

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/a-pristine-beach-a-decision-and-a-wave-of-discontent/2008/01/04/1198950073937.html>

Fairfax Digital

A pristine beach, a decision and a wave of discontent



Glyndon Ringrose fears the effects of the proposed desalination plant
Photo: *Jason South*

Ben Doherty
January 5, 2008

FROM dawn each day they appear. Atop the sand dunes, bleary eyed, clad in hoodies and board shorts, surfers scan the waves that barrel along the unspoilt Bass Coast beaches.

There's a community here, even including those who drive from as far as Melbourne to surf. Cars are recognised in the car parks, and greetings exchanged, along with condition reports.

It is not normally a politically active community, nor one inclined to advertise the quality of the waves, but all that changed when the State Government announced plans to build one of the world's biggest desalination plants here.

Now the board-riders who surf the beaches here are worried, even angry, that their breaks — rated among the best in Victoria — might not be theirs, or there, for much longer.

The \$3.1 billion desalination plant is set to be built on a 20-hectare site on the foreshore of Williamsons Beach, between Kilcunda and Wonthaggi.

The project is subject to an environmental effects statement, due to be completed in December, but preliminary drilling, and even a test desalination plant, is set to go ahead before the statement is finished.

Once operating in 2011, the plant will provide Melbourne with about 150 billion litres of drinking water a year.

But it will also pump 200 billion litres of high-salt brine a year back into the ocean (a pipe will deposit it about a kilometre out to sea), as well as produce some 30,000 tonnes of iron-rich sludge, to be stored in a landfill.

Preliminary studies have shown that the plant will likely harm nearby marine life, in particular weakening fish stocks.

Glyndon Ringrose, probably this area's best-known surfer and a former world tour professional, has been surfing the Bass Coast since he was a teenager.

He says almost nothing is known about the effects the desalination plant will have on the water, the marine life, or the waves at beaches like Williamsons.

"The fact that they're going to put these enormous pipelines out into the ocean, we don't know what effect that will have," he says. "We need to know more. When you mess with the environment, you don't know what could happen."

Beach fisherman are concerned the brine could kill marine life and reduce the number of fish. Surfers are worried that the discharge, if pushed back to shore by currents and tides, could make the water uninhabitable.

Ringrose says many on the Bass Coast remain upset by the Government's handling of the project, in particular the fact the plans were presented as a "fait accompli", with no consultation.

We weren't told anything, and we still haven't been told anything. People are worried about this, and we don't have any answers."

At just 10 years of age, Taj McEntee has not had the chance to surf Williamsons as long as others. He's worried he won't have much longer and expressed his fears in the latest edition of the national surfing magazine, *Tracks*. "It (the desalination plant) will pump million litres of brine into the sea. It could kill marine life, the seaweed will die. It will just wreck the whole beach," he told *The Age* yesterday.

Taj has started a petition at Inverloch Primary School, urging his classmates to become interested in the biggest government infrastructure project in the state's history, slated to be built just down the road.

"But it's not just about the desalination plant," he says. "It is really about how we get, use and dump water. If we can use the water we have more efficiently, then we don't need to build things like desalination plants."

The Victorian Government has maintained that the desalination plant will have a minimal impact, in construction and operation, and that beach users won't be adversely affected. Water Minister Tim Holding, releasing a range of preliminary environmental studies last month before the full environmental effects statement, said he was confident the study would find the Government's proposal was environmentally sound.

"The technical studies and reports that we've completed so far make it very clear the construction and operation and maintenance of a desalination plant at the site in the vicinity of the Wonthaggi area will fundamentally have no adverse environmental impacts which are not able to be managed appropriately," he said.

http://www.shetlandtoday.co.uk/shetlandlife/content_details.asp?ContentID=24826

SHETLAND Life

04 January 2008

Environment: Paradise lost

Shetland was once a paradise for sea trout anglers, but today there are very few to be found. In the

second of a short series of articles, *Paul Bloomer* explores the reasons for the massive decline in Shetland's sea trout population.

Sea trout have been important to people in Shetland for a very long time. They have helped to sustain islanders for millennia, and have attracted visitors from all corners of the globe. Countless generations have enjoyed their presence, but for at least the last 50 years they have been in serious decline. Writing from the perspective of an angler with a deep love for the natural environment of these islands, this article looks at the multiple factors that have led almost to the demise of these beautiful fish in Shetland.

Before moving on to these factors though, it is vital to point out that while anglers like me can be quick to point the finger of blame at others, we must also look at our own actions. Though most anglers would only ever take a few fish home, everyone I've spoken to can tell stories of others taking large baskets of undersized fish. The excuse that "if I don't kill them somebody else will" is entirely self-defeating. Anglers have as much responsibility as anybody else to protect and conserve this species.

Netting

A sea trout is essentially a brown trout that has migrated from freshwater to saltwater to feed for a period of time. They return to freshwater to spawn and then travel back to sea again. The unique lifestyle of sea trout coupled with the unique geography of Shetland means that they are very vulnerable to exploitation here. The myriad of small burns around the isles are not capable of carrying large numbers of fish unless they are in spate, meaning that sea trout gather in the vicinity of burn mouths awaiting heavy rain, which could be weeks or months away. This is when they are at their most vulnerable to excessive angling pressure, seals and nets.

There has been a concerted effort at restocking sea trout over the years from the Shetland angling clubs, but with limited success. A consistent pattern with any restocking programme has been that any increase in stocks has led to a corresponding increase in illegal netting.

An example from recent years is in Cunningsburgh where, following the landslides of 2003, both burns were restocked. A good head of sea trout was quickly established and many people in the local community enjoyed a level of fishing that had not been available in any region of Shetland for many years. Then in 2005 and 2006 stocks declined rapidly and some fish were caught that were heavily net marked. The selfish actions of a short-sighted few cut short the recovery, and now there are so few fish left that it would be pointless even to set a net. An equally disturbing story came this year from Yell, with reports of a haul of 50 sea trout netted then photographed by their captor. These two incidents inspired me to write this article.

The netting of sea trout in Shetland has gone on since time immemorial, and is considered by some to be a traditional part of Shetland crofting life. But others cite wholesale netting of the sea trout shoals as a major cause of their decline. It is a debate that has been raging for a long time.

Minutes from a meeting held in Bixter Hall in 1971 between Shetland Anglers Association, crofters bodies, fisheries trust and tourist representatives reached the conclusion that "It is not the crofter taking 'one for the pot' that has done most damage but the 'fly by night' gangs who come from outwith the area and under cover of darkness sweep areas clean of fish and usually go unnoticed. This activity was exacerbated by the invention of the motorcar and the deep freeze".

Another profound observation from this meeting is "the possible unspoken tension that exists between the perceived rights of anglers to take sea trout over and above the perceived rights of landowners". This too is an issue that has not gone away, and an open honest dialogue between anglers and landowners needs to be cultivated.

The strong Shetland community feeling not to tell and the lack of any meaningful support from the police have effectively given netters free rein in parts of Shetland. Most communities will know who their local netters are and turn a blind eye, but if sea trout are to survive then the notion that netting is a harmless

activity has got to be relegated to history for the sake of future generations. In this respect community councils could play a much larger role in looking after the sea trout in their midst and especially in challenging known netters.

Fish farms

The warnings have been sounding increasingly loudly for some time that fish farms, and specifically the enormous sea lice proliferation from open net cage salmon farming, are decimating wild migratory sea trout and salmon populations.

Salmon cages act as a magnet for sea lice and they breed there in their billions. Young sea lice are free swimming and move on tidal currents. As wild fish swim past the cages they are confronted with clouds of these lice. Wild fish can thrive with up to six sea lice on them, but when there are tens of thousands of salmon in a confined space then we are speaking of many hundreds of thousands of lice each putting eggs out into the environment.

What chance does a wild salmon or sea trout have when it swims past these clouds of lice on its natural migratory route?

No accurate data exists in Shetland regarding stocks of sea trout before and after aquaculture appeared around the shores, but some elder anglers interviewed for this article noticed a decline in stocks when fish farms appeared. One vividly remembers a fish caught from a once prime sea trout location with around 300 sea lice on it.

Recently, the man described as the most powerful man in fish-farming, John Fredriksen, stated in an interview in the Norwegian paper *Alta Posten* that he thought that "all salmon farms should be removed from any fjords in Norway containing wild salmon rivers". It is a brave statement indeed and has been applauded by many. His warning gave birth to a letter, dated 19th September 2007, being posted to Marine Harvest, the company Fredriksen owns shares in. This letter was signed by 33 fishing, tourist, first nation and environmental groups from six countries, all urging Marine Harvest to heed Mr Fredriksen's warning and to formulate a plan of action and timetable for the removal of poorly situated sites. This could eventually lead towards closed-containment farming practises, giving closer control of parasites, disease, effluent and escapees.

There is a great and urgent need for more research in this area, as well as a bridge to be built in the form of dialogue, debate and action between environmentalists, anglers and fish farmers, who are at this moment adopting diametrically opposed and entrenched positions regarding the effects of aquaculture on the environment.

In Shetland fish farms have provided jobs in remote rural communities, but this should not be allowed to take precedence over negative and far-reaching effects on the environment. A workable road ahead has to be forged that accommodates the needs of the industry and the needs of wild fish.

Sandeels and global warming

Sea trout are opportunistic feeders and consume a wide variety of food items, but a large part of their diet, when the shoals were at their peak, was sandeels. The demise of sandeels has been extensively studied in relation to its effects on bird populations, and the decline in breeding success around the mid 1980s of surface feeding species such as Arctic Terns and Kittiwakes.

Industrial fishing was initially blamed for the collapse of sandeel stocks and millions of tonnes of sandeels have indeed been taken ruthlessly from the North Sea, a large percentage of it to make fish meal for animal food, pellets for farmed fish and, unbelievably, as fuel for Danish power stations. Removing a base part of the food chain has devastating consequences to all those creatures further up the chain, and unfortunately the same thing is happening to krill.

Maybe we need also to ask what effect extreme inshore fishing is having on nursery stocks of all species of fish and, consequently, on those other creatures dependant on them for food.

Research is showing that global warming is now having a major effect on the ability of traditional coldwater species like sandeels to recover from damage to their populations, and they are starting to be replaced by warm water species. The warming of the seas is also leading to a change in ecosystems, where established feed type and availability will vary through the year, and not necessarily match up to the needs of fledgling birds and migrating sea trout.

It may be a harsh reality to face but it is possible that the food chain has been disrupted and depleted to such an extent that any attempt at re-establishing large shoals of sea trout is utterly futile if they cannot feed themselves. (If global warming continues unabated though, sea trout will be the least of our worries.)

Degradation of spawning areas

The sea trout is a product of its environment and if this is changed then the overall population dynamics will change with it.

The increased productivity of burns caused by agricultural run-off means that the trout grow and mature at an earlier age and thereby lose the need to migrate.

The urge to migrate is a basic survival mechanism to escape from an unfavourable freshwater environment with little food and much competition, into a favourable saltwater environment with more food and less competition. The trend of increasingly fertile freshwater systems and increasingly barren oceans is not conducive to migration.

The gradual degradation of spawning burns has also made life extremely difficult for sea trout to reproduce, and their needs have rarely been considered during any kind of change to freshwater courses.

We see thin water sluices on bridges designed with no consideration of passage of migratory fish (e.g. at the head of the East Voe in Scalloway). Deep drainage channels are excavated without forming any kind of holding pool (e.g. at Sandwick). Water board works such as at the Channerwick burn dam (now unused) have no fish pass. At Roerwater, North Collafirth, water extraction depletes summer flow in the burn to extremely low levels, thereby threatening the very existence of fish. The list could go on and on, and though changes are being made, past mistakes have to be rectified and the welfare of fish considered in future projects.

Changes in agricultural drainage in Shetland have also led to canalisation of once healthy free-flowing burns. The Loch of Strand was once one of the cleanest brackish sea trout lochs in Shetland, but in the early 1970s a silage pit was built about a mile upstream and within five years the loch was rank!

Large concentrations of cattle and ponies around burns can break down banks, leading to spawning areas being lost through changes in flow pattern and increased silting. This in turn leads to the suffocation of eggs and the clogging of the gills of young fish. Organo-phosphate sheep dip has in the past decimated the invertebrate life of many burns and consequently all the other creatures dependant on them, including fish.

There is great scope for community involvement in the enhancement of burns. Those that have become silted could be cleared out, new pea sized gravel added for fish to spawn on, flat stones added to give the young fish protection from eels and larger predatory trout, protective reeds allowed to grow to help from predation by birds and man, and maybe larger stones added to help protect from predation by otters. Fences could be constructed to help stop erosion from animals and populations of fish could be assessed. Any attempt at restocking will not work unless the environment is correct to receive the fish. However, whilst attention to freshwater sources will help with recruitment of future sea trout stocks it is thought to be marine

survival that is the biggest threat.

Acid rain

Acid rain is rarely mentioned nowadays, but in 1990 Arisdale hatchery in Yell lost a lot of fish. A pH reading of the water running the spate in the Arisdale burn was found to be the same as asetic acid. If this was killing the salmon parr and smolts in the hatchery then the effect that this would have had on wild fish would have been equally dramatic. The most susceptible areas were probably those watercourses that flow over gneiss and granite, such as parts of the North Mainland and Yell, whilst the bedrock of limestone under the central mainland burns would have had a slight buffering effect against acidification. The EU has stipulated that Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) has to be fitted on all coal-fired power stations by 2015 or they will have to close. So acid rain will hopefully be a thing of the past.

Conclusion

There is much truth to the feeling, often repeated by anglers in Shetland, that "if you have feathers you're protected to the hilt, but if you have scales you're bugged". Imagine the outcry if puffins were netted to oblivion while people turned a blind eye. Fish are extremely under-represented in conservation matters. They are out of sight, and therefore out of mind.

We must take the disappearance of these fish seriously. Research is desperately needed to establish the key reasons for their decline before any realistic and workable conservation measures can be put in place. This academic, scientific approach has to be coupled with some hard physical work, time, financial commitment and probably a few difficult decisions.

Let us be remembered as the generation that tried to save the sea trout, and not as one that ruthlessly turned a blind eye to the plight of these beautiful and increasingly precious fish

Next month, Paul Featherstone examines what measures can be taken to ensure that sea trout have a future in Shetland.

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23004551-30417,00.html>

\$7m nets return of fishing rights

Matthew Franklin, Chief political correspondent | *January 04, 2008*

KEVIN Rudd will spend \$7.5million buying commercial fishing leases in the Torres Strait to return the fishing rights to indigenous people.

Sources confirmed yesterday Labor planned to honour its election promise to resolve a long-running dispute over Torres Strait reef fisheries within 10 nautical miles of islands with a buyback of commercial leases.

The fisheries will be passed to the Torres Strait Regional Authority for reallocation to traditional fishers, according to Labor policy documents.

The Government will also allow the islanders to lease the rights back to commercial fishers to boost their incomes.

Confirmation of delivery of the election promise highlights the ongoing shift in indigenous affairs under the new Labor Government.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin yesterday confirmed Labor would create a new indigenous body to be elected from indigenous communities around the country and provide advice to the Government.

This would be the first time indigenous people could elect such representatives since the Howard government abolished the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation with Labor support during its final term in office.

A spokesman for Ms Macklin said Labor had no intention of recreating ATSIC, which was mired in claims of misuse of public money.

Ms Macklin is also continuing to work on the Government's planned apology to members of the so-called Stolen Generation of indigenous people removed from their parents as children.

The Government was unable to give any indication of when the apology would be delivered, amid despite speculation it could be on Australia Day.



<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/220/604901>

Fishing of immature fish on the rise again

Thursday, 3rd January, 2008

 E-mail article  Print article

By Kiganda Ssonko

FISHING of immature fish on Lake Victoria is on the rise again, the chairman of the Uganda Integrated Fish Suppliers Association, Ponsiano Lwakataka, has said.

Lwakataka said the practice, which is common in Masaka, was being perpetrated by mainly security agencies and politicians.

He said the Government should fight the anomaly because it puts the fishing industry, one of Uganda's biggest foreign exchange earners, at risk.

“The fish sector is under threat. Fishing of young fish that was successfully fought by Brig. Elly Kayanja's Operation Clean in 2005 has now hit a climax. The lake has run short of fish, driving the sector into low productivity,” Lwakataka told a press conference in Kampala.

He said security personnel from the Regional Internal Security Organisation in Masaka and politicians protect the culprits who have a ready market in DR Congo.

“Some members of these groups cover up the wrongdoers by taking huge bribes from them to prevent them from being arrested. Cases are many at Ddimu, Namirembe and Kasensero landing sites, where container trucks park, load and head straight to DR Congo. When we complain, the security people intimidate us and have even arrested some of our members after tramping cases of robbery and murder against them.”

“In 2007, it was agreed that no processor could buy fish below 16 inches. The resolution still stands and has

helped us eliminate wrong elements.”

However, Lwakataka said the decision not to buy the immature fish had prompted the fishermen to resort to DR Congo where over 10 tonnes of immature undocumented and untaxed fish are exported everyday.

Lwakataka said because of the fish shortage in the lake, five out the 14 fish factories had closed whereas others are producing below capacity.

<http://www.999today.com/scienceandnature/news/story/33662.html>

Fish quota increases threaten Cod stocks



The quota increases could seriously damage cod stocks

© Roberta Casaliggi

3rd January 2008

A global conservation group has attacked the EU Fisheries Council over its decision to increase the North Sea cod quota by 11 per cent in 2008.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) says the new quota will seriously damage North Sea cod stocks.

The quota increase of around 22,000 tonnes is based on early signs of stock recovery.

But according to the WWF, ministers have failed to put in place compulsory measures that will enable young fish to remain in the sea and reproduce.

The group warned that "cod stocks are not out of trouble yet and the next 12 months will be crucial for determining the fate of this fragile, over-exploited species".

The WWF also slammed EU Fisheries ministers for giving the green light to voluntary measures by fishermen to address the wasteful situation of discards.

Helen McLachlan, WWF: "This is the fishing industry's big chance to show they can deliver on their claims of being able to fish more selectively and sustainably."

The council approved the concept of allowing fishermen to propose "tailor-made measures" that would best suit them.

These voluntary measures include the temporary closure of areas where cod are abundant or spawning, and the use of more selective fishing gear.

"This is the first time such a conservation credit-scheme has been approved by the Commission and demonstrates a willingness to prevent the wasteful practice of discarding whereby huge quantities of fish caught over the quota limit are thrown overboard," the WWF said in a statement.

"Recent EU figures show that fishermen are throwing between 40 and 60 per cent of their catch overboard."

Helen McLachlan, senior marine policy officer at WWF, added: "This is the fishing industry's big chance to show they can deliver on their claims of being able to fish more selectively and sustainably.

"If successful the 2008 measures will give the much needed break that cod needs and help the stock replenish.

"However, if the fishermen fail to implement cod avoidance plans, we will have wasted the only chance at recovery since 1997. The stakes are high - let's hope they can deliver."

The WWF also criticised the "minimal reduction" of quotas, ranging from 8 to 18 per cent, agreed for other cod populations, such as the Kattegat, Irish Sea, and West Scotland for which scientists had advised not to fish at all.

"The real failure was not to accompany any cuts with agreed measures to improve selectivity and avoid catching unwanted cod in the first place," the group said.

But the UK fishing industry welcomed the EU Fisheries Council's decision to increase North Sea cod quotas.

UK fisheries minister Jonathan Shaw described the deal as a "fair settlement".



<http://www.news.com.au/mercury/story/0,22884,23005604-5007221,00.html>

Salmon escape fishing furore

Article from: **MERCURY**

MICHELLE PAINE

January 04, 2008 12:00am

A RECORD salmon escape is filling, and ruining, the nets of commercial fishers. And fishermen trying to sell or buy the escaped salmon are breaking the law.

Up to 25,000 atlantic salmon escaped from a broken net on a Tasman Peninsula fish farm just before Christmas.

The salmon were filling nets set for wild fish, said the Tasmanian Fishing Industry Council.

"We've had reports of scale fishers catching them when they're aiming for banded morwong and blue warehous," TFIC chief executive Neil Stump said.

"They're catching something they can't sell. It's a double whammy, their catch is predominantly made up of atlantic salmon and it's also having an impact on their gear, some of which is highly specialised."

He said other escapes had been in areas that did not affect commercial fishers such as D'Entrecasteaux Channel.

The Department of Primary industries and Water yesterday warned it was illegal to sell atlantic salmon or sea trout.

"It's important for commercial fishermen to remember it is illegal for them to sell atlantic salmon or sea trout they may catch," said primary industries manager Wes Ford.

"We've had anecdotal reports of commercial fishers selling the atlantic salmon that they've caught and there appears to be some confusion amongst some fishers as to whether they can sell these fish or not.

"While a commercial fisher is entitled to be in possession of any atlantic salmon they catch, they are unable to sell them."

He said fishermen risked prosecution.

"Members of the public, as well as fish processors, should also be aware that it is an offence to buy or to sell escaped atlantic salmon," he said.

Mr Ford said the escape was the biggest in recent years.

There have also been escapes from farms at Macquarie Harbour on the West Coast, which proved a boom for the local economy as fishermen flocked to Strahan.



Seize the carp, says Inland Fisheries

Posted Wed Jan 2, 2008 6:29pm AEDT



Efforts are continuing to eradicate the pest fish, carp from Tasmanian waterways (ABC News: Cameron Atkins)

Tasmania's Inland Fisheries Service is in the last stage of eradicating carp from the state's Midlands lakes.

The Carp Management Plan was established in 1995, when carp were found in Lakes Crescent and Sorell.

The introduced species needs to be removed because it eats the food of trout and the endangered Golden Galaxia fish.

Paul Donkers from Inland Fisheries says the drought has been hampering the eradication effort.

"We're in the last stages of the program," Mr Donkers said.

"We're in the process of cleaning up the last few carp in Lake Crescent and Lake Sorell, we're at the point now in Lake Crescent where they could well be no carp left after what may well be the last female was caught two weeks ago."

<http://web.bcnewsgroup.com/portals-code/list.cgi?paper=117&cat=23&id=1131073&more=0>

Upstream Battle for B.C. Salmon

By —Jason Youmans

Jan 02 2008

Reseracher

Alexandra Morton discusses disturbing data about sea lice

A report co-authored by B.C. fisheries researcher Alexandra Morton and published in the December edition of Science magazine says pink salmon stocks in the Queen Charlotte Strait's Broughton Archipelago have declined 80 percent over the last four years—and if current trends continue, the species could be headed for extinction. The report's authors place the blame squarely on sea lice incubating in net-pen fish farms. We asked Morton just how bad things are likely to get.

Monday: What were the findings of the study you recently co-authored?

Alexandra Morton: We found that sea lice from fish farms can take a salmon population from historic levels to within one percent of that in eight years. So for pink salmon, which are on a two-year cycle, that's four generations. This was done by looking at the data that exists and projecting into the future. We saw a trend that is a very steep line. We looked at where the Broughton Archipelago pink salmon stocks are at halfway down that timeline. So we have four more years, or two generations left, on this trajectory before we're within one percent of where we were at the outset of this study. And all of this is based on nothing changing—so if sea lice get worse or there's a natural disaster, this line will go faster. If there's a break in the infection cycle it will be slightly slower, but on average, we have four more years.

Monday: Is there consensus within the scientific community that a direct relationship exists between current aquaculture practices and what appears to be the decimation of our wild salmon populations?

AM: Yes there is. There is very strong evidence and scientific consensus, particularly on this one issue, that sea lice in fish farms are killing off wild salmon. It's very easy science. The fish farms give the sea lice a place to overwinter they never had before, and pink and chum salmon, unfortunately, come out of the rivers without any scales. So it's a collision between parasite and host, where these little fish wouldn't normally get infected until they were older, at which time they would have a coat of scales.

Sea lice are normally benign, but in the situation we have now with fish farms situated right at river mouths, wild salmon come in and infect the farmed fish. In a natural situation, those little pinks and chums would come out of the river with no scales and eat rapidly and grow and by the time they met sea lice they would be prepared, but now they're meeting with sea lice much too early.

Monday: How would you characterize the current state of B.C.'s wild salmon population?

AM: Shameful. [This year] Alaska had its fifth biggest pink salmon harvest ever and the sockeye, I believe, were fourth largest. There's no reason for [B.C.] stocks to be in decline. British Columbia salmon just don't have political will, that's the difference. They're all going out and feeding in the same ocean. There's absolutely no reason for this. It's just an act of sheer sloppiness. Sea lice eating wild salmon to death is about corporations externalizing their costs. They don't want to pay the bill of keeping their fish in closed tanks so the public gets saddled with this—and, the loss is enormous.

The economy of British Columbia is so tied to wild salmon, both in the sheer bulk of nutrients these fish import into our forests to the eagles and whales and visitors they attract. Wilderness tourism is based on salmon and it brings in \$1.6 billion to B.C. versus \$600 million by fish farming. B.C. wild salmon have been abandoned by the provincial and federal governments and the loss of wild salmon will send an economic shock wave through this province.

Monday: In May 2007, the Special Legislative Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture recommended the immediate implementation of closed containment fish farms. Have those recommendations been implemented?

AM: The minister in charge of responding to these recommendations, Pat Bell, has not only failed to respond in the three months he announced that he would, but has granted four more netpens—the very technology the committee recommends be phased out because of its devastating impact on our wild salmon. I think fish farms offer safe haven for politicians, because wild salmon force politicians to bite all the hands that feed them, preventing huge hydroelectric projects, some logging, mining and oil wells. I think somewhere in the 1980s there was a deal done and government cannot get out of it, in spite of the impact this industry is now having on political careers. I don't think this is about fish, I think it is about water, oil, logging, etc.

Monday: What must be done to save B.C.'s wild salmon?

AM: Bottom line, wild salmon need political will. The impact of fish farms is easily reversed; just get the farms away from the rivers. Nature is very fastidious about separating young and old salmon—this is how the parasite and disease cycles are broken. All the adult spawning salmon die in the fall, the tides wash the coast all winter and by spring the sea is clean and ready for the tiny, vulnerable next generation. But today, huge fish feedlots pick up pathogens from the wild adult salmon, brew them all winter and by spring each fish farm can be producing a billion lice in places there should be none.

This is not a problem isolated to the Broughton. Work I have coming out soon shows sea lice eating young salmon and herring to death off Campbell River on the pathway of the Fraser River sockeye, east Vancouver Island rivers and in mainland areas such as Bute Inlet. Over one third of all Canada's wild salmon go through this area and they are being infected by fish farms.

Horse flu headed for eradication

Article from: [Herald Sun](http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22974245-662,00.html)

<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22974245-662,00.html>

Gerard McManus

December 27, 2007 12:00am

THE equine flu epidemic should be eliminated altogether in Australia in 2008, according to federal Agriculture Minister Tony Burke.

The flu outbreak, which began in August and brought the racing industry to its knees, has now been contained, and some interstate horse movement has begun.

Over the coming months all restrictions on horse movement are likely to be lifted.

Mr Burke said yesterday he was hopeful that the steps taken to date would eliminate the threat of equine flu altogether next year.

"I am pleased to say that we are on track to have equine influenza eradicated in 2008," Mr Burke said yesterday.

"Leading up to eradication, we will be able to increase green zones, which will allow horse owners to get back to some normality.

"However, during this holiday period it is vital that people still need to observe all relevant biosecurity measures if they come in contact with horses."

The Federal Government has sent out more than two million "eradicate in 2008" postcards to alert people in rural areas and in places where there is a high concentration of horses about action they can take to contain the flu, which had never existed in Australia before.



<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/waters-of-wonderment/2007/12/30/1198949675404.html>

Waters of wonderment

December 31, 2007

Page 1 of 3 | [Single page](#)

The Barrier Reef gets the world fame but NSW has six great marine parks of its own, writes James Woodford.

Advertisement

Fishermen, as with any good hunter gatherers, don't like being told what they can and can't do, and where they can and can't do it.

Until recently, with the exception of a few bag limits, protected species and size restrictions, anglers could turn up at a favourite spot, hook up a yabby or a prawn and catch almost any old fish they wanted, any time they pleased.

There was no need to make an appointment for a spot, no forms to fill in, no hourly fee and no tax collectors sneaking around the rock platforms to collect GST.

The only forces higher up the food chain than an angler were the tide, weather and an impatient spouse.

But a southerly buster was tearing up the coast. First came recreational fishing licences and then along came four words - marine park zoning plan.

If you listen to recreational fishermen you would think "marine park" was code for a mass lockout of people. It is true that, in a few small areas of the coast, signs have sprouted up like mushrooms alerting anglers to marine park boundaries - but the sky has not fallen.

So what is all the fuss about?

New South Wales has one of the most spectacular coastlines on earth - 1586 kilometres, nearly 45 per cent in terrestrial reserves and a third in marine protected areas. There are wild offshore islands like Cabbage Tree, off Port Stephens, and Montague, off Narooma. There are also coral reefs, kelp forests, whale migration routes, cuttlefish spawning grounds, coastal lakes that are still in near-pristine condition, networks of underwater caves and hundreds of ship and plane wrecks.

And, last but not least, there are, according to Andy Short, University of Sydney researcher and author of *Beaches Of The NSW Coast*, 721 beaches in the state.

So far NSW has given birth to a neat half-dozen marine parks - Solitary Islands, Port Stephens, Lord Howe Island, Batemans, Jervis Bay and Cape Byron. All of them have caused immense political headaches - breach babies that needed emergency caesareans.

Each of the six has been created in a different bio-region and aims to protect a representation of the different habitats in each of the areas.

All the parks are multiple-use reserves, which means certain areas are zoned for particular activities. They are all within state waters and extend from high tide mark to depths of at least 180 metres. It is only in sanctuary zones that recreational fishing is prohibited altogether. These zones are still open to all other recreational pursuits - snorkelling, scuba, boating and ecotourism - and make up on average about a fifth of the total park area.

http://nqr.farmonline.com.au/news_daily.asp?ag_id=47737



Surgeon appointed to lead new vet school in SA

Monday, 31 December 2007

The University of Adelaide has appointed orthopaedic research and specialist vet surgeon Professor Gail Anderson as Head of its new School of Veterinary Science.

Professor Anderson is currently professor of companion animal surgery at the University of Queensland and hospital director of UQ's veterinary teaching hospital and clinic. The highly qualified Professor Anderson gained her Bachelor of Veterinary Science with honours from the University of Melbourne, has a Master of Science (comparative orthopaedics) from Ontario Veterinary College and a Phd (bone cell biology) from the University of Toronto.

And she holds the distinction of being the first Australian woman to attain diplomate status from the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.

"Professor Anderson is an ideal appointment to head the University of Adelaide's - and the State's - first School of Veterinary Science," vice-chancellor and president James McWha said.

"Her emphasis on and understanding of research will place our vet school in good stead for the future.

"In order to service the needs of South Australia and its industries, research will play a major role and will help to set our school apart."

The new vet school, based at the university's Roseworthy campus, will have its first intake of 40 students in 2008.

Entry to the new school has been popular, with the university so far receiving 168 first-preference applications for the 40 places.

Adelaide's vet program, which consists of an undergraduate pre-veterinary degree and a postgraduate clinical program, will include large animal production, aquaculture, biosecurity and equine studies.

SOURCE: *Stock Journal*, SA's weekly rural newspaper, posting news updates on *FarmOnline*.

http://www.sitnews.us/LaineWelch/123107_fish_factor.html



Fish Factor

Seafood industry highlights from 2007

By Laine Welch

December 31, 2007
Monday AM

Looking back at past 'fish retrospectives' I found it striking that the same introduction written five years ago still applies today:

"Commercial fishing in Alaska remains a vibrant industry that each year provides more than half of our nation's seafood. Alaska's fish stocks are the envy of other countries around the world, and its management programs are regarded as a model for sustainability."
What more needs to be said?

Here is a sampler of Alaska seafood industry highlights from 2007, in no particular order or priority, followed by my annual picks of top fish stories:

The Alaska "brand" became a poster child for seafood healthfulness and purity at a time when food contaminants, especially from China made world headlines.

"Wild" became a bigger draw than "organic" according to national consumer surveys. Nearly 40 percent of Americans said they stopped buying particular foods in response to safety concerns, compared to 9 percent in 2005.

Omega 3 fatty acids became the hottest food additive, and scientists said omegas from wild fish is best.

Alaska's salmon harvest produced 212 million fish, making it the 4th largest catch on record. The dockside fishery value of \$374 million is an increase of \$28 million from 2006.

Prices also were up for salmon fishing permits across the state.

The world's first solar powered salmon fishery operated all summer at Lummi Island, WA. Reef netters used solar panels to charge batteries that run the fishing gear.

Alaska halibut prices started out in March at \$5/lb in major ports and remained in 'nose bleed' range for the eight month season. Halibut quota shares in prime areas (Central Gulf) were fetching \$27 per pound and could go higher, brokers said.

Bering Sea red king crab quota shares were on the board at \$28-\$30 per pound; snow crab was closer to \$10.

Dutch Harbor held onto its ranking as the nation's #1 port for the 18th year in a row. Kodiak remained at 4th place.

Construction began on a new, ultra modern marine facility at Dutch Harbor, replacing docks and buildings that date back to World War II.

Another groundbreaking at Ketchikan saw the start of the Oceans Alaska Marine Science Center, which aims to expand Alaska shellfish growing into a global industry.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear Exxon's final appeal of the \$2.5 billion punitive damages award from the 1989 Prince William Sound oil spill. A hearing is set for mid-February.

Federal policy makers advanced plans to expand a U.S. 'open ocean' aquaculture industry in waters from three to 200 miles from shore. Alaska was granted an "opt out" option.

The U.S. had an \$8 billion seafood trade deficit, and imported 80 percent of its seafood, mostly from foreign fish farms.

Impacts of global warming on Alaska fisheries leaped to the forefront: pollock and snow crab heading north to colder waters; crustacean shells dissolving from ocean acids. The program 'Deadliest Catch' became Discovery Channel's most popular show ever, giving rock star status to the Bering Sea crab fisheries.

Japanese (and Alaska) giants Maruha and Nichiro merged to form one of the world's largest seafood companies.

The purchase of Icicle Seafoods by San Francisco-based private equity firm Fox Paine III was regarded by many as a sign of confidence in Alaska's seafood industry.

Ballot initiatives, petitions and proposed laws were launched as means to block development of the huge Pebble Mine near Bristol Bay.

President Bush lifted the ban on oil and gas drilling in Bristol Bay and the eastern Bering Sea; first lease bids are set for 2010.

FBI raids and subpoenas launched widespread investigations of 'fishy' political favors.

The average age of Alaska commercial fishermen was 47. Nearly 40 percent were non-residents.

Alaska's seafood industry continued to provide more jobs than oil and gas, mining, agriculture and forestry combined.

18th Annual Fish Picks

Best 'fish crat': Denby Lloyd, ADF&G Commissioner

Best friend to the environment fish story: Marine Conservation Alliance marine debris clean up program

Scariest fish story: ocean acidification

Biggest Fish Folly: Sig Hansen, skipper of the 'crabber *Northwestern* on *Deadliest Catch*', promoting Russian king crab

Best fish fast track: The state pushing for a quicker and closer look at the Bering Sea crab ratz plan

Best new fish-product: bio-LEDs made from salmon sperm DNA

Best new fish term: Co-products, instead of by-products (credit Peter Bechtel/UAF)

Baddest fish attitude: FBI investigations into 'fishy' business and political favors

Fond fish farewell: Dr. Bill Hogarth, departing as head of NOAA Fisheries

Most promising fish story: The Alaska king crab enhancement project, which aims to revitalize stocks at Kodiak and St. Paul

Best fish partnership: ADF&G, UAA/UAF and Sea Grant for efforts to recruit young Alaskans into fishery science and management careers

Best 'eat fish' ambassadors: Patty Luckhurst of Dillingham, Chris Sannito of Kodiak, Genuine Alaska Pollock Producers for getting top quality fish into school lunch programs.

Best fishing reality teaching tool: Former Bering Sea crabber *Aleutian Ballad*, now launching pots for tourists at Ketchikan

Best new Alaska salmon customer: Global food aid programs, thanks to Bruce Schactler and ASMI

Best 'give credit where it's due' fish story: Sen. Lisa Murkowski for championing tax relief for 'oiled' Exxon plaintiffs; Senator Ted Stevens for getting fishermen included in the US Farm Bill.

Best fish story of the year: Projects by the State and the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference to get better labor data for seafood harvesters.

Kodiak-based Laine Welch has been reporting news of Alaska's seafood industry for print and radio for 20 years. Fish Factor appears in 15 newspapers and websites. Laine's Fish Radio programs air daily on more than 25 stations across Alaska.

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Stories In The News

Ketchikan, Alaska



<http://www.southcoasttoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080101/OPINION/801010362>

YOUR VIEW: Fishery rebuilding goals should be revised, not endlessly delayed

By **MICHAEL S. FLAHERTY**

Mr. Flaherty, a recreational fisherman, lives in Wareham.

January 01, 2008 6:00 AM

In the Dec. 1 issue of The Standard-Times, Congressman Barney Frank explained his position on why he is co-sponsoring the "Flexibility in Rebuilding American Fisheries Act" (HR 4087), which was introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Walter Jones, R-N.C.

Congressman Frank defended the fact that the Jones bill would add yet another four more exceptions to current law in order to extend the timetables needed to rebuild weakened fish stocks. On the other hand, he insisted that he is not in favor of "open-ended" time frames for fishery rebuilding plans.

With all due respect to Congressman Frank, the wording of HR 4087 is so ambiguous that it would be nearly impossible to implement finite time frames for any fishery rebuilding schedule if it passed.

Consider the example of Georges Bank Cod. Due to the biology of that stock, under current law the rebuilding plan was legally allowed to be extended twice beyond the standard 10-year limit to 20 years. Clearly, this demonstrates that the

exceptions currently written into the law already allow a great deal of flexibility when the science, not politics, indicates it is needed.

Under the Jones bill, however, care to guess what would be the new maximum time legally allowed for cod to rebuild? It is a good question. Unfortunately, nobody is able to answer it, including Congressman Frank's own office when I asked them.

Surprisingly, Congressman Frank isn't the only proponent of the Jones bill who hasn't done the math. I also asked the Garden State Seafood Association. They are a major supporter of the Jones bill, but they too could not answer this fundamentally important question.

Finally, I checked with the National Marine Fisheries Service. NMFS is the federal agency ultimately tasked with implementing fishery management plans. They took a look at the bill and concluded that they, too, could not estimate what the Jones bill would do to rebuilding schedules because it is, in their words, "rather broad."

Congressman Frank also pondered, "If the same rebuilding targets can be met in, say, 13 years instead of 10, without compromising the ultimate rebuilding goal, who is hurt?" Interestingly, this is precisely what was done with summer flounder with a special exception written into the law for that species last year. Only one year later and all but two states have overfished their quota for summer flounder yet again. Predictably, industry groups are now complaining that the special extension still did not provide enough time. Now they are demanding for the passage of the Jones bill to allow the rebuilding period to be extended further still, with literally no end in sight.

Many fishermen have called the rebuilding target itself for summer flounder "unrealistic." The Recreational Fishing Alliance, another major organization lobbying for the passage of the Jones bill, has gone so far as to claim that the target for summer flounder is actually "unattainable." Think about that for a moment. If the RFA is right, then how on Earth can the bill that they and Congressman Frank are supporting not lead to "open-ended" rebuilding schedules if the rebuilding goal can never be achieved anyway?

Like many issues where politics interferes with science, it makes no sense.

Honestly, the rebuilding target for summer flounder may indeed be unrealistic. That claim does have some merit, which is why I, as a recreational fisherman, cannot support HR 4087. The bill simply does not address that potential flaw in the system at all.

If folks are truly concerned that the rebuilding targets are somehow outdated, obsolete, and impossible to achieve, then a much more responsible and prudent position would be to insist on having fishery managers actually revisit the science originally used to determine the rebuilding targets themselves. In other words, due to impacts from modern society on our marine resources, it may indeed be the case that summer flounder, and other rebuilding species, are already rebuilt to new, lower baselines than were previously acceptable. Accordingly, the targets could be revised to reflect these contemporary realities, presuming that is the case. Naturally, though, fishing capacity would also need to be reduced appropriately to accommodate the lower baselines.

If, however, the current rebuilding targets are validated by a review using the best available science, then fishery managers must finally address the same problems that they have been putting off for years. For example, the dead discard rate of summer flounder in other non-directed commercial fisheries still remains a tremendous waste. In addition, the commercial size limit for summer flounder is a puny 14 inches, at least in Massachusetts. That is barely a fish that is mature enough to spawn once. Managers should consider increasing the minimum size to be more in line with the recreational standard, which is a much more conservative 17.5 inches coupled with a reasonably limited season. This has proven effective in keeping Massachusetts anglers from going over our quota.

During the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act last year, many loopholes were removed that were often used by industry groups to delay the steps necessary to rebuild overfished stocks. I urge Congressman Frank and the industry supporters of HR 4087 to reconsider introducing a whole slew of new ones.