



Austral Summer Games

As this season's JARPA II whale research program progresses, we are busy observing those whose business it is to win media attention through being a nuisance or a menace to crews on the high seas.

Greenpeace is in the Antarctic with one vessel and Sea Shepherd has two. Both organizations are in the spring of their fundraising year, as "saving the whales" is their most lucrative campaign effort. Neither of them is expected to halt the research.

The Greenpeace campaigners aim is to "get between the whales and the harpooners" – so long as they are caught on video. Without the video footage, these acts are worthless since the whalers will carry on harvesting anyway until they meet their quota. The point was even made by Sea Shepherd chief, Paul Watson, who complained on his website recently that Greenpeace only appears to be saving whales for the cameras.

The militant Sea Shepherd may attempt to do physical damage to some research vessels, in a manner similar to last year when the Farley Mowat allegedly contacted and dug a mark with a sharp object into the hull of a Japanese supply ship. But the Farley Mowat has now been stripped of its registry by Belize and is operating as a pirate ship. Several other countries have refused to flag it.

The great hope of both organizations is that film of their exploits may reach world news outlets such as BBC, CNN, Fox, Australian and European news channels. The footage is mainly useful in attracting new funding, and of course, it may all be seen on the websites of these organizations. If no one in world media bites, the websites will be the only venue for their material.

IWMC President Eugene Lapointe said: "These acts of false heroism and fakery in the protest business are dangerous for all involved, and they are counter productive for cetacean conservation efforts."

The International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, or ICRW, is the legal instrument that guides research and management action to be taken by treaty signatories. Article VIII, 1., of the Convention covers scientific research whaling, and states that any treaty member "may grant to any of its nationals a special permit authorizing that national to kill, take and treat whales for purposes of scientific research subject to such restrictions as to number and subject to other conditions as the Contracting Government thinks fit, and the killing, taking, and treating of whales in accordance with the provisions of this Article shall be exempt from the operation of this Convention...."

In addition, Article VIII 2., states that "any whales taken under these special permits shall so far as practicable be processed and the proceeds shall be dealt with in accordance with directions issued by the Government by which the permit was granted."

Meanwhile, Senator Ian Campbell, Australia's combative Environment Minister, has been fired. Most recently, Campbell pledged material

Continued on page 3

In This Issue

Austral Summer Games	Page 1
Editorial -World Wetland Day	Page 2
No One's Buying PETA'S Plastic Pretenses	Page 3
An Inconvenient Truth	Page 4
Seal Problems affect Both Canada and the EU	Page 5

World Wetlands Day

Editorial by Eugene Lapointe



IWMC World Conservation Trust joins thousands of other conservationists in anticipating recognition of the 36th anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands, in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. This year, as World Wetlands Day is celebrated on February 2, the international theme is “Wetlands and Fisheries”.

The Ramsar Convention was an important starting point in recognition of the environmental importance of wetlands, in both coastal and inland forms. Coastal wetlands not only provide buffers against ocean storm surges, but are vital components of fisheries; many fish species spawn there, where the young of succeeding generations are nurtured in a safe environment until such time as the mature fish migrate into the ocean. Inland fisheries also depend on wetlands as a safe haven where biodiversity provides nourishment and the conditions in which each succeeding generation of fish can grow and thrive.

Wetlands have not always been recognized as vital parts of the natural environment. Before humans learned basic biology, we made some terrible mistakes, and often tried to do away with wetlands. They were regarded as uninhabitable, undeveloped land that “needs improvement” in order to be converted into a drained, dry and usable environment.

Over the millennia this perception of wetlands did much damage to these reservoirs of diverse natural resources. Although it took 26 years before there was widespread celebration of the first World Wetlands Day in 1997, there is now a good momentum in this movement. Today there are many wetlands preservation projects in many nations. These reflect the fortunate new attitude of people towards the natural environment upon which we all depend.

This year, the World Wetlands Day slogan is “Fish for Tomorrow”. This reminds us that sustainable management of fish resources depends on careful, science based maintenance of their diverse environments. Both wild fisheries and aquaculture facilities are important to international food security. Our conservation of wetlands is a vital component in achieving the security of food resources for our children, and for the generations that follow us. Widespread communication about the values and vision inherent in World Wetlands Day is important, because the world’s citizens need to be aware of the ongoing importance of wetlands to our future.

IWMC World Conservation Trust, urges all nations blessed with wetlands to celebrate World Wetlands Day through promotion of this year’s Fish for Tomorrow theme, as an important national vision for a healthy and secure future ■



Published by IWMC World Conservation Trust, 3 Passage Montriond, 1006 Lausanne, Switzerland. Distributed free every month to supporters of IWMC and the World Conservation Trust Foundation. Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Janice Henke. Advertising enquiries, subscription requests, article submissions, letters and comments should be sent to iwmc@iwmc.org. Please include name, email address and organization in all correspondence. Copyright © 2006 IWMC World Conservation Trust.

Continued from page 1

support to Sea Shepherd, allowing it to use an Australian Antarctic base in an emergency as it carries out illegal and dangerous activities against Japanese whaling ships (see eNews, December 2006, "Australia's Environment Minister Goes Over to the Dark Side"). Campbell also admitted telephoning Watson and wishing him well.

