

Sustainable eNews

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Promoting Sustainable Use

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IWMC
World Conservation Trust

Welcome to the 163rd Party to CITES

Albania has deposited its instrument of accession to CITES on 30 April 2003 and will so become the 163rd Party to CITES on 25 September 2003.

Editorial: EXIT IWC

By Eugène Lapointe

When Socrates was accused of "corrupting" Athenian youth and thereby being guilty of treason against the state, he responded that he was ipso facto innocent – a sane man does not work against his own interests and, as an Athenian citizen, he would never have worked to undermine his own interests. The teacher of Plato was a great philosopher but a lousy politician. Governments and individual politicians alike, all too often, work to sabotage their own professed interests and goals in the pathetic quest for short-term PR gain and favorable headlines.

... They have worked double overtime to encourage the sustainable use camp to exit the IWC ...

Consider the behavior of the lead anti-whaling nations: U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Italy etc. here at the IWC over the past four days. They have routinely trumpeted their commitment to "saving" the cetacean (whether or not he needs it). However, they have, simultaneously, worked double overtime to encourage the sustainable use camp to exit the IWC and establish an alternative pro-whaling forum that will, quite speedily, promulgate a Revised Management Scheme for the regulated harvesting of abundant whale species (indeed, the scheme is all but ready to be promulgated) and recommence commercial whaling.

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And what will the US, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Italy etc. be able to do to demonstrate their outrage when this development becomes reality? Precisely nothing.

By overplaying their hand and demonstrating their intention to transform the IWC into a purely "conservation" institution which never again would allow significant interaction between humans and whales, the anti-use countries placed the sustainable use countries in a quandary from which they have only one escape – the clearly marked "EXIT".

If they stay in the IWC, they condemn themselves to watching several more years of efforts to: undermine the text of the ICRW; exclude pro-use nations from the voting rolls all the while disbursing thousands of dollars in air travel to discuss the minutiae of a revised Management Scheme (RMS) that many of the negotiators have zero intention of ever implementing.

... The NGOs may control the IWC but the IWC will control nothing ...

Surely, a much more sensible course – indeed, the only course – for them would be to exit the IWC and establish their pro-use sustainable whaling forum. Given the extensive – indeed too extensive – work that

has gone into the RMS already, that scheme can be promulgated virtually overnight and the organization can begin to issue quotas for the regulated harvest of plentiful cetacean species.

What input into and control over this process will US, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Italy etc. have over this process? Zero. To what extent will they be able to impact the process, to alter the RMS and possibly lower catch quotas of some species – they will have no such capability.

In effect, by their intransigence and their clumsiness, anti-whaling nations have handed over the future management of the world's cetacean population to others. By voting for the Berlin resolution and allowing outside money to begin to flow into the IWC, they probably felt that they were handing over the organization to their friends in the NGO's. In the event, the NGO's may control the IWC but the IWC will control nothing. Responsibility for management of the world's whale populations will pass to those sustainable use nations who are, alone, truly interested in scientific management.

In the meantime, the rump of the IWC can meet each year in a pleasant venue and discuss how much they like whales.

Nat Kwansa - Ideal Activist Inspiration to Madagascar and the World

Very often, activism is thought of as a negative social movement, one that has goals of preventing people from carrying out traditional activities while they pursue their life work. In contrast to this, there is a very positive kind of activism being carried out by a visionary man in an out-of-the-way place away from the mainstream modern world.

Nat Kwansa believes in the complementary nature of traditional healing practices and modern medicine, and this makes him unique. In addition, his advocacy includes encouraging the sustainable use of native habitat by Madagascar healers to continue their craft and at the same time, to keep the nation's habitats from disappearing. A recent story by CNN outlined the basics of Kwansa's vision: Madagascar's people have long depended on thousands of native plants as the source of practical remedies. These plants are well known by traditional healers, who go out into the bush to extract them, one by one, from where they are growing. These people are not cutting down wide swaths of timber. They are finding and picking parts (leaves, seeds, nuts, fruits, bark, roots) of certain plants and leaving the source to continue its growth.



In each of the communities of southwestern Madagascar are outdoor markets, where the stalls of vendors line the narrow streets. Here are the pharmacies of native medicine. One who has a particular ailment may go to the vendor, describe the problem, and buy a cure. Nat Kwansa has a history of encouraging the cooperation of modern medical practitioners with traditional healers. The result is of great benefit both to science, and to the people whom he loves. There should not have to be a choice between "native" and modern healers. The two have learned to work together in Madagascar for the benefit of public health and the environment.

The world's huge multinational pharmaceutical corporations have come to appreciate the wealth of biodiversity in tropical and other un-timbered forests, and in some countries, such as Costa Rica, millions of dollars have been

invested in infrastructure and research, in order to find those compounds that can be used to produce "wonder drugs" from plants, insects, fungi, and other substances. The involvement of big business has always brought forth the objection of another kind of traditional practitioner - the professional environmental activist. Such professionals invariably want to lock up forest resources inside a "fence" of prohibitions against use. Their goal is to "save biodiversity from profit seekers". This tactic and the accompanying rhetoric have not often worked for the benefit of either forests or the people who depend upon them. It appears that commercial use of resources does not have to be damaging, despite the claims of modern activism.

Nat Kwansa of Madagascar encourages the sustainable use of forest resources for people whose lives, livelihoods, and culture are intricately interwoven with them. He feels that there should be respect for traditional healers and recognition of their real contribution of knowledge to the world, that the forests should continue to be used in this manner, and that the modern logging practices of outsiders would destroy an entire ecosystem of human and forest interdependence. IWMC applauds Nat Kwansa and his vision of melding the traditional medical knowledge of Madagascar with modern medicine and with sustainable forest practices. Kwansa's visionary activism depends on faith in people, and on the conviction that their forest resources should be maintained forever through their own efforts, and for their own sustainable future. Nat Kwansa should be recognized as a local hero who has a global conservation vision and ethic.

IWC offended by Extremism

The IWC has rightly and unanimously condemned the publication ECO, where names such as WWF, IFAW, HSUS, EIA, EII, Greenpeace appear, for publishing offensive and racist material about Caribbean nations and Japan. All signatories to ECO were requested to apologize to the IWC and ordered not to publish anymore during the IWC55, to the risk of losing their accreditation. ECO's animal rights backers can relax in the knowledge that it is they who will be calling the shots in the future, following the passing of the Berlin Initiative on Monday.

If the accusations are recycled at subsequent IWC meetings, ECO will be able to tell the Commission to take a hike or risk losing its Conservation Committee funding. That is what happens when you hand over power to unaccountable extremists.

Don't expect to see any apologies on the web sites or other fundraising material of the animal rights groups. And don't expect to learn that the foundations bankrolling the campaigners have any feelings of remorse either. Extremism has no conscience.

Nukes for the North Sea The UK's Global Gift

The UK believes in recycling and reprocessing those products that are the waste remains of manufacturing and development in modern society. Among those materials that are reprocessed are nuclear wastes from power generating plants. Where to put it and what to do with it for a final solution? The British government no longer allows the reprocessing plant at Cumbria, in the northwest of England, to store nuclear waste materials on land. The Sella field plant managers, in compliance with government regulations, have for years been taking the liquid that contains Technetium 99 out to sea, and dumping it there. Down the drain. Finished. Until the Gulf Stream takes the stuff north, past the Irish coast, on up to the North Sea and the Lofoton Islands, which



are just off the west coast of Norway, where 25,000 people live by commercial fishing.

Norwegians now complain that radioactive build-up in fish, seaweed, and other seafood, is potentially dangerous to human health, and certainly hazardous for the future of the north Atlantic fishing industry. In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency has determined that the ingestion of Technetium 99 results in its deposit in many organs of the body, including the liver and the thyroid, but that the element is then excreted at a known rate - half is excreted within 60 hours, and half of the remainder is excreted within the next 60 hours, and so on, until the T 99 is all gone. Until one consumes some more in the next meal, or drinks contaminated water. Long term impact of T 99 on the body is not known, but we know it can't be good, or the Brits would have found ways to take care of it on their own soil.

Scientists in the UK feel the stuff should not be stored on land. They have found that some old liquid storage tanks that do contain the stuff, have been leaking, and that a thorough clean up of the surrounding area is mandatory. Enraged Norwegians, such as Parliamentarian Steinar Bastesen, leader of the Norwegian Coastal Peoples Party, feel that the British are being irresponsible and unreasonable about the matter of dumping any level of nuclear waste at sea. In an interview with the BBC, Bastesen remarked that if the British (who have been down playing the danger from T 99) feel it is safe, then they should bury it on their own land, or find some other way to store it there. "If this waste isn't dangerous, they can eat it themselves", said the Norwegian, himself a former whaler and fisherman.

The impact of dumping Technetium 99 at sea is not just the proven biological effects on fish, plants, and humans. The concept of entire ecosystems being contaminated with radioactive waste is a significant threat to the entire global fish trade. Other countries such as China, Japan, Taiwan, and of course, the many members of the EU, are hearing

concerns voiced by their citizens about import regulations on seafood possibly being too lenient. The thought of health department inspectors checking samples of imported fish with Geiger counters is enough to adversely affect the world market, and surely, the Norwegians and other North Sea producers are feeling very vulnerable. Fish are their livelihood. The sea is their field, and it continues to be fouled by their neighbor.

IWMC urges that the UK authorities immediately halt the dumping of Technetium 99 and any other radioactive materials at sea. It is unconscionably irresponsible, sets a terrible precedent, and has already done damage that may never be remedied. T 99 has a half-life of 212,000 years and it will never in our lifetime disappear. The Brits have set a date of 2012 to close the Sellafield reprocessing plant, and to have new laws about this matter in place by 2020. The world should not have to wait another minute for remedial action that will end this ongoing crime against the environment and all who live in it.

Fishing seen by the Pew Charitable Trust

Reproduction of an Op-ed from New Bedford, Mass. and submitted to The Standard Times June 10, 2003

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Sarah Martineau's well-written article entitled, "Oceans In Bad Shape." