirement from the board in 2007 made way for Mr Bolkus, has also questioned how ABA's collapse came about with so little warning. Monthly checks on the abalone are meant to provide regular updates on the progress of the precious stock.

"I could not understand how a great concept could go so horribly wrong," Mr Woodhead said. "The original business plans we did really only showed the company needing to be involved in the MIS (managed investment scheme) fundraising up until about 2008.

"What I don't understand is if the mortality rates are as high as what people are saying, that management didn't know about this a long time ago. If it has been, then there have been people misleading people."

When The Weekend Australian asked Mr Rann whether the government had any concerns about ABA's operations and its relationship with the government, a spokeswoman for the Premier said it was a private company.

"In terms of its relationship with the government we have no concerns," she said.

In the lucrative abalone industry, prized aquaculture licences and the growing Chinese middle-class's insatiable taste for the delicacy hold the key to multi-million-dollar fortunes.

Raising funds through managed investment schemes, ABA boasted in its publicity material that it was "perfectly poised" to reap gains from the proposed Australia-China free trade agreement.

The impact was huge. Net assets doubled in the 12 months to June last year to \$18.1m, with the directors crediting that to "improved operating performance" and proceeds raised from the 2008 MIS. Now the company is in voluntary administration.

According to industry sources, ABA ignored warnings about the risks of abalone farming in the areas covered by the leases first granted in 2005 and, with government approvals in place, pushed ahead in a rush for profit.

"The connections that were made at that time let it expand at an out-of-control rate without any real checks or measures," said one source close to the company. "There is no doubt they were very well-connected politically."

The Adelaide-based aquaculture firm operates abalone farming operations at four sites near Elliston, on South Australia's remote Eyre Peninsula.

Before ABA was placed into voluntary administration last month, Mr Ferguson and other executives had met Mr Rann, Deputy Premier Kevin Foley, Infrastructure Minister Patrick Conlon, Planning Minister Paul Holloway and Fisheries Minister Paul Caica at his company's official functions, government events and exclusive ALP fundraising events.

Mr Rann and senior ministers in his cabinet have this week sought to avoid scrutiny over their links to the company, following an exclusive report in The Australian on Tuesday that Mr Bolkus was headhunted by Mr Ferguson to become a director because of his connections with the government.

Mr Bolkus -- one of Australia's top political lobbyists and a founding partner in Adelaide-based lobbyist firm Bespoke Approach with Howard government minister Alexander Downer -- said yesterday he had never used those connections to promote ABA.

"I haven't made any representations to ministers about ABA," Mr Bolkus said. "Nor did I discuss any question as to the state of the licences or the changeover."

Mr Bolkus chairs the state Labor fundraising body, SA Progressive Business, which organises events every month offering access to the Premier and senior ministers for up to \$1500 a person.

Mr Ferguson is a regular at some of those events. Earlier this week, he said he had been to intimate boardroom lunches hosted by Mr Holloway "because we operate on government leases and it is important to us to know what the government is doing, and it is important for the government to know what we are doing".

Mr Holloway said Mr Ferguson had asked for a meeting to discuss ABA when he was fisheries minister, but he could not remember the details of the conversation.

"He sought an appointment and I met with him about some of the issues," Mr Holloway said. "It was

years ago now."

He said that although he "regularly" saw Mr Bolkus, the former senator had never approached him regarding ABA.

"The company wouldn't appoint him (as a director) if they didn't think there was a benefit, but maybe he brings some other skills they need," he added.

Mr Conlon, who describes himself as a mate of Mr Bolkus, said this week he had met "people from Australian Bight Abalone many times and discussed issues concerning their business".

Mr Bolkus is a close factional ally of Mr Conlon, the state parliamentary leader of the Left.

Mr Conlon declined to be interviewed or answer written questions, including: who from ABA he met and when; who arranged the meetings and whether Mr Bolkus was present; the nature of the business issues discussed; and why he was meeting company representatives to discuss a business outside his portfolio.

In an emailed statement, Mr Conlon said that "as the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Energy, I meet with many businesses in South Australia".

"There isn't a business in South Australia that doesn't touch on my portfolio areas," he said. "I have met with Andrew Ferguson on a few occasions -- I cannot imagine why I wouldn't have."

The minister responsible for ABA's lease conversions in 2007 and 2008 was Rory McEwen, who remains a state MP but is no longer in cabinet. In 2007, Mr McEwen admitted he had not disclosed five electoral donations worth more than \$750 each. The scandal damaged the Rann government and almost cost him his cabinet position at the time.

When contacted by The Weekend Australian about his dealings with ABA, Mr McEwen refused to comment. A primary industries department spokeswoman said all ABA's conversion applications were assessed by its aquaculture division "to confirm lease performance criteria were being met".

Mr Rann's office initially refused to respond to inquiries, claiming the Premier had never met Mr Ferguson.

After Mr Ferguson was quoted in The Australian on Tuesday saying he had met Mr Rann and several senior ministers, the Premier's office said Mr Rann had been the guest speaker at ABA's end-of-financial-year drinks on July 9 last year at The Loft, above North Restaurant at Skycity Adelaide Casino. The event was arranged by Labor-aligned lobbyist firm Hawker Britton, whose South Australian director is Stephen Halliday, a former chief-of-staff to Mr Rann as Premier and opposition leader.

Mr Halliday has not responded to calls for comment.

A spokeswoman for Mr Caica, who took over the fisheries portfolio from Mr McEwen when he resigned from cabinet on March 2, insisted Mr Caica had not "formally" met Mr Ferguson and that he had only a "very informal chat" with Mr Ferguson at an aquaculture announcement in Adelaide on June 25.

Mr Ferguson, who received a \$412,500 loan from ABA in 2007-08, has declined to comment further about the company.

Additional reporting: Gavin Lower

 Praise for Handling of Abalone Disease in Victoria

Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:28 PM

Praise for Handling of Abalone Disease in Victoria

AUSTRALIA - The fishing community in Victoria's South-West is being congratulated for observing the restricted fishing area between Lion Headland and the Aire River aimed at limiting the spread of abalone disease.

Fisheries Victoria Acting Executive Director Anthony Hurst said there had been no breaches since the restrictions were introduced on June 26, 2009.

"Fisheries Officers have undertaken numerous land and sea patrols of the restricted fishing area,

during the day and night, and have not encountered anyone doing the wrong thing," Mr Hurst said.

"The area has limited access and attracts few anglers during winter, but the anglers Fisheries Officers have encountered reported seeing the signs placed on access paths and were only linefishing, which is permitted.

"Fisheries Officers have been raising awareness of the restricted fishing area with the help of local businesses that sell fishing licences, Parks Victoria and Victoria Police.

"The local community has been very helpful in communicating the restrictions to visitors who might otherwise be unaware, and it's pleasing that both commercial and recreational fishers are doing the right thing."

The restricted fishing area includes all marine waters enclosed by a line running from the southern-most tip of Lion Headland to the mouth of the Aire River, and extending to the high water mark between the two points, which covers approximately 13 kilometres of coastline.

TheFishSite News Desk

www.thefishsite.com/fishnews/10546/praise-for-handling-of-abalone-d...

☰ Untitled

Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:27 PM

<http://www.weekendpost.co.za/article.aspx?id=455036>

☰ The Weekend Post Online

Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:25 PM

Cops nab smallholder with R1m worth of perlemoen

2009/08/08

Rochelle de Kock HERALD REPORTER dekockr@avusa.co.za



FISHY BUSINESS ... Police discovered 700kg of perlemoen at a smallholding on the Old Seaview Road, Port Elizabeth, yesterday. Constable Simfumene Mndayi was one of the policemen who made the bust. Picture: FREDLIN ADRIAAN

IN yet another major perlemoen bust yesterday, police arrested a 54-year-old man in possession of about R1-million worth of perlemoen at a smallholding on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth, ready to be shipped off today.

This comes after 17 suspected perlemoen poachers were arrested last week after they were spotted in a rubber duck by marine rangers in Algoa Bay.

The Kabega Park crime prevention unit acted on a tip-off and rushed to the smallholding, which is on the Old Seaview Road, and discovered about 700kg of perlemoen stashed in an outbuilding.

When The Herald arrived, the team saw 13 baths, three crates and 7½ potato bags filled to capacity with the perlemoen, which was being dried by four electric fans.

Police on the scene said the perlemoen was usually dried and packed into potato bags and later transported by a construction bakkie to the harbour, where it was shipped off to its various buyers.

Police spokesman Inspector Alwyn Labans said information had been received that perlemoen was being stored in a house. "The man was on the premises and had keys to all the rooms we searched. We presume the plot belongs to him.

"The police searched the entire premises and eventually discovered the perlemoen stashed in an outbuilding, a few metres away from the house.

"We cannot confirm whether the man is linked to the 17 men who were arrested last week, but we will be investigating the matter," Labans said.

The suspect is believed to have a construction or cabinet-making company, which he uses as a front for his illegal trading.

Four freezers, a scale and buckets were stored in the same room as the dried perlemoen.

Police who arrived first said they had smelt the perlemoen a few metres before they uncovered the stash. They even suspected that a body was hidden inside the room.

<http://www.weekendpost.co.za/article.aspx?id=455041>

The Weekend Post Online

Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:24 PM

Rhodes academic to head world perlemoen body

2009/08/08

Guy Rogers ENVIRONMENT & TOURISM EDITOR rogersg@avusa.co.za



TRASHED ... Prof Peter Britz examines perlemoen shells shucked and discarded by poachers at Wavecrest in Transkei.

blatant than in South Africa. The reason is that our wild *Haliotis midae* has long ranked among the top three most sought-after perlemoen species on the black

RHODES University ichthyology head Prof Peter Britz has been elected chairman of the International Abalone Association at a conference in Thailand, highlighting the leading role South Africa is playing in research and development of this lucrative fishery.

Twenty-two countries are represented on the association, which met at the 7th International Abalone Symposium in Pattaya last month.

Abalone, or perlemoen as it is known in South Africa, is a large marine snail, with an insatiable market as a delicacy in the Far East. It occurs on rocky coasts around the world.

Every country where it occurs has been affected to varying degrees by poaching, Britz said yesterday.

Although it is prevalent worldwide, this poaching is nowhere more rampant and

market.

“We estimate 2000 to 3000 tons of poached perlemoen have been exported from South Africa in the last five years, over and above the legal quota.

“We are one of the major players in this fishery, but most of our harvest is illegal.”

Despite this onslaught and the insecurity of the former legal quota system, and partly because of these issues, South Africa also started researching perlemoen farming nearly two decades ago, led by fish scientists like Britz,

The result today is a buoyant perlemoen farming industry and a canned product which is selling like hot cakes, creating jobs in an area where they were haemorrhaging after the wild fishery had to be closed 18 months ago, and even raising the possibility of re- seeding devastated reefs.

South Africa was increasingly reaping the fruit of its research- based approach in this sector, Britz explained.

“The industry has gone from strength to strength. We are now producing and exporting 900kg of perlemoen a year – more than the 650kg wild legal quota at the height of the legal fishery in the mid-’90s.

“We have created 1000 jobs on 13 farms. That’s excluding staff for processing and canning or in the requisite service industries for feed, security and hardware. You could probably double the jobs if you included those sectors.”

Perlemoen farming is done in land-based tanks and the shellfish are fed pellets. Part of the success of the South African operation is the high density recipe of soya, starch, fish meal, vitamins and minerals that Britz and his team have developed.

While the main canned product is exported to China, there is also a market in Japan for live perlemoen and South African perlemoen farmers have become experts in the specialist art of packing them in cool-boxes with wet sponges.

Perlemoen farming was expanding fast in Korea and China, but South Africa was more than holding its own, he said.

“The animals we grow have 15% meat and the customers also seem to like the texture. We’re getting a really good reputation in terms of quality and quantity that complements the market sentiment that was attached to our wild perlemoen and which continues to protect the unique identity of South African perlemoen.”

Because of the demand, canned perlemoen from South African can be sold for top prices – \$75- \$105/kg (R583-R816) de-shelled in cans.

While aqua-culture holds great potential benefits for the environment in terms of reducing pressure on wild fish stocks, there has long been a concern that the food given to these farmed fish, depending on how much fish meal it contains, can nullify these benefits.

Asked about this, Britz said that because perlemoen ate seaweed in the wild, very little fish meal was used in the pellets. Some was used at present to deliver oils and other necessary nutrients, but it could be replaced altogether by a cultured marine algae which was being researched at present.

There are two perlemoen farms in the Eastern Cape, one at Marsh Strand near

Haga-Haga, north-east of East London, and one at Hougham Park, east of Coega in Algoa Bay.

Unconfirmed reports last week indicated that the Hougham Park facility, owned by the National Ports Authority (NPA), had closed following an assessment which showed it would be unviable next to the Port of Ngqura.

Yesterday, however, NPA spokesman Ayanda Mantshongo said it was not closed and that it was being run by Premier Fishing.

If the Hougham Park farm does come under pressure because of its proximity to Ngqura, it could be turned into a training centre and a supplier of spats (baby perlemoen), Britz said. These spats would be sold to perlemoen farms and could also play a vital role in the re-seeding of reefs in the Eastern Cape.

The water quality factor with its being next to a port would not be a problem because a spat hatchery – as opposed to a fully developed farm – needs relatively little water and any impurities can be screened out.

If this is approved for Hougham Park, it would be South Africa's first re-seeding farm. If it was successful, another would have to be established to serve the Western Cape, because although it is all *H. midae* there are genetic differences between the perlemoen here and there.

Experimental re-seeding done at Cape Recife had shown an acceptable 50% survival rate, so wild populations could be saved in this way, Britz said.

Although no country has halted poaching completely, Australia is one of the nations faring best.

Its approach has been to encourage the involvement of private companies or groups, who are then allocated rights to harvest sections of the coast.

"The key is strong, inalienable rights which can be traded, but cannot be redistributed."

www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25894325-5013871,00.html

WARNINGS about the risks of abalone farming at sites on South Australia's remote Eyre Peninsula were ignored by Australian Bight Abalone, of which ALP fundraiser and lobbyist Nick Bolkus is a director, in a rush for profit that has led to the company's collapse.

No heed to risk in failed abalone farm | The Australian

Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:20 PM

No heed to risk in failed abalone farm

Pia Akerman and Verity Edwards | August 07, 2009

Article from: [The Australian](#)

WARNINGS about the risks of abalone farming at sites on South Australia's remote Eyre Peninsula were ignored by Australian Bight Abalone, of which ALP fundraiser and lobbyist Nick Bolkus is a director, in a rush for profit that has led to the company's collapse.

Environmentalists and concerned residents of the community at Elliston have questioned why the company was allowed to proceed with a multi-million dollar aquaculture project, and whether it should have been expected that mortality rates among the abalone would stifle investors' returns.

The company has gone into administration, leaving 1200 people who invested \$43.8 million across four sites in limbo.

The Australian has this week revealed several high-level connections between ABA and the ALP, chiefly linked to Mr Bolkus, a former ALP senator, and Labor-aligned lobbyist firm Hawker Britton,

whose state director Stephen Halliday is a former chief of staff to SA Premier Mike Rann. One source close to the company said yesterday corporate greed had been allowed to take over, stimulating an "out of control" growth rate.

"If the environmental concerns were listened to, we probably wouldn't be in this situation now," an industry source said. "Elliston is just too rough; it's just not suitable for that method (of farming). It's a good location for growing wild abalone but not for growing them in a sea cage." John Haagmans fought the company in court after the Rann government granted development approval for the state's first offshore abalone farm at Elliston, 640km west of Adelaide.

Mr Haagmans and the Friends of Elliston claimed that Anxious Bay was unsuitable for aquaculture and the development would affect a colony of sea lions on nearby West Waldegrave Island.

The court ruled against the Friends of Elliston in January 2007. ABA has since taken Mr Haagmans to court in an effort to recover costs. Mr Haagmans yesterday claimed that he had seen broken baskets from the abalone farm on West Waldegrave Island earlier this week.

"Our concerns at the time were the environment around the Waldegrave Conservation Park and the effect it may have on the Australian sea lion colony," Mr Haagmans, a former abalone diver, told The Australian. "The other concerns were the area runs through a migratory path of whales as well as the sea lions."

ABA went into administration last month after its managed investment scheme attracted only enough applications to meet 20 per cent of the company's costs. The company had been trying to raise \$20m-\$25m.

Mining giant BHP Billiton also suffered a hit yesterday. After close to 12 months of consultation, the state parliament's Environment, Resources and Development Committee recommended an alternative site be sought for BHP's desalination plant in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

<http://www.eyewitnessnews.co.za/articleprog.aspx?id=19170>

📰 Eyewitness News: Abalone poachers to appear in court

Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:17 PM

Abalone poachers to appear in court

Malungelo Boo | 2 Days Ago



Southern Cape police say two men arrested for the illegal possession of abalone will appear in court on Thursday.

The suspects were arrested in Beaufort West on Wednesday.

During the arrest police seized perlemoen estimated to be worth R700 000.

The men, aged 36, are believed to be from Cape Town and were on route to Gauteng at the time of arrest.

"At this moment in time, it's only the two that have been arrested but there's always a chance we can link that to other abalone finds that we had in the past," said the police's Malcolm Potjie.

(Edited by Danya Philander)

www.int.iol.co.za/index.php?...id=15&art_id=nw20090805234151580C582255

Western Cape police have arrested two men found in possession of 50 bags of abalone.

News - Crime & Courts: Perlemoen seized by police

Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:13 PM

Perlemoen seized by police

August 06 2009 at 12:29AM

Two men were arrested for possession of abalone worth about R700 000 in Beaufort West on Tuesday, Western Cape police said.

The two, aged 38, from Cape Town, were arrested with 50 bags of perlemoen, Captain Malcolm Pojie said in a statement.

"The abalone was found when police pulled over a Toyota Quantum minibus on Dunkin Street which was on its way to Johannesburg."

The vehicle had false number plates and police confiscated it and the abalone.

The pair would appear in the Beaufort West Magistrate's Court on Thursday. - Sapa

<http://www.weekendpost.co.za/article.aspx?id=453916>

The Weekend Post Online

Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:12 PM

Six still missing as perlemoen suspects freed on R1200 bail

2009/08/05

Guy Rogers ENVIRONMENT & TOURISM EDITOR rogersg@avusa.co.za

DETAILS of the five perlemoen poaching suspects arrested in a dramatic Bird Island swoop off Port Elizabeth last week were released yesterday.

In a dramatic sequence of events last Wednesday, SANParks marine rangers spotted a boat in the marine protected area and when they approached it the occupants tried to race away, SANParks spokesman Megan Taplin said in her initial report.

A high-speed chase ensued and shots had to be fired to force the suspects to stop.

The boat was then searched but perlemoen had apparently already been dumped overboard and the decks were washed down with a cleaning agent to remove DNA traces.

The suspects were arrested and charged at the Kinkelbos Police Station with illegally diving and fishing in a marine protected area, obstruction of justice and destruction of evidence. Their diving gear was confiscated and the boat was towed back and handed over to the Asset Forfeiture Unit in Port Elizabeth. The suspects were granted bail of R1200 each in the Paterson Magistrates' Court, she said yesterday.

"They also have to report to the police station every day of the week ... The magistrate has referred the case to the Grahamstown Court, but no date has been

set yet."

Police spokesman Inspector Dumile Gwavu named the suspects as Juan Els, 29, of Uitenhage, Waldo Harmse, 28, of Despatch, Edward Morton, 26, of Sydenham in Port Elizabeth, Morne Bouwer, 26, of Uitenhage and Terrence Oosthuizen, 32, of Algoa Park, Port Elizabeth.

Taplin said there was still no sign of the six suspects who escaped during the Bird Island swoop. The six divers emerged from the water and gathered on Seal Island while their companions were being arrested.

Unable to get onto the tiny island or to deal with another half dozen suspects on their vessel, especially as it was getting dark, the rangers then headed back to shore with the arrested suspects.

Marine and Coastal Management patrol boat Lillian Ngoyi arrived at 8.30pm to monitor the suspects through the night. The next morning the divers were gone, prompting speculation about an epic 15km swim to shore at night through shark-infested waters with the help of a raft they were seen making.

www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25877629-5013871,00.html

ONE of Australia's top political lobbyists, former Labor senator Nick Bolkus, was headhunted because of his connections with the Rann government to be a director of an aquaculture company that has gone into administration.

 Lobbyist Nick Bolkus headhunted for connections | The Australian

Sunday, 9 August 2009 4:03 PM

Lobbyist Nick Bolkus headhunted for connections

Michael Owen, SA political reporter | August 04, 2009

Article from: [The Australian](#)

ONE of Australia's top political lobbyists, former Labor senator Nick Bolkus, was headhunted because of his connections with the Rann government to be a director of an aquaculture company that has gone into administration.

The collapse of Australian Bight Abalone -- the nation's largest holder of abalone farming leases and licences -- has left 1200 people who invested \$43.8million in limbo.

Mr Bolkus, who is a business partner with Howard government foreign minister Alexander Downer in Adelaide-based lobbyist firm Bespoke Approach, also chairs the state Labor fundraising body SA Progressive Business.

Inquiries by The Australian reveal ABA chief executive Andrew Ferguson is a regular at SA Progressive Business events, where those in attendance pay up to \$1500 each for intimate dinners and special briefings with South Australian Premier Mike Rann and his senior cabinet ministers.

SA Progressive Business documents show that between September and November, Mr Rann is scheduled to personally host eight Labor fundraising events, charging people between \$110 and \$1500 to attend.

Mr Ferguson told The Australian he had met Mr Rann, Deputy Premier Kevin Foley and Infrastructure Minister Patrick Conlon and "certainly have had a meal with all of those guys". He also met with Fisheries Minister Paul Caica about six weeks ago and "he (Caica) agreed to catch up (again) at a later date", Mr Ferguson said.

However, Mr Rann's office denied the Premier had ever met Mr Ferguson.

"Having searched through the office records, we have no record of the Premier having any meetings with Mr Ferguson," a spokesman said in an emailed statement.

"I'm sorry, but I'm unable to answer for every minister."

In a statement last night, Mr Conlon said: "I have met with people from Australian Bight Abalone

many times and discussed issues concerning their business."

Mr Caica said he had a "brief, informal conversation" with Mr Ferguson, and "no state government money has been provided to ABA from Primary Industries and Resources SA".

When approached outside state parliament yesterday, Mr Rann refused to speak to The Australian about the matter, saying he had "covered" it in other interviews.

Mr Rann came under renewed pressure yesterday to take a stand on regulating political donations and the role of lobbyists, and to acknowledge the benefits of an independent anti-corruption body, after Queensland Premier Anna Bligh instructed all state MPs that "they are no longer allowed to attend any fundraising dinners, lunches or breakfasts with businesses".

This came after former Queensland anti-corruption commissioner Tony Fitzgerald told a conference in Brisbane last week that access to government could be bought, Labor mates were appointed to high-paying positions and retired politicians were exploiting their political connections for "success fees".

Following Tasmania's announcement a fortnight ago that it would set up an independent anti-corruption commission, South Australia and Victoria became the only states without such a body. SA has also left lobbying activity unregulated, unlike most of the rest of the country, which has moved to establish registers of lobbyists or codes of conduct.

Mr Ferguson yesterday refused to disclose how much Mr Bolkus was paid as a director of ABA, saying the information was "confidential", but said he had not been paid at any point as a lobbyist. But he said he had attended SA Progressive Business functions organised by Mr Bolkus, including boardroom lunches hosted by Planning Minister Paul Holloway, and was a regular at the Premier's annual end-of-year drinks.

"We do this because we operate on government leases and it is important to us to know what the government is doing and it is important for the government to know what we are doing," Mr Ferguson said. "I don't think there is anything improper in it. We do not expect any favours, but we put it down to doing business in SA."

Mr Ferguson, a former Sydney lawyer who was appointed chief executive of ABA in February 2005, said he was "tasked to put together a list of possible independent directors" a few years ago and settled on Mr Bolkus.

A former South Australian Labor senator and federal minister, Mr Bolkus is a close factional ally to state minister Patrick Conlon, the parliamentary leader of the Left.

Mr Bolkus was appointed as a director of ABA on July 1, 2007, because "Nick is very well respected and you tend to look for well-respected people to sit on your board", Mr Ferguson said. "Certainly you always choose directors who have a good network -- that never hurts (in doing business)."


ABA was placed into voluntary administration on July 1 and administrator Sam Davies of McGrathNicol has called the next creditors meeting for September 9. ABA in May had hoped to raise \$20m to \$25m by selling shares in its farmed abalone venture near Elliston on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula, but had been forced instead to make 27 employees redundant.

Sources close to the administration process said that while people had invested millions into four sites, no projects were ever harvested. Administrators are now investigating a grower-funded solution, recapitalisation or whether to wind up the schemes and sell the assets.

ABA directors have blamed several factors for the company's problems, including deteriorating business conditions and "issues surrounding the managed investment scheme industry".

Mr Bolkus, speaking from Greece yesterday, said he remained a director of the company and refused to comment on any aspect of the political donations or lobbying issues.

<http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/viewiStockNews/articleid/3387215>

 Cancer patient fulfills dream / Becomes ocean-diving fisherwoman while battling illness

Monday, 3 August 2009 10:21 AM

Cancer patient fulfills dream / Becomes ocean-diving fisherwoman while battling illness

Sunday, August 02, 2009 1:33 PM

   [Print](#)

Aug. 2, 2009 (The Yomiuri Shimbun) -- SAKAI, Fukui--A 53-year-old diver who underwent a cancer operation has made her dream of "talking with the fish" come true.

On a rainy day in July at a beach in the Mikuni area, Nayomi Oi emerged from the water and commented on the waves crashing against the Tojinbo Cliffs some distance away. "With waves like these, we won't be able to enter the ocean tomorrow," she said.

She then smiled and revealed a large abalone in her hand to Nobu Yanagida, 84, who taught her all about diving. "It's my birthday today. I think this is a present from the ocean," Oi said.

The abalone was the largest catch in her three-year career as a diver.

Oi is the youngest among the 17 women who dive in the Komegawaki district of the Mikuni area. "She's become quite good," said Yanagida, the oldest. "I wish she'd started 10 years earlier so I could've taught her more. But I can no longer hold my breath like I used to."

Oi, who was born and raised in the Mikuni area, would turn to the ocean whenever she felt sad or had difficulties.

She started windsurfing when she was a student at Kanazawa University, and after working for a major electric wire manufacturer for four years, she married and returned to Mikuni at the age of 30. She enjoyed windsurfing while running a surf shop on a beach in her hometown.

In January 1997, 10 years after her return to Mikuni, the Russian tanker Nakhodka sank off Shimane Prefecture, causing a massive oil spill along the coastline of the Sea of Japan, including Mikuni.

Oi saw divers crying and spreading their arms in the ocean, trying to stop the oil from pouring in. They were screaming that turban shells and seaweed would die.

Wanting to help, Oi and her surfing friends joined the efforts to clean up the oil along the tainted coastline.

During conversations with other women divers who were out scooping oil, Oi was told that the divers could make eye contact with fish and even talk to them.

"Perhaps there's a world that can only be seen underwater. Perhaps I don't truly know the ocean," Oi thought.

She also was impressed by the compassion of the divers, as they were concerned about how people in Nakhodka would not have heating oil.

Half a year after the Nakhodka incident, Oi reopened her surf shop and also started a beach-based playgroup for children. Although she had developed a vague yearning to become a diver herself, she was too busy with the surf shop.

On Christmas Eve in 2005, when Oi was 49, she was told she had breast cancer.

After undergoing an operation in a Fukui hospital, she looked out on the ocean every day through the window from her 10th-floor room with binoculars given to her by her surfing friends.

Learning that her cancer had metastasized, Oi asked herself what she should do and realized that at the bottom of her heart, she had always wanted to be a diver and be able to talk with the fish.

Oi's husband, Yasuaki, who was working in Tokyo, returned to Mikuni, also his hometown, to be with his wife.

A year after Oi was discharged from the hospital, the local fisheries cooperative association approved the couple's request to work as a diver and a fisherman, respectively.

Now Oi is learning how to fish under water while regularly receiving hospital treatment.

She says she is amazed how older divers, though bent with age, can swim so gracefully in the ocean. "I feel human beings were born from the sea," she said.

Women traditionally pass on their diving territories to their daughters in the Mikuni area. But Yanagida's daughter-in-law and granddaughter have no plans to become divers, so Yanagida is turning over her territory to Oi.

Oi catches turban shells and abalone in the morning and sells them to restaurants and inns, while her husband fishes from a boat and distributes his catch to restaurants.

"We don't have much income, but it's great that we can both work near the ocean," Yasuaki said.

The couple now often have younger employees manage the surf shop.

Sea urchins are in season, and even experienced divers have a hard time with the prickly creatures, as catching them often bruises the hands.

"I want to catch a lot of them," Oi said. "But even if I don't do well, I aspire to be like my elders, who can take it easy and be willing to try again the next day."

(Source: iStockAnalyst)

www.sundaytribune.co.za/?...=163&fArticleId=vn20090801063846621C547750

KwaZulu-Natal's weekly Sunday newspaper. Coverage of news from the province, South Africa and around the globe, with a strong focus on the passions and interests of the people in KwaZulu-Natal. Includes the community newspaper Tribune Herald

 Sunday Tribune

Sunday, 2 August 2009 4:32 PM

End of 'sometimes arduous trial'

1 August 2009, 08:27

By Jade Witten

Druglord and crime boss Kiyaam Rinqest will spend more than 30 years behind bars for his involvement in drug and abalone smuggling, car theft and money laundering.

He was on Friday sentenced by Bellville Commercial Crimes Court magistrate Amrith Chabilall after the "sometimes arduous trial" which ran for two years.

Chabilall sentenced Rinqest to 35 years on two counts of dealing in drugs, 12 on three counts of vehicle theft, eight on four counts of poaching and possession of abalone and eight for money laundering. Rinqest, 47, should effectively spend 32 years in prison.

Chabilall convicted Rinqest of 10 of the 23 counts he initially faced and acquitted him of the remaining counts as there was insufficient evidence.

The court heard Rinqest had three previous convictions of theft dating back more than 30 years. He was arrested on June 25, 2003 after police stopped and searched his BMW during a routine inspection on the N1 near Beaufort West.

He was found in possession of more than 51 000 mandrax tablets with an estimated value of R1.8 million and nearly 1kg of compressed dagga.

Rinqest forfeited his bail of R500 000 in October after he was arrested for the illegal possession of abalone to the value of R7m. He and four others, including a Blackheath pastor, are on trial in that case.

Chabilall on Friday referred to the evidence of Angus McKenzie of Marine and Coastal Management who testified that the total allowable abalone catch along the West Coast has depleted significantly over the years.

The total permitted commercial catch in the 1960s was 600 tons but that had diminished to the extent that no commercial or recreational catching is allowed at all.

Chabilall further indicated the primary destination for abalone was the Far East as it was used as an aphrodisiac and for medicinal purposes.

Close to 7 000 unshelled dried abalone were confiscated from an Epping warehouse Rinqest managed in February 2003. It was established that boiling, drying and processing of abalone took place there.

Evidence of Captain Johan Smit revealed there was a link between drugs, including mandrax and tik, and abalone in the illegal market.

It is understood drug dealers would exchange drugs for abalone and vice versa instead of receiving money.

Chabilall considered Rinqest's circumstances, the severity of the crime and the interest of society when handing down judgment. "Whatever sentence the court imposes should be blended with a measure of mercy," he said.

Chabilall said drug-dealing offences were of particular public interest as the impact on society was "profound".

The minimum sentence of a first offender convicted of dealing in drugs in excess of R50 000 is 15 years' imprisonment unless the court found exceptional circumstances.

Defence attorney Marco Thomas argued the court should grant a lesser sentence in terms of the two counts of dealing in drugs, as Rinqest was a first offender and a family man. The court dismissed these reasons saying they "carried hardly any weight".

"Dealers benefit at the expense and misery of others. Dealers need to face the full wrath of the law," said Chabilall.

In terms of money laundering, Rinqest bought items such as cars and a boat for R130 000 in cash and registered them in other people's names without their knowledge. The court convicted Rinqest of theft relating to a stolen Audi A3, BMW and Mercedes-Benz SLK but had not found that he actually stole the cars himself.

Chabilall said the only suitable sentence would be imprisonment. Rinqest, who has been married for 26 years, has two children who are both married, and one grandchild. His family, who sat in two benches of the public gallery, appeared to be traumatised after Rinqest was sentenced.

Chabilall commended senior state advocate Derick Vogel, the investigating officer and the defence for a "valiant effort".

- This article was originally published on page 4 of [The Cape Argus](#) on August 01, 2009

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/02/magazine/02food-t-000.html?_r=1&hpw

A (very local) abalone farm brings back a California delicacy.

Field Report - Kelp Wanted - NYTimes.com

Saturday, 1 August 2009 4:50 PM

Kelp Wanted

By **CHRISTINE MUHLKE**

Published: July 30, 2009

Tourists and seagulls are drawn to Municipal Wharf No. 2 on California's Monterey Bay — both for the seafood. While picturesque, it's a working pier: fishermen dangle lines over the side; wholesale distributors load refrigerated vans with local sardines and squid. And then there is fresh abalone. From a wharf-top office the size of a one-car garage, Art Seavey and Trevor Fay, who are partners in Monterey Abalone Company, sell more than six tons a year of these once-endangered mollusks to walk-in customers, nearby restaurants and great chefs across the country. Their abalone is as local as it gets. To harvest it, they simply pop through a trapdoor and down a slippery ladder to the water below.

[Skip to next paragraph](#)

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Tony Cenicola/The New York Times

Related

Recipes: Monterey Bay Abalone, Meunière-Style (August 2, 2009)

Recipes: Abalone Ceviche (August 2, 2009)

Unlike other farms, theirs exists in a dim, tidal underworld: barnacle- and starfish-covered pilings hold up a few narrow wooden plankways for the abalone harvesters. Barking sea lions, the constant whine of a hydraulic winch and municipal pipes whooshing close overhead make conversation difficult. But the 200,000 native red abalones are silent in their cages, growing slowly — just an inch per year — until their frilly, sluglike “feet” are scraped from the panels with a spatula and they’re shipped live in a plastic bubble of oxygen. At the other end, another type of spatula awaits.

The abalone’s oceanic flavor comes with a uniquely al dente texture — it’s like an oyster crossed with a scallop with a twist of snail. (Only otters can eat it straight from the shell: fresh abalone requires tenderizing to transform its eraserlike consistency.) Long prized in Asian cuisine, it has become an American delicacy as well, served in high-end restaurants like Michel Richard Citronelle in Washington. By the 1990s, its desirability had led to overfishing. Commercial fishing was banned in 1997; poaching flourished despite a vastly depleted wild population.

By that point, Seavey — a reedy, handsome, soft-spoken man who farmed shrimp in Ecuador for a decade — was already farming abalone. “I got very homesick” in Ecuador, recalled Seavey, whose family owns a vineyard in Napa, Calif., “so I started thinking about what kind of aquaculture I could do here.” Abalone seemed a good fit: “The price was high, it was indigenous to California and there weren’t a lot of places where it could be grown.” In 1994, Seavey teamed with his original partner, who was starting an abalone farm under a Monterey wharf. Luckily both men had patience and faith: it takes four years before the smallest abalone reaches market size. If it survives.

From the beginning, Seavey has had to educate people about his operation. “California’s a tough place to do business, because aquaculture has bad connotations,” he said. “People don’t realize that aquaculture is like agriculture: there are different things that can be raised and different ways to raise things. I think people don’t understand that it’s shellfish farming. We’re feeding local plant production instead of imported fish meal.”

In order to reach one pound live weight, the mollusk must consume 20 pounds of kelp over the course of six or seven years. (Abalones can live 70 years and reach more than a foot in width. “They make nice Christmas ornaments,” noted Fay, a twinkly, articulate man, as he dangled a pearly craft project he made for his wife.) M.A.C. harvests five tons of giant kelp a week to put into the cages, an act some locals don’t find neighborly, despite the facts that they have city permits and kelp can grow more than a foot a day.

Abalone is first on the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch list of “Best Choices” for consumers. (The list is alphabetical.) Peter Bridson, the aquaculture research manager for the aquarium — which serves a snazzy dish of abalone with vanilla beurre blanc in its Portola restaurant — deemed the

ecological impact of farmed abalone benign. Regardless, he said, few consumers like buying seafood that's farmed. "There's still this perception that seafood should be wild and fresh-caught, though half of the fish consumed worldwide is farmed," he said.

When trying to apply "local" and "sustainable" to seafood, even California chefs find themselves with little they can put on the plate. In 2007, Daniel Patterson, the chef and owner of Coi in San Francisco, was getting most of his fish from Japan. "I said: 'This is crazy! If you want to serve the food of a place, then you have to serve that food.'" Research into local fish showed that there wasn't much of quality left. Then he remembered a dish of abalone and pig's feet he ate at Manresa in Los Gatos, Calif. It was David Kinch, Manresa's chef, who told him about M.A.C.

Patterson, an East Coast native, is intrigued by abalone's texture, saying, "It doesn't have bite to it, exactly; it has presence." (He says he believes letting it rest for four or five days helps to tenderize it.) He has served it raw, dressed with minced oysters and their liquor, and flash-grilled on the plancha, paired with cultured and wild seaweeds bought from M.A.C. For him, the flavor is pure California. "It's like eating a wave," he said.

For Californians like Fay, who grew up collecting specimens with his marine-biologist father, abalone is a memory food. Those who once pried it from rocks are amused to hear that people are willing to pay up to \$26 a pound. ("It's what we ate growing up because we were too poor to eat fish," a Los Gatos native told me over abalone meunière, part of the \$95 prix fixe at Manresa.) At home, it's cooked simply — albeit after tenderizing the daylight out of it — flour and oil and a hot pan, or maybe a secret family breeding of Ritz crackers and Lay's potato chips.

While working with top chefs is a perk, it's the reactions of walk-in customers that keep Seavey and Fay going through the trapdoor every day. "I love to sell our abalone to people where they walk up to the door and realize you can still buy abalone," Fay said. "It's exciting to bring back a delicacy. When you love what you do, you never work a day in your life."

<http://www.thetimes.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=1042801>

☰ The Times - Abalone poacher jailed for 32 years

Saturday, 1 August 2009 4:46 PM

Abalone poacher jailed for 32 years

Sapa

Published: Jul 31, 2009

Abalone poacher Kiyaaam Rinquest, who received drugs worth millions of rands as payment for illegal abalone exports to the Far East, was jailed for 32 years on Friday.

The jail sentence, imposed by magistrate Amrith Chabilall in the Bellville Specialised Commercial Crime Court, brought to an end Rinquest's marathon trial on 23 charges.

He was found guilty on 10 of the 23 charges -- two of dealing in drugs, two of possession of abalone (perlemoen), two involving the possession of abalone-processing equipment, one concerning the illegal use of the proceeds of crime and three of car theft.

Chabilall sentenced Rinquest to 63 years in jail, but ordered that the different sentences run concurrently, which reduced the sentence to 32 years.

Rinquest's wife and large family packed into the small court room, and all appeared relaxed during the few hours that it took Chabilall to deliver the sentence.

There was a gasp when he pronounced the first sentence - 15 years for dealing in 51,301 Mandrax tablets and 995,7g of hashish (compressed dagga).

Rinquest's wife sobbed loudly when the second sentence was handed down - 20 years for dealing in 563,297 Mandrax pills, found in a garage at a block of flats in Table View.

Other members of the Rinquest family wept quietly, as more jail sentences were handed down.

Chabilall said the trial had been long and, at times, arduous.

He praised the investigating detective Inspector Stoney Steenkamp for his "dogged footwork" in bringing Rinquest to justice.

Chabilall said poaching had depleted the abalone resources on the Western Cape coast to the extent that the authorities no longer allowed abalone fishing at all - not even for recreational purposes.

By poaching undersized abalone, in addition to those removed without a permit, Rinquest had "aggravated an already desperate situation", the judge said.

Chabilall said the primary destination of the poached abalone had been the Far East, where it was in huge demand for medicinal purposes as well as an aphrodisiac, and the rewards huge.

He said there was also a connection between abalone poaching and the drug trade, as payment for illegal abalone was by way of drugs, especially Mandrax and tik.

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0907/S00385.htm>

Fisheries Minister Phil Heatley has given paua stocks a helping hand by releasing hundreds of farm-bred baby paua into the water at Stirling Point near Bluff this morning. Mr Heatley was taking part in a paua reseedling programme funded and run ...

☰ Scoop: Minister gives paua a helping hand

Saturday, 1 August 2009 2:28 PM

Minister gives paua a helping hand

Thursday, 30 July 2009, 12:47 pm

Press Release: New Zealand Government

Hon Phil Heatley
Minister of Fisheries

30 July 2009
Media Statement

Minister gives paua a helping hand

Fisheries Minister Phil Heatley has given paua stocks a helping hand by releasing hundreds of farm-bred baby paua into the water at Stirling Point near Bluff this morning.

Mr Heatley was taking part in a paua reseedling programme funded and run by the Area 5 Paua Management Company. The programme releases around 200,000 baby paua every year around the southern South Island from Otago Peninsula to Fiordland and Stewart Island.

"This is a fantastic programme that is giving southern paua stocks a real boost and enhances an important natural resource. It shows the paua industry is taking an innovative and forward thinking approach to helping manage southern paua fisheries into the future," Mr Heatley said.

"All the paua released in the programme are available for recreational and customary divers to catch, so the whole community benefits," he said.

The fingernail sized paua spend the first two-to-three years of their lives out of sight, living under rocks, and will take around five or six years to reach the minimum legal size of 125mm. The baby

paua are placed inside empty shells which are then put under rocks in suitable rocky reef areas where they can grow to adulthood.

Commercial fishers do not operate in the Stirling Point area so recreational and customary divers will receive the full benefit of today's release.

The Minister was in Southland meeting with representatives of the rock lobster, blue cod, paua and Bluff oyster fishing industries.

The Southland region has some of the most commercially important inshore fisheries in New Zealand including the country's largest blue cod, paua and rock lobster (crayfish) fisheries, and the iconic Bluff oyster fishery.

"Inshore fishing is a vital part of Southland's economy and an important part of New Zealand's economy, it employs thousands of people and brings in millions of dollars in exports every year," Mr Heatley said.

"My meetings today have been very informative and productive, giving me the chance to hear first hand from the people at the business end of one of our most important primary industries."

Background

For more information on the management of inshore commercial fisheries and the rules for recreational paua diving please visit the Ministry of Fisheries website at www.fish.govt.nz

More information on the paua reseedling programme and the commercial paua industry is available on the Paua Industry Council website at <http://www.paua.org.nz/>

www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,25828889-5005961,00.html

A West Australian man accused of dealing more than 300kg of abalone on the black market faces four years in jail and a hefty fine if convicted of the crime.

Alleged abalone dealer fronts court | Herald Sun

Saturday, 25 July 2009 5:06 PM

Alleged abalone dealer fronts court

Article from: AAP

July 24, 2009 04:20pm

A West Australian man accused of dealing more than 300kg of abalone on the black market faces four years in jail and a hefty fine if convicted of the crime.

Kevin Huynh, 40, was not required to plead when he appeared in the Perth Magistrates Court today.

He also faces a charge of receiving about 3,000kg of stolen greenlip abalone, valued at \$390,000.

The case was uncovered after a seven-month surveillance operation by WA police and the Department of Fisheries.

Under fisheries laws, the man is also alleged to have contravened the state's abalone management plan in dealing with more than 80kg of abalone in June and July last year and attempting to deal in a further 250kg.

All charges were adjourned until September 11 in the Perth Magistrates Court.

Magistrate Wayne Tarr granted Mr Huynh bail.

Fax. (03) 8660 2755 Mob. (0418) 292 004
fishing@searead.net www.searead.net

Thursday, 16 July 2009 12:00 AM



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