

<http://northerntasmania.yourguide.com.au/news/local/environmental-issues/lobsters-in-fight-against-urchins/1231625.html>

**THE EXAMINER** 

## Lobsters in fight against urchins

Sunday, 27 April 2008

An ambitious plan is under way to release 2000 lobsters into East Coast waters that are infested with long-spined sea urchins. The hope is the lobsters will win out. MATHEW MALONEY reports.

AN ARMY of 2000 crayfish weighing four tonnes will be dropped off the East Coast this week to try and eat away the region's pesky long-spined sea urchin.

The urchin or "rabbits of the sea" overgraze lush weed bodies on rocky reef areas and foul surrounding waters, and present a problem to abalone and rock lobster habitats, says dive operator Peter Paulsen.

St Helens man John Hagg has been catching cray from Flinders Island for the test drop during the past two months.

He said that this Wednesday, four tonnes of cray will be released, amounting to 2000, that each weigh 2kg.

Mr Paulsen said that Elephant Rock is one of Tasmania's most popular dive sites. It has become home to thousands of sea urchins.

He said the project was ambitious, but welcome.

"We've realised over the past few years the effect that urchins are having on the area," he said

"If left unchecked, they will destroy the ecology of the seabed, and if you loose the weeds, you loose recreational fishing."

The Department of Primary Industries and Water declared Elephant Rock an official Research Area last Wednesday as part of a research project on possible controls of the long-spined sea urchin.

To ensure the scientific validity of the project, the temporary Elephant Rock Research Area will be closed for three years to commercial and recreational fishing by diving, and the use of rock lobster pots and rings, though fishing for scalefish by rod and line is permitted.

The no-take zone extends around Elephant Rock and to the shoreline.

Research so far has shown that large rock lobsters have the potential to be an effective predator against the urchin, and to test their effectiveness in wild conditions, there will be a large rock lobster population in the urchin-affected area around Elephant Rock.

---

If you have an interesting **Photo, Story, Issue or Report** that you would like included in Fishing Stories send it to:  
[admincbg@hotmail.net.au](mailto:admincbg@hotmail.net.au) or Fax (03) 8660 2755

Mr Hagg sees policing of the site being an issue, as it will be difficult to contain such a large number of cray in the one place, even though they will be dye- marked and have tracking monitors on them.

"They're not going to stay in the one place - they have tails and can swim," he said.

"I'm in favour as long as it can be policed. In realistic terms, they should have made Sloop Rock a research area where they can police it.

"There's one thing that happens with marine parks is that you never see any open to the public again, like the marine parks on Governor Island and one part of Maria Island.

"Deal Island is half marine park, so it's neither here nor there."

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/divers-all-at-sea-as-rescue-eludes-industry/2008/04/26/1208743326656.html>



## Divers all at sea as rescue eludes industry



**Abalone diver Lou Benetti, who is based in Flinders on the Mornington Peninsula, worries about the virus affecting the shellfish.**

*Photo: Craig Sillitoe*

Melissa Fyfe

April 27, 2008

IT'S a rare thing to feel sorry for an abalone fisherman. They are, after all, holders of one of the most lucrative licences in the fishing game. They're not normally short of a dollar.

But the abalone virus has soured the good fortune of Victoria's abalone divers and the panic is building.

Lou Benetti, a diver based at the Mornington Peninsula town of Flinders, reckons that after 16 years in the business he'll have to find something else to do within a year.

"To be honest, I can't see us stopping that virus, especially when it gets to Apollo Bay — humans are going to spread it. I'm pretty anxious about what I am going to do next."

Mr Benetti is not sure there will be a viable future fishery for his son, who has also joined the business. The shutdown of infected reefs has, Mr Benetti said, meant they are overfishing stocks in the virus-free areas.

He is nervous about the cray fishers who move their cray pots — possibly infected with the virus — up and down the coast. But he says: "We can't blame them, they have to make a living as well."

The abalone fisherman feels that governments — which enforced an unpopular and widespread ban on horse movements to deal with equine influenza — have failed the industry.

"They gave the horse industry millions of dollars to deal with EI, they haven't even coughed at us."

Western abalone divers believe it will take five to six years for their stocks to recover. They are waiting nervously for the scientific verdict

on whether the next generation of abalone can be reinfected with the virus, which attacks the shellfish's nervous system.

The Victorian Government has offered the abalone fishermen dollar-for-dollar funding to fight the virus. But Vin Gannon, head of the Victorian industry, said it was an insulting offer when people were going broke.

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/virus-breakout-panics-abalone-trade/2008/04/26/1208743326653.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>

## Virus breakout panics abalone trade

Melissa Fyfe

April 27, 2008

THE Victorian abalone industry is begging the Federal Government to ban human activity — including commercial and recreational fishing, surfing and diving — on stretches of the state's west coast after the devastating abalone virus was recently found to have suddenly jumped eastwards towards Melbourne.

But authorities have admitted there is little they can do to stop the virus and protect the \$80 million abalone industry, the state's most valuable commercial fishery, from devastating and widespread losses.

The panicked industry believes humans are behind a 21-kilometre leap in the virus front, discovered 10 days ago near the Twelve Apostles Marine National Park. The virus, which is not harmful to humans, was discovered in December 2005 and has largely been contained west of Port Campbell. It appears to be moving quickly eastwards.

The industry wants a federally enforced quarantine that would see all human water-based activity — including the shutdown of the local rock lobster fishery — banned in the affected area around Port Campbell, the Twelve Apostles Marine National Park and Moonlight Head.

The industry has given up on the Victorian Government, which it says has failed to act.

"They are putting at risk the Victorian industry and the whole Australian industry," says Vin Gannon, the Victorian Abalone Divers Association chief executive officer. "We are astounded they won't try and stop the disease ... I'm begging (Federal Fisheries Minister) Tony Burke to intervene. We can't believe we are watching an exotic disease destroy our marine environment and no one wants to help."

The herpes-like abalone viral ganglioneuritis is deadly to the shellfish and has wiped \$30 million off the industry's bottom line. The state's western abalone divers are on the brink of financial ruin, with quotas shrinking from 220 tonnes a year to 16.

Little is known about the virus — abalone viruses were unheard of before 2001 — but scientists think it may be spread by water currents; seals, fish and birds eating dead abalone; and people carrying it on equipment such as fishing rods, cray pots, boats and wetsuits.

But Fisheries Victoria told *The Sunday Age* that quarantines had failed and, even if they worked, banning all activity on a stretch of coastline would be socially and commercially unacceptable.

Executive director Peter Appleford said the Government had done all it could for the abalone fishers; it had monitored the virus, put biosecurity measures in place — requiring decontamination of equipment — and run public information campaigns. "It is impossible to remove a virus like this once it is in the wild, unless we nuke hundreds of kilometres of coastline," he said. "We'd have to kill everything on the reefs. It is most likely to spread, that is what these things do. They run their course, they burn themselves out and the stocks recover behind them."