Eugene Lapointe said: "Last month I asked Australia to respond to Campbell's outrageous support for Sea Shepherd. We should all be happy to see that Australia has acted decisively against this public disrespect for international law." ■

No One's Buying PETA'S Plastic Pretenses

PETA activists have tried to crash a fashion show in Hong Kong, only to be carried off stage by security guards before they could disrupt the event. Dressing as "cave men" and screaming that modern people "don't need fur" to keep warm, they instead advocated the use of synthetics.

However, it is fur that is increasingly being touted as a green product. The public and media are awakening to the fact that "fake" items are produced from a petroleum and chemical base and therefore have their own environmental issues.

Fur is now in greater demand than ever because it is beautiful, clean, renewable, warm to wear,



and the use of it is sustainable and therefore environmentally friendly in a way that synthetics never can be. Real people, it seems, wear real fur and feel good about it. ■



Who says you're a fisherman, not a tour guide?

We do.

While you're busy earning your livelihood, the future of fisheries is being decided in international meetings.

Guess what some environmentalists say you could be doing instead of fishing?

We promote the sustainable use of wildlife worldwide.



WORLD CONSERVATION TRUST FOUNDATION

Sensible Conservation
www.conservingwildlife.org

An Inconvenient Truth

Regardless of the hype promoted by climate campaigners, polar bears are not the “mine canaries” they have been claimed to be; instead of suffering population loss, the big beasts are thriving more now than in the past fifty years. This news comes from one of Canada’s most active environmental scientists.

Dr. Mitch Taylor, Nunavut’s polar bear biologist, is recognized as a leading world expert on the creature. Dr. Taylor’s research has led him to two conclusions; that those Arctic nations which contain the bears have been managing them successfully since an international agreement back in 1973, and that both the bears and their supporting environments are adapting and responding well to the new conditions of warmer climate.

Lorne Gunter, writer for the Edmonton Journal, has done a fine job of highlighting this information. Contrary to the claims of the global warming crowd, polar bears are more numerous now than at any time in the past fifty years; the world population is now estimated at some 22,000, while fifty years ago there were “just 8,000 to 10,000”. Lorne

Gunter quotes Taylor and other bear specialists and repeats their message that although bear populations are known for cyclical ups and downs, the long-term trend has been one of growth rather than decline.

It is worth noting that the polar bear is a relatively old species, and that its abundance follows the abundance of its major prey, various seal species, which have also increased in the past half century. The last ice age has come and gone without causing the extinction of this creature, which apparently adapts adequately to changes in its environment.

At this time the polar bear is neither threatened nor endangered, despite the claims of those who wish to use it as an exhibition of an up-coming man-made climatic disaster. Critics are already saying that the decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to recommend listing the polar bear as endangered has more to do with politics than science.

Bear with us. As Dr. Taylor has pointed out, “Polar bears have persisted through many similar climate cycles.” Don’t panic yet! ■



WORK BOAT WORLD

now incorporating **FISHING BOAT WORLD**

SUBSCRIBE and SAVE

With the world’s leading international small ship magazine
Receive two **FREE** issues of WORK BOAT WORLD



To SUBSCRIBE or FIND OUT MORE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.baird.com.au or Email: marinfo@baird.com.au



The Netherlands and the Sea
THE NETHERLANDS' LEADING MARITIME EXPORTERS PROFILED

- 2006: 2006 and beyond developments
- 2006: 2006 and beyond developments
- 2006: 2006 and beyond developments
- 2006: 2006 and beyond developments
- 2006: 2006 and beyond developments

Seal Problems affect Both Canada and the EU

At a time when the European Union is contemplating ways it can object to the Canadian harp seal harvest, examining the possibility of new bans on seal or fish products, it has been struck by a seal problem of its own.

Anti-hunt organizers on the continent have been active in convincing the Commission that any tolerance for Canada's seal harvest would be politically costly. But in southern Finland an aquaculture disaster has occurred in which some nine tons of rainbow trout in farm pens off the coast have been devoured by gray seals.



Gray seals are large, ferocious animals with voracious appetites. They have been known to raid other aquaculture facilities where these are located in their range. This latest loss has occurred in the last few weeks, and it is thought that because of the mild winter, the seals have stayed around the coast instead of seeking other habitats. The fish pens are close to the coast.

The catastrophic loss has been experienced by the Sandvikin Lohi Company, which also has to bear the cost of solid waste disposal of the fish remains. Fish were raised in tanks that are surrounded by nets. The seals reportedly mauled the fish through the protective netting, doing their damage to both the product and the facility. The waste disposal charge was EUR 1,100, and the value of lost fish was EUR 31,500.

Under EU rules, fishermen are paid compensation for seal damage to their nets but are not paid for losses in fish. Unfortunately for fish farmers, however, there is no compensation paid to them for either net damage or fish loss. For a brief period in 2000/2001, the European Commission

paid fishermen for seal damage and then ceased this policy. It was apparently happening too often and was becoming too costly.

Fishermen's organizations are currently discussing the situation with the Commission, with expectations of a decision by spring. Text of these negotiations is not known, but the long range perspective is that unless gray seals are managed by people, these problems will increase.

Sustainable use of seals has not been practiced in recent decades in Europe. Thanks to the anti-seal-hunting sentiment first launched in 1983 by IFAW's Brian Davies, there is no tolerance for seal hunting for any reason.

Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC World Conservation Trust, is reminding colleagues in Europe that adaptation to changing environmental conditions is a constant requirement for success on this planet. He said: "Those who produce our food supply are too important to us all to be disregarded in this matter. We wish fishermen and fish farmers in the EU all the best in this latest challenge." ■