If, as expected, the virus continues further east, it will hit the abalone reefs of Cape Otway, then Apollo Bay and on to the \$20 million Mornington Peninsula industry. The \$100 million Tasmanian industry, the biggest wild abalone catch in the world, is in a state of extreme concern.

Marine conservationists are dismayed the virus now bookends the marine national park.

Mr Gannon, also concerned about the virus reinfesting areas in recovery, said the ban on human activity would only need to last for three months.

Scientists believe the infection started when a wild abalone from South Australia or Tasmania was taken for breeding to an abalone farm near Portland. It is possible that infected effluent then flowed out to sea, spreading the virus to Victoria's wild abalone stocks. Another theory is that the abalone are stressed and vulnerable because of slightly higher water temperatures on the state's west coast and changes in water quality.

VRFish, which represents the state's recreational fishers, has asked its members to voluntarily stop using abalone gut as bait. But executive officer Christopher Collins said he did not support a ban on activity "at this stage".

Australia's chief veterinary officer, Dr Andy Carroll, said Victoria's was a very serious situation and the Commonwealth would offer any help it could. It would look at any State Government plans, he said, but would not have the legal power to enforce a quarantine in state waters, only help manage one.

Federal Opposition environment spokesman Greg Hunt said that the Government should intervene urgently if the State Government failed to act on a recovery and protection plan.

<http://www.patagoniatimes.cl/content/view/476/1/>



## CHILE GOVT CONVENES EMERGENCY SALMON COMMITTEE

Written by Patagonia Times Staff

Thursday, 24 April 2008

The Ministry of Economy this week announced the formation of an emergency committee to confront the

ongoing crisis in Chile's farmed salmon industry.

The group, which was formed at the request of President Michelle Bachelet, is being headed by Felipe Sandoval, the former head of the government's Fishing Undersecretaries Office (SUBPESCA). Other members of the committee include current Fishing Undersecretary Jorge Chocair, Production Promotion Authority Vice President Carlos Alvarez, National Fishing Service (SERNAPESCA) Director Félix Inostroza, Marina Undersecretary Carolina Echeverría, Luis Pichott of the Chile Foundation and scientist Bernabé Santelices.

According to Economy Minister Hugo Lavados, the group will have 30 days to come up with a list of priority measures. Those measures are likely to include changes to aquaculture licensing procedures and sanitary rules. The government is expected to begin implementing the new measures within the next two months, said Lavados.

Chile's US\$2.2 billion farmed salmon and trout industry has struggled of late, in large part because of an ongoing outbreak of Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA). First detected in Chile last July, ISA is a highly contagious virus that can be lethal to fish but does not affect humans. SERNAPESCA's official list of infected fish farms now totals 21, approximately half of which belong to industry leader Marine Harvest, a Norwegian-owned company.

The ISA problem has spelled significant financial losses for Marine Harvest and other companies, which together have laid off more than 1,000 workers in just the past few weeks. Last Thursday Mainstream fired approximately 260 workers in Quemchi, Chiloé (PT, April 18). The firings came on the heels of a decision by Marine Harvest to shut its Puerto Montt-based Chinquihue processing plant (PT, April 15). That closure, originally scheduled for late June, resulted in roughly 600 layoffs. Just days before, yet another salmon company, Japanese-owned Salmenes Antártica, fired approximately 300 workers.

"We've seen a production drop and job losses, which are extremely relevant for us," said Minister Lavados.

News of the government's emergency commission has not been well received by Chile's National Confederation of Artisan Fishermen (CONAPACH), the country's principal local fishermen's association. During his tenure as the fishing undersecretary, committee head Felipe Sandoval pushed hard for privatization of the fisheries, CONAPACH recalls.

"This is a bad sign because... it opens the door for this man to once again intervene in state policies. Now he'll do so with the salmon industry, but we fear that little by little he'll turn his attention to artisan fishing and become a real force within SUBPESCA," said CONAPACH.

Salmon industry labor leaders, meanwhile, are questioning why the new government committee does not include representatives from either the Labor Ministry or the National Service for Women. The industry, they point out, employs more than 50,000 people, approximately 30 percent of whom are women.

"Once again the government is making a mistake and proving that the so-called 'citizens' government' that President Bachelet promised is only an illusion," Ricardo Casas, president of the Federation of Fishing Industry Workers, told the NGO Ecoceanos.

By Patagonia Times Staff ( [benwritte@santiagotimes.cl](mailto:benwritte@santiagotimes.cl) )

Last Updated ( Friday, 25 April 2008 )



## Look out for 'whale' that's watching the bay



What lies beneath: The Orca takes to the water yesterday to monitor Port Phillip Bay during channel-deepening. PICTURE: WAYNE TAYLOR

Photo: *Wayne Taylor*

Advertisement

Peter Ker

April 23, 2008

AN ORCA was sighted in the clear waters off Sorrento yesterday. But don't worry if you missed it — sightings of this orca are about to become much more common in Port Phillip Bay.

Measuring 15.5 metres, the vessel — named after what is also known as the killer whale — will sail the bay as an independent environmental watchdog during the controversial channel-deepening project.

After several funding-related delays, the Orca finally took to the water this week, with organisers from the Australian Conservation Foundation and independent scientists from Monash University on board.

Environmental activists have a long tradition of taking to the water in protest, but do not confuse the Orca with the Rainbow Warrior or the Sea Shepherd.

"It's not a protest ship," said Simon Roberts, the Monash University biologist in charge of the Orca's scientific monitoring.

"If anything, what we are trying to do is increase the integrity of the sampling that is being done so that people have more confidence."

Dr Roberts said there were gaps in the environmental monitoring being carried out by the dredging proponents, and the Orca program sought to fill those gaps. With a row of laptop computers on board, the Orca allows a range of monitoring programs to be carried out.

Surface water analysis will be performed constantly as the ship sails, with data available on deck in "real time". Beneath the water, five "long poles" have been put into the ocean floor, where they will log water temperature and light penetration levels every five minutes for the next two years.

Divers from the Orca will perform regular manual checks on the health and density of seagrass beds, while the full depth of the water column will be inspected for nutrient levels, turbidity and oxygen levels at 20 sites around the bay.

Conservation Foundation spokesman Chris Smyth said the Orca project had enough funding to cover the next two months, but would require more contributions from local government and private donors to carry on through two years of dredging.

The Port of Melbourne intended to start dredging the contaminated sediments in the Yarra River on Monday but mechanical issues delayed that until tomorrow at the earliest.

Dr Roberts said the Orca was capable of monitoring contaminant levels in bay water but would require significantly more funding to do so.

<http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=4720481>



## Is 'Deadliest Catch' a Model of Safety?

**Officials Say Other U.S. Fishing Industries Are Deadlier Than Alaska's**

By *LAUREN COX*  
*ABC Medical Unit*

April 25, 2008—



Crab fishermen work through some of the most dangerous conditions in the U.S. workforce. (Arnulf Husmo/Stone/Getty Images)

The weathered sea captains who star in the Discovery Channel's reality series "Deadliest Catch" might be surprised to hear what safety researchers in the United States government think of them.

The notoriously dangerous crab-fishing industry on the frigid seas of Alaska's Bering Strait actually serves as a model for safety, according to Jennifer Lincoln, an occupational safety and health specialist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, specifically in the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health division of safety research.

Crab fishing anywhere is one of the deadliest jobs in the United States. At times, men on deck work through freezing weather, daylong shifts, and brave up to 40-foot waves and 80 mph winds.

The fishermen who venture out on Alaskan crab fishing boats also face an average annual fatality rate of 115 deaths per 100,000 workers. The average job in the U.S. has a rate of four deaths per 100,000 workers.

But deaths among Alaskan commercial fisherman have dropped by half since 1990, thanks to strategic efforts by the U.S. Coast Guard, the fishing industry and government regulators, Lincoln said.

Now the smaller crab-fishing industries off the coasts of Washington state and California and Oregon can claim the title "deadliest."

The Pacific Coast states had twice the number of fatalities and a higher death rate than the Alaskan fishing industry from 2000 to 2006, Lincoln said. This safety record looks especially dire, considering that the Alaskan fishing industry is 10 times larger.

But Lincoln said she hopes to use the same techniques that proved effective in Alaska to save lives off the Western Pacific coast, especially in the Northwest Dungeness crab fishery.

"The Northwest Dungeness crab fleet had a greater number of fatalities and a higher fatality rate," Lincoln said.

Vessels lost at sea accounted for 74 percent of the deaths, while men thrown overboard made up 19 percent of the deaths. None were wearing flotation devices.

Nature was responsible for high waves, flooding and rough seas. However, NIOSH reports that human error and negligence such as unstable ships, failure to use safety equipment, and drug or alcohol use also contributed to the 58 mortalities.

"Safety improvement in Alaska did not occur through one intervention," said Lincoln, who added that tailoring the multitiered approach of inspection and safety measures used in Alaska would likely help the Pacific Coast fisheries.

Safer or not, the Alaskan king crab season continues to draw thousands of workers hoping to cash in on large harvests. According to AlaskaFishingJobFinder.com, a low-ranking deckhand can sometimes make \$20,000 in a month.

Copyright © 2008 ABC News Internet Ventures

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/local/pingtung/2008/04/24/153329/First-bluefin.htm>

**The China Post**

[www.ChinaPost.com.tw](http://www.ChinaPost.com.tw)



## First bluefin tuna caught this season sells for NT\$1.72 mil.

**Thursday, April 24, 2008 CAN**

PINGTUNG, Taiwan -- The first bluefin tuna caught this season was sold for NT\$1.73 million (US\$57,055) in an auction at Donggang harbor Wednesday.

The auction, presided over by Council of Agriculture head Su Jia-chyuan and Pingtung County Magistrate Tsao Chi-hung, marked the beginning of the 2008 annual Pingtung Bluefin Tuna Cultural Festival.

The giant tuna fish, weighing 247 kilograms, was caught by a fishing boat named Wan Yi Tsai

which is registered with the Liouciou Islet off Pingtung County.

To qualify as the first tuna caught for the season, the fish must be a northern bluefin tuna -- a species native to both the western and eastern Atlantic Ocean. Its weight must exceed 180 kilograms, and the fish must have been alive when it was removed from the water.

The catch must be reported immediately to the nearest fishery radio station and must be shipped back to Donggong harbor by boat.

Three restaurants bid for the fish in the auction. Hung Shih-yang, owner of the Hong Hai Sea Food Restaurant near the Kaohsiung International Airport, said he was happy to win the bid for his four-month old business by offering a price of NT\$7,000 per kilogram.

The Pingtung County Government has hosted the annual Bluefin Tuna Cultural Festival since 2001, with the aim of stimulating the local economy.

Owners of fishing boats operating out of Donggang used to export most of their tuna catch to Japan, but since the county government launched the Bluefin Tuna Cultural Festival, they now prefer to sell their fish on the domestic market for better prices, netting a total profit of over NT\$600 million per year.

<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/oceans/aquaculture-risk-management/html/page7.html>



## 5 Risk Mitigation Instruments

If at the end of any comprehensive risk assessment there is an unacceptable residual risk (e.g. of marine farm abandonment), then there is a range of mitigation instruments - financial and otherwise - to consider. These can be applied to activities that use a shared resource and present the risk of adverse effects on a site that may require remedial action to return it to its original condition, without cost to the public.

Risk mitigation instruments should accurately reflect the current knowledge of residual risk, and balance the costs and benefits to stakeholders. They should also be considered within the New Zealand aquaculture context, including the industry and regulatory environment. This section describes and assesses the risk mitigation instruments most likely to be successfully applied to aquaculture in the current New Zealand setting. The options are divided into those that are currently available:

- permanent RMA bonds, payable in cash or surety/guarantee, or with the liability met by insurance
- private insurance

and those that would require new industry initiatives and/or modification of council policy and process to be applicable:

- remediation pool funds
- mutual insurance.

There is also a discussion of non-financial risk mitigation tools.

Each option is evaluated against its ability to:

- address risks
- be set up and administered
- fulfil statutory obligations
- be acceptable to industry
- be acceptable to stakeholders.

### 5.1.1 Environmental assurance bonds/sureties

**Full Story** <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/oceans/aquaculture-risk-management/html/page7.html>

<http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,23572240-1702,00.html>

## Controversial river dredging to start

April 21, 2008 07:53am

Article from: AAP

DREDGING of Melbourne's Yarra River will start today as part of the controversial \$1 billion Port Phillip Bay channel-deepening project.

The dredging will drag up to two million cubic metres of toxic sediment from the river bed and dump it in a containment bund in the bay.

A crane, the Goomai, mounted on a pontoon moored in the seabed will be used to dig up the sediment.

The toxic sediment will be loaded into a barge and taken to the clay containment bund, which will then be capped with clean dredged sand.

The Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) has previously said this is "best practice" for dealing with the toxic sludge they are dredging.

The \$1 billion channel project, which began in February and was set to finish in October, is deepening Melbourne's Port Phillip Bay to enable bigger container ships into the port.

In all, 23 million cubic metres of sediment will be moved.

Protesters have lost successive court bids to stop the dredging of the Yarra River and the bay going ahead.

<http://kangarooisland.yourguide.com.au/news/local/general/more-than-2000-add-to-marine-park-debate/1229777.html>

**The  Islander**

Thursday, 24 April 2008

### More than 2000 add to marine park debate

This year alone, more than 2000 people have attended marine parks information sessions across SA, "demonstrating that the Department for Environment and Heritage is partnering the community in the creation of 19 marine parks along the State's coastline".

DEH's acting manager of coast and marine conservation, Chris Thomas, said the success of the recent community engagement program built on the consultations when the Encounter Marine Park Draft Zoning Plan was released for public comment.

"During the Encounter consultations, DEH distributed more than 9000 brochures, presented information to nearly 50 interest groups, hosted 15 open days and directly met more than 800 people," Mr Thomas said.

"More than 400 written submissions were received and these have been available for public viewing at DEH offices in Victor Harbor, Kangaroo Island and Adelaide since the end of the consultation period. The feedback we received was impressive," Mr Thomas said.

A summary of submissions is available from DEH offices and at <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/coasts/marineparks.html>.

“The community engagement process is very much a two-way street. People really like to tell us about the marine environment and why they love it so much,” Mr Thomas said. “This input will contribute significantly to marine park development and help ensure minimal impact on recreational and commercial activities, while still protecting our marine habitats.”

The Marine Parks Council of SA would soon be established to provide independent advice to Environment Minister Gail Gago on various matters relating to marine parks.

“Council members will include individuals with knowledge in marine conservation, marine science, recreational and commercial fishing, aquaculture, community affairs and indigenous culture.

“The Government also established the Displaced Effort Working Group last year, to advise the Minister on the processes and mechanisms to effectively address any impacts on commercial fishers and aquaculture operators,” Mr Thomas said.

Organisations represented on the Displaced Effort Working Group are SA Fishing Industry Council, SA Seafood Industry Federation, SA Rock Lobster Advisory Council, Abalone Industry Association of SA, Spencer Gulf and West Coast Prawn Fisherman’s Association; SA Marine Scale Sardine Industry Association, SA Aquaculture Council, Department of Primary Industries and Resources, Department for Environment and Heritage.

In the next stage in the process, the 19 marine park outer boundaries would be released for public comment, followed by a minimum six-week consultation period and public forums around the state.

Once outer boundaries were finalised, the Government intended to proceed with developing multiple-use zoning and management plans for the parks in consultation with local communities and stakeholders, with a view to completing this process by the end of 2010.

<http://www.abnnewswire.net/press/en/50738/WWF-Norway.html>

# ABN NEWSWIRE

Asia Business News | Sunday, April 27, 2008

## **WWF-Norway Teams Up With Marine Harvest: Partnership For Sustainable Aquaculture**

Stavanger, Norway, Apr 23, 2008 - (ABN Newswire) - WWF-Norway and Marine Harvest (MH) today announced their new partnership working to reduce the environmental impacts and ecological footprint of aquaculture. Environmental impacts are a key concern in all Marine Harvest activities, and the company wants to strengthen the focus on sustainable fish farming with leading environmental standards. A partnership agreement with WWF-Norway will help Marine Harvest in its work with environmental challenges. The secretary general (CEO) Rasmus Hansson of WWF-Norway believes that this partnership will create new opportunities for both organizations. -Through this agreement, Marine Harvest and WWF-Norway will reduce the impact of Marine Harvest production on the environment and the industry as a whole while ensuring the economic sustainability of the production, says Hansson. -Farming of species such as salmon and cod can have serious environmental impact, therefore we are very glad to work with one of the world's leading seafood companies, says Hansson. Marine Harvest has a strong view that the farming of safe, healthy and sustainable fish is a business for the future. We have

through several years had WWF as a dialogue partner in raising important issues in fish farming. We are formalizing our cooperation with WWF-Norway in order to increase the fact-based understanding of the aquaculture business, says Åse Aulie Michelet, CEO of Marine Harvest. WWF-Norway is one of Norway's most influential environmental conservation organizations and its marine programme has been working on aquaculture and fish farming for over a decade. WWF's mission is to conserve nature, biodiversity, and ecological processes while ensuring the sustainable use of renewable resources. WWF-Norway therefore recognises the potential value to society of aquaculture in terms of providing food security, revenue and an alternative food source to wild-caught fish. The partnership between WWF-Norway and Marine Harvest is signed for three years and is unique in the history of both organizations. WWF-Norway will, under this agreement, have the resources to employ a full-time marine conservation officer who will work with aquaculture. MH and WWF-Norway have the following shared objectives under this agreement:

\* Protection of marine and freshwater biological diversity. \* Significant reduction of the ecological footprint and environmental effects of MHs operations. \* Minimize climate change impacts from fish farming activities and processing.

For further information: Maren Esmark, tel: 0047 97 18 33 79, email: mesmark@wwf.no Eivind Sørli, tel: 0047 93 06 41 78, email: esorlie@wwf.no Arne Hjeltnes, tel: 0047 91 30 20 20, email: arne.hjeltnes@marineharvest.com

Copyright © Hugin AS 2008. All rights reserved.

Marine Harvest ASA

<http://www.marineharvest.com/> ISIN: NO0003054108 Stock Identifier: XOSL.MHG US: PNFSF.PK

[http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set\\_id=1&click\\_id=31&art\\_id=nw20080423144437249C432850](http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=31&art_id=nw20080423144437249C432850)



## Time and tuna are running out'

April 23 2008 at 03:01PM

Brussels - Greenpeace activists stopped five tuna suppliers from selling their wares at a major trade fair in Brussels on Wednesday by covering their stands with fishing nets, according to an AFP reporter.

Around a dozen environmental activists also chained up the stands, at the European Seafood Exposition, and unfurled a banner reading: "Don't buy tuna. Time and tuna are running out."

The event is the biggest in Europe in the fishing and seafood sector, attracting some 20 000 buyers and sellers from around 80 countries to the Belgian capital each year.

"The aim was to upset the business of these companies, which have a huge responsibility for tuna overfishing," Greenpeace France representative Stephan Beaucher said.

"The way overfishing is at the moment, we will not be able to avoid the collapse of stocks of tuna species, some of which are close to extinction," he said.

In 2007, European Union nations breached the bloc's bluefin tuna quota of around 4 000 tons, with France the main

culprit. As a result, tuna fishing was halted for the rest of the year.

Environmentalists warn that tuna could face extinction if fishing continues at current rates to feed a world-wide fad for Japanese food such as sushi.

But tuna fishing is an increasingly lucrative industry, particularly for developing economies that export to Japan, which consumes a quarter of the world's tuna.

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/4495511a11.html>



## Venomous sea snake found on Kiwi beach [+video]

By ROBYN DOWNEY | Friday, 25 April 2008



Dargaville and Districts News

**UNWELCOME VISITOR:** Police were standing guard over a venomous sea snake that washed ashore on Dargaville's west coast, which was found by a man walking his dog.

**Police are standing guard over a venomous sea snake that washed ashore on Dargaville's west coast.**

Baylys Beach resident Graeme Ramsey was walking his dog on the beach at about 8am yesterday when he came across the snake in his path about 1km north of the Chases Gorge entrance to the beach.

"It wasn't moving but it was alive and when I touched it with a stick it moved and it was very unusual looking," he says.

The snake appeared to be a defined black or dark blue on the upper top side of its body and a yellow colour on the under side, about .9m long and a tail that was a flattened oar shape and leopard skin coloured at the tip.

"I looked it up on the internet and found an image the same as what I'd found on the beach and it was called a yellow-bellied sea snake, apparently a member of the cobra family and described as extremely poisonous," Mr Ramsey says.

Dargaville police Constable Nick Wilson says police stood guard over the serpent throughout the day waiting for Biosecurity staff to arrive from Auckland.

"We contacted both Ministry of Fisheries and Department of Conservation but apparently it's handled by the Biosecurity people," he says.

Mr Wilson says police had been keeping people away from the snake just in case, but it seemed to be "quite placid and not keen on going anywhere".

However, another constable at the scene says when the snake was touched earlier in the day, it had struck out a slightly risen part of the sand, leaving two long, deep marks shaped like an X.

The Dargaville and Districts News is yet to speak to Biosecurity staff about the snake find.

#### **- Dargaville and Districts News**

<http://tvnz.co.nz/view/page/536641/1737209>

**tvnz.co.nz**

## **Washed up snake not a worry**

Apr 23, 2008 12:42 PM

Biosecurity New Zealand says a yellow bellied sea snake washed up near Dargaville is nothing to be concerned about.

The snake was found on Wednesday on Baylys Beach and police have cordoned off the area so no one goes near it.

Biosecurity spokeswoman Lesley Patston says a handful of the quite harmless snakes wash up on New Zealand shores each year, most likely pushed along by ocean currents from Tonga.

She says the fact they get here on their own means they're not a biosecurity issue.

Patston says although MAF offered to send a snake specialist to help deal with the situation, the matter is now been passed on to Department of Conservation.

Source: Newstalk ZB

[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Mumbai/Cops\\_seize\\_Shirdi-bound\\_charas/articleshow/2973703.cms](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Mumbai/Cops_seize_Shirdi-bound_charas/articleshow/2973703.cms)

**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

## **Cops seize Shirdi-bound charas**

23 Apr 2008, 0349 hrs IST, TNN

MUMBAI: A 45-year-old man ferrying 4 kg of charas to Shirdi was nabbed by the Kurla police during a nakabandi on Tuesday.

The accused, identified as Yashwant Vithal Patil, was charged under the Narcotics Act and remanded to police custody.

According to the police, the man in a taxi was detained during routine checking at Lion Gate. While the police found a handbag containing tiger prawns, [the passenger's](#) suspicious behaviour led to the police investigating further.

On removing the prawns from the polythene bag, the police found some white powder concealed underneath in a styrofoam box.

Assistant commissioner of police (Kurla) Mohammed Javed said the powder smelled like charas.

"Patil said there was a lot of demand for charas in Shirdi and he was taking the parcel there. The consignment was given by a person in Andheri," said senior inspector Vijay Bagwe.

The police are trying to trace the man in Andheri, hoping to bust a bigger racket.

<http://www.tv3.co.nz/News/Story/tabid/209/articleID/53577/cat/41/Default.aspx>

## **New bottom trawling measures will cost NZ industry**

Wed, 23 Apr 2008 08:25p.m.

New measures to manage high seas bottom trawling will be costly, the seafood industry says.

Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) chief executive Wayne McNee today announced measures to better manage the environmental impact of bottom trawling by New Zealand fishers on the high seas.

New Zealand agreed to implement a set of interim conservation and management measures during negotiations to form the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO).

The measures relate to high seas areas - outside the control of any country - of the southern Pacific Ocean and Tasman Sea.

They were designed to avoid significant adverse impacts to vulnerable marine ecosystems, such as deepwater coral forests, by focusing fishing activity on areas that were likely to have already been affected.

The measures are:

- Limiting bottom trawling to areas that were fished between 2002 and 2006;
- Prohibiting bottom trawling in any new areas;
- Closing around 112,000sq km of previously fished high seas area to bottom trawling;
- Imposing restrictions on bottom trawling in around 82,000sq km; and
- Requiring all fishing vessels to carry at least one MFish observer.

Mr McNee said the measures were "a major step forward in managing the environmental impacts of bottom trawling in the high seas around New Zealand."

But New Zealand Seafood Industry Council chief executive Owen Symmans said the interim measures were crude, would limit fishing opportunities in the high seas near New Zealand and would be costly.

The New Zealand industry had supported the negotiation of a regional management agreement for fisheries in the southern Pacific, he said.

However it had yet to see any details of measures that other fishing industries in other countries would have to meet. The high seas deepsea fishery in the Pacific is fished from Australia and by distant water fishing vessels flagged to Belize, Korea, Ukraine and Russia.

"New Zealand industry will be angry if others who fish in our back pond don't have to meet similar restrictions on their freedom to fish. The New Zealand government is expecting its industry to pay a very high price for being responsible high seas fishers and we need to be assured that we are not alone in having to make economic sacrifices."

Mr McNee said he recognised there would be some financial impact on fishers, but that there were significant fishing grounds still available.

"These measures are based on the best available scientific information, including fishing intensity and activity, depth and seabed topography."

There had been extensive consultation, he said.

The measures would be reviewed in 2010.

Meanwhile, Green Party Conservation spokesperson Metiria Turei called on the Fisheries Minister to give New Zealand's marine environment the same protection from bottom trawling he had just given international waters.

"The Ministry of Fisheries announced today new measures to reduce bottom trawling devastation in the South Pacific high seas -- overdue and incomplete as they are -- but has so far done nothing effective to preserve New Zealand's own marine environment from bottom trawling," Mrs Turei said.

"New Zealand has the largest bottom trawling fleet in the South Pacific, larger even than Australia's, and our own seas now have less protection than what we afford international waters," she said.

"The Fisheries Minister should take the rules of the international treaty and apply them to our own backyard, instead of bowing to fishing industry demands to pillage new Zealand's natural environment with impunity."

NZPA

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU0804/S00439.htm>



## High seas fishing measures will be costly

Wednesday, 23 April 2008, 5:17 pm

Press Release: Seafood Industry Council

23 April 2008

High seas fishing measures will be costly for industry

The interim measures are crude, will limit fishing opportunities in the high seas near New Zealand and will be costly, said New Zealand Seafood Industry Council chief executive Owen Symmans.

“The New Zealand industry has supported the negotiation of a regional management agreement for fisheries in the southern Pacific. The interim measures announced today are the result of international negotiations over the last three or four years, including at the United Nations.

“We continue to support the negotiation of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Agreement as it will be only way that we can get international agreement on how the high seas fisheries can be developed when the interim measures end in 2010.”

Implementation of the measures has been negotiated with industry over the last several months. They will severely reduce the area where New Zealanders can go fishing, but the area where most fishing has occurred will remain available for fishing, said Mr Symmans.

The New Zealand industry has yet to see any details of measures that other fishing industries in other countries will have to meet. The high seas deepsea fishery in the Pacific is fished from Australia and by distant water fishing vessels flagged to Belize, Korea, Ukraine and Russia.

Mr Symmans commented, “The New Zealand industry will be angry if others who fish in our back pond don’t have to meet similar restrictions on their freedom to fish. The New Zealand government is expecting its industry to pay a very high price for being responsible high seas fishers and we need to be assured that we are not alone in having to make economic sacrifices”

ENDS

<http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSTP164846>



## Taiwan fumes over surprise Greenpeace shark check

Thu Apr 24, 2008 2:39am EDT

TAIPEI, April 24 (Reuters) - Taiwan is drafting a public statement to slam Greenpeace activists who boarded a fishing boat in the South Pacific earlier this week to check for an illegal shark fin harvest, a fisheries official said on Thursday.

The Fisheries Agency will send a protest letter to the multi-lateral Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and to Greenpeace, an international environmental group that the government says inappropriately forced its way onto a Taiwan-registered boat on Monday to inspect the shark catch.

"This took place on the high seas, and it was done by a private organisation, not by law enforcement agencies," said James Sha, the agency's deputy director-general. "Their actions were extreme, and they distorted the evidence."

Activists on the Greenpeace ship Esperanza obtained the Taiwan crew's permission to board the ship in waters east of the Solomon Islands and found about 110 kilos of shark fins, Greenpeace oceans campaigner Jason Collins said.

The amount of separated shark fins probably exceeded a legal weight limit, Collins said.

Although shark catches are legal, the 25-member-state fishing commission restricts the weight of severed fins per boat to ensure that live finless sharks are not being thrown back.

"Then they just sink to the bottom and die," Collins said.

Shark fin soup is an expensive delicacy in southern China and in Chinese restaurants in other countries.

More than 100 shark species are being "commercially exploited", casting doubt on the long-term survival of some, according to the Switzerland-based Shark Foundation.

There is no evidence that the Taiwan boat in question broke any laws, Taiwan's Fisheries Agency says.

The Esperanza, which is known for confronting Japanese whaling ships to protest hauls of the giant mammals, is scouring several tracts of the high seas northeast of Australia this year to check for shark violations, Collins said.

Greenpeace searched the same waters in 2004 and 2006, he said. He said the group would urge the commission to approve a broader fishing ban in the region.

(Reporting by Ralph Jennings; Editing by Valerie Lee)

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200804/s2223904.htm>

## **Mud crab season expected to be strong**

Tuesday, 22/04/2008

Mud crab fishermen in the Gulf of Carpentaria are expecting a strong catch this year despite an average wet season.

Severe flooding of the McArthur River in the Northern Territory six years ago meant much of the prime habitat for crabs was washed away.

But now fisherman Greg Quail believes the region has recovered, allowing the mud crabs to return also.

"We're starting to get mud on the mud flats back here now after the big floods in 2000 and 2002," he said.

"And we didn't get a real big Wet here, so we had a steady flow just down the river that took all the mud out just to the flats outside and I think the crabs like that.

"There are a lot of crabs moved in, so we're expecting a good year."

<http://www.bclocalnews.com/opinion/17997794.html>

## **We are starting to realize if we put up with pollution, we will perish**

By Diana French - Williams Lake Tribune - April 22, 2008

Earth Day celebrates the beginning of the Environmental Movement as we know it. Earth Day was the brain child of US Senator Gaylord Nelson, and the first one was held April 22, 1970 when groups that had been fighting for a clean and healthy environment got together.

Some 20 million like-minded people from 114 countries took part in that first world-wide demonstration. In 2007 an estimated 500 million people in 175 countries participated.

In the years between, environmentalists have been plugging away on a huge number of issues, campaigning for clean air, clean water, and food free of harmful substances.

They have been calling for the protection of the wilderness and wild things, and a balance between economics and sustainable environmental practices.

They have been warning that good old Mom Earth has limited resources and if we don't live within her means we're going to be in trouble.

Environmentalists tended to be a lonely lot, on the outside looking in. They were called nasty names. They were reviled for opposing growth and prosperity, denigrated for even daring to question industry's right to spew toxins into the air, dump deadly wastes into the waterways, or strip resources from the land.

As someone said, pollution was the perfume of profit, put up with it or perish.

We are beginning to realize that if we continue to "put up with it" we will perish.

Almost overnight people have been converting to the green side, call it what you will, climate change, sustainability, environmentalism. The growing evidence that the earth's climate is changing has been the trigger, but more and more political and industrial leaders are realizing "growth" cannot be sustained at the current rate and we have a problem with carbon emissions.

The change in public attitude has been a long time coming.

When Federal Health Minister Tony Clement announced recently that he was going to list bisphenol A as a toxic substance and ban the use of polycarbonate baby bottles, he said he was simply being precautionary and prudent, but merchants began taking the offending bottles off the shelves immediately with nary a squawk about what it is going to cost them.

The closure of the Atlantic cod fishing industry in 1992 should have been a wake up call, but it wasn't. Now the Pacific salmon fishing industry is in peril. In an unprecedented move, the US Pacific Fishery Management Council has moved to ban all salmon fishing along most of the Oregon coast and all of the California coast.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has declared it a state of emergency and has asked for federal disaster funds. He has allocated \$5.3 million state funds for coastal salmon and steelhead restoration projects.

While nobody knows for sure what has caused the decline, the National Marine Fisheries Service has pointed to a sudden lack of nutrient-rich deep ocean upwellings caused by ocean temperature changes as a possible cause.

Many biologists believe it is a combination of factors, including agricultural pollution, water diversions and damaged habitat. If the ban holds it means thousands of jobs and millions of dollars will be lost.

Could it happen here?

Concerns over the well being of our salmon don't go anywhere much. A massive marine development planned in the Shuswap could damage the famed Adams River sockeye run.

Will the politicians in the Columbia Shuswap regional district OK it for the good of the economy or nix it for the good of the salmon?

"Economic growth" is still the mantra, but we are beginning to take a closer look at the consequences. We're still over-cutting and over fishing and crapping up the world with discarded plastic. We continue to pave paradise and many, like BC Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon, are proud to do that.

But rules and regulations are a lot stiffer now they were in 1970. We are more aware that threats to the land, to the water, and to the air are threats to us.

\*\*\*

Still on the environmental theme, a note from me to the Interior Health Authority.

Replacing all the hospital toilets with water saver types was certainly environmentally correct, but were there no higher ones available? The new ones may be fine for wee people but when tall persons sit their knees must be higher than their bums.

Even with the grab bar there could be a problem lifting off, using these facilities must be a challenge for many patients. I know my knees wouldn't be up to it (down to it?)

Taller patients could use the commodes but that causes another problem. The sprays seem to have been eliminated.

It used to be when a patient used a potty it was a simple matter for a nurse to spray it clean in the ward toilet. Now the used bedpan has to be carried to the utility room and brushed clean. A really good use of staff time.

Maybe someone could nip over to the Red Cross lending place and borrow a few toilet booster seats.

Question. Do the people making the decisions ever consult with the people who have to live with the decisions?

On the plus side of health care, hurray for the recognition and training of nurse practitioners. How long will it be before we have a clinic staffed with a nurse practitioner or two who can deal with some of the minor problems that now plug the emergency ward?

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/environment/fears-for-penguin-colony/2008/04/21/1208742852742.html>

**Fairfax Digital**

## Fears for penguin colony

Peter Ker

April 22, 2008

A PENGUIN colony living in St Kilda could get increased protection from vandals and dogs, but not from the contaminants that will be disturbed this week by the controversial channel deepening project.

With dredging in the contaminated parts of the Yarra River to begin in earnest tomorrow, environment group Earthcare St Kilda has stepped-up calls for the Port of Melbourne and the Brumby Government to increase monitoring of the penguins.

The specialist dredger Goomai moved into the Yarra near Newport yesterday, where it will remove the riverbed above key infrastructure, including an underground sewer owned by Melbourne Water.

Earthcare spokeswoman Tiana Preston said the group, which has campaigned for greater penguin protection for months, was alarmed that sediments containing lead, mercury and DDT were about to be disturbed, yet no extra protection had been provided for the penguins.

Planning Minister Justin Madden recommended the St Kilda penguins be given extra protection in a report on the channel deepening project released in October last year.

But the Department of Sustainability and Environment, which has ultimate environmental control over the dredging project, said yesterday the recommendation did not have to be implemented because it was not included in the Environmental Management Plan.

DSE spokeswoman Julia Davies said a monitoring program on penguins at Phillip Island was deemed sufficient to cover the St Kilda colony as well.

"The program is focused on the Phillip Island population because the majority of penguins that use the bay come from that colony," she said.

Phillip Island penguins will be monitored by weight, and other studies will be carried out into anchovy numbers, as they are a primary source of food for the penguins.

Ms Davies said the scientific research carried out for the dredging project showed that the St Kilda colony would not be adversely affected by dredging, despite living hundreds of kilometres closer to the contaminants than the Phillip Island penguins.

"The biggest threats to the St Kilda penguin colony are vandals and dogs," Ms Davies said.

She said the department would continue talks with Earthcare about possible security measures to provide greater protection for the St Kilda colony.

<http://www.thewest.com.au/default.aspx?MenuId=32&ContentID=69286>

## Minister grants company 15,000 baby lobsters

*22nd April 2008, 16:15 WST*

Shares in Western Kingfish rose 25 per cent today after the State Fisheries Minister Jon Ford gave it permission to collect 15,000 juvenile Western Rock Lobsters to conduct a commercial scale pilot trial.

The Jurien Bay-based company was issued a full aquaculture licence to produce and sell lobsters in January, executive director Alan Savage said, giving it the first licence to collect juvenile lobsters for commercial purposes in Western Australia.

Mr Savage said the licence would result in a substantial increase in Australian lobster production.

"WKL will now be able to start operations to collect pueruli (early stage juvenile lobsters) and develop culture systems appropriate for this species," he said.

"The project needs to demonstrate the technical and economic capacity to collect and culture the pueruli on a scale that is commercial and sustainable."

Shares in Western Kingfish closed at 20 cents, up four cents.

ANDREW HOBBS

<http://www.news-press.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080420/NEWS0105/804200402/1075>

**news-press.com**

# Organism threatens Florida oysters

## P. olseni causes disease in Pacific mollusks

BY KEVIN LOLLAR • KLOLLAR@NEWS-PRESS.COM • APRIL 20, 2008



University of Florida veterinary pathologist Barbara Sheppard inspects a group of ornamental reef clams in her laboratory March 21.

A tiny exotic organism recently discovered in aquarium clams might someday become a bane for Florida oysters.

Veterinary pathologist Barbara Sheppard, of the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine, was keeping tridacnid clams, the family of giant clams, in an aquarium and noticed that the mollusks didn't look healthy.

"The clams were shipped from the Indo-Pacific area, and when they first arrived, they were beautiful, absolutely beautiful," Sheppard said. "But they were loaded with infection and started looking sick and died."

After a series of tests, Sheppard determined that the clam killer was the protozoan *Perkinsus olseni* and a previously unknown species of *Perkinsus* - *P. olseni* causes disease in mollusks of the western Pacific; it has also recently shown up in Spain and Uruguay.

Sheppard's tridacnids had been infected for a long time before they started to show symptoms.

Tridacnid clams are popular in the aquarium trade, and the fear is that aquarium owners might introduce *P. olseni* to Florida by dumping infected clams into state waterways.

Unfortunately, Sheppard said, foreign ornamental shellfish are not tested or quarantined before entering the United States, and she has already heard reports of sick and dying tridacnid clams.

Rich Windeler, president of Boardroom Aquatics, sells tridacnids but hasn't experienced or heard about problems with infected clams.

As for the possibility that aquarium owners would introduce *P. olseni* to Florida, Windeler isn't worried.

"These clams are high-end, specialist things," he said. "They're delicate, not an easy animal to keep. They're an advanced

aquarist thing. If you buy one and can keep it alive, there's just no way you're going to throw it into the wild."

Released tridacnids are not the only way *P. olseni* could be introduced to Florida. No one knows how the organism reached Uruguay (ship ballast is a possibility), but it got to Spain in contaminated shellfish seed from Korea, Sheppard said.

*P. olseni* is related to *Perkinsus marinus*, which causes "dermo disease" in oysters and occurs from Maine to Florida, including the Gulf of Mexico, and the Yucatan Peninsula.

First documented during the 1940s in the Gulf of Mexico, dermo has been responsible for massive oyster die-offs in the United States and Mexico, with Chesapeake Bay being a *P. marinus* hot spot.

So, what happens if *P. marinus*' cousin *P. olseni* reaches the United States?

"In Australia and New Zealand, it has done tremendous damage to the abalone industry, as well as cockles and a variety of other shellfish in Spain, Japan and Korea. We don't want their pathogen.

"Anytime you take an organism from one part of the world to a naive environment, it might just die, or it might become a super-pathogen and have a significant impact."

For Aswani Voley, chairman of Florida Gulf Coast University's Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences, the jury is still out on the possible effects of *P. olseni* on Florida shellfish.

Although the local *P. marinus* kills oysters on the east coast, it doesn't affect California oysters, Voley said, so maybe *P. olseni* wouldn't hurt local shellfish.

"If *olseni* is introduced, and I hope it's not introduced, we don't know what the host would be for local clams and oysters," he said. "It looks as if *olseni* likes more high-saline species, so how does it do in low-saline species like our oysters? I'm just not sure how much damage it would do."

The discovery of *P. olseni* in imported tridacnid clams might have a positive side, Sheppard said.

"It might open a market for enterprising people in the United States to grow them here," she said. "If we complain about what we're getting from Asia, let's do it in the U.S. where we can test them."

[http://www.dailypress.com/news/opinion/dp-ed\\_suntopleter\\_0420apr20,0,5520298.story](http://www.dailypress.com/news/opinion/dp-ed_suntopleter_0420apr20,0,5520298.story)



## Use tough love to save crab harvest

April 20, 2008

I am extremely proud of the fisheries management staff and the board at the [Virginia Marine Resources Commission](#) for their stand this year regarding the declining numbers of the extremely valuable [Chesapeake Bay](#) blue crab.

In recent months the commission has taken significant steps to cut the current harvest numbers of crabs, much to the discomfort and disdain of working watermen. Much sympathy goes out to Virginia's watermen. They have been faced with cuts in recent years in almost every area they work, whether with oysters, crabs or striped bass.

Reality must set in: You cannot harvest more each year than a species can regenerate. Regardless of the source of the problem — habitat reduction, poor water quality or over-fishing — drastic measures must be implemented to turn around a decline.

Jack Travelstead, chief of the VMRC fisheries management team, and VMRC Commissioner Steven Bowman have led this recent charge to curtail blue crab fishing. On April 15, the governors of Virginia and [Maryland](#) went on record calling for a specific percentage reduction — 34 percent — in the annual female blue crab harvest.

Harvest reduction measures already approved in February and March must now be joined by additional steps up for consideration at the VMRC's meeting on Tuesday.

The action must be across the board; no segment of the blue crab fishery can be excluded, including recreational harvesting.

A total reduction package is now necessary, or next year there will not be a call for more cuts; there will be a call for a total moratorium for the harvesting of blue crabs in the waters of Virginia.

*Wilford Kale Retired VMRC staff member, Williamsburg*

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,23572664-5013511,00.html>

## Come in spanner

Article from: **Courier Mail**

Natascha Mirosch

April 22, 2008 12:00am

**A DECADE ago, Alison Reed was stacking and stamping books. Today she's just as likely to be elbow deep in salt water or painstakingly picking crab meat out of its shell.**

Her sea change was a literal one, from the safe, dry environs of a library to joining partner Jason Sgro in a business selling spanner crabs.

Today, not only is their product used by top Noosa and Sydney chefs, but it's in the running to win the accolade of "best product from the sea" in the *Vogue Entertaining + Travel* Audi Produce Awards, announced on May 12. "We are so excited. It's just hard to wait to find out how we do," Reed says.

In 1995 professional fisherman Sgro recognised a huge gap in the market. "We were selling all the good stuff overseas and keeping the inferior crab," Reed says.

Most of Queensland's commercial spanner crab catch was being exported to Taiwan and Hong Kong, but the pair thought spanner crab, despite being largely ignored locally in favour of blue swimmers and muddies, held enormous potential.

In 2002 they set up Noosa Spanner Crabs with a tank in their back yard and began selling their product to local restaurants. Word spread among both chefs and gourmets, who discovered them at the Noosa Farmers Markets. Now they regularly sell out of both the live product and the hand-picked meat at the weekly markets and put their success down partly to the local support. "We've had fantastic support from local chefs like David Rayner from the River House and Marc Wohner from Ricky's," Reed says.

"We did the Noosa Celebration of Food and Wine last year and were able to network with lots of interstate chefs too," Reed says.

Demand started to roll in from Sydney and further afield and the crab now appears on the menu of several Sydney restaurants. "We appeared in *Delicious* magazine and soon celebrity chefs were starting to talk. Cheong Liew (celebrated chef of The Grange at the Adelaide Hilton) requested some be flown down for a cooking class he was doing."

Reed seems pleased but almost overwhelmed by the growth of their back-yard business. "In six years it's grown in leaps and bounds; the demand is just huge. We've worked on our own all these years but, finally, Jason has promised that we're going to get staff!"

They're just about to abandon the small set-up for a purpose-built factory with three or four tanks and a processing room. And these days they also buy from carefully selected crab fishermen, as Sgro is unable to keep up with demand on his own.

So what does the spanner have to offer that other crustaceans don't? While it's a fetching scarlet in colour compared to its drabber cousins, the spanner crab certainly wouldn't win any prizes in a beauty contest. It's shaped a bit like a frog and has large spanner-like pincers, but Reed says the flesh is a delicacy.

"Spanner crab flesh is very white, and slightly sweet but not as much as the blue swimmer. It has a delicate flavour so is great to use with other flavours and chefs say that it presents really well," she says.

Unlike mud and blue swimmer crabs, spanners are available all-year round, with the exception of a month at the end of November when they spawn. They are found only in Queensland and NSW, preferring clear, sandy-bottomed water where they bury under the sand waiting to spring out on their prey.

They are also more agile than other crabs, moving forwards and backwards instead of just sideways.

"It's a very sustainable seafood. They're caught via a dilly bag with a line baited with pilchards. Up to around 20 crabs crawl in to eat the pilchards and around a third get stuck; the rest get away," Reed says.

The crabs are caught daily off Noosa or Mooloolaba and stored in baskets on the boat. "They can go 24 hours without water. Once we get them, they're put into holding tanks overnight to purge, so there's no mud or sand in them. Then they're sent off live to local restaurants or put on a plane to Sydney. Others we keep to sell at the market or cook and extract the meat," she says.

Reed says that where once the public was nervous about buying live crab, we are much more confident now. "The farmers markets tend to attract foodies who are always willing to try something new. We give them a little leaflet with instructions on what to do and that seems to work. It really is just a couple of lines, but it seems to reassure people. Now people's ideas have shifted and many of them come back week after week."

The accepted way of humanely killing the live crabs, Reed says, is by putting them into a comatose state by placing them in the freezer for a couple of hours. "Then simply boil or steam them."

Reed and Sgro have developed a way of extracting the meat from the carapace without shredding it, so it's in bigger pieces and presents better.

She remains tightlipped about the method, saying only that they are all "hand-picked". The extracted meat, which is packed and Cryovac sealed, is also popular. "Chefs really like it, because you can take it out of the pack and saute or just simmer in the bag and toss through pasta or risotto. If you want to use the meat cold, after cooking you can just put the bag into an ice-bath for three or four minutes then use in a salad," she says.

As for her personal preference, Reed says that she likes her crab "unadulterated". "I like them as a crab roll – in a good crusty bread roll, with just a squeeze of lime and salt or pepper. I also do them in a pasta, with olive oil, pepper, garlic, shallots and a few cherry tomatoes."

Reed is happy to put in the hard yards for her business.

"Yes, it's a big career change, but I'd never go back to working for someone else again."

**Try spanner crab at the Settler's Cove Celebration of Food and Wine Noosa Style, May 16-18. On May 16, the Seafood Afloat Trail boat stops at Reed and Sgro's dock, for their demonstration of crab picking and a seafood lunch cooked by acclaimed chefs Serge Dansereau and David Pugh. To book: [www.celebrationofaustralianfoodandwine.com.au](http://www.celebrationofaustralianfoodandwine.com.au) or**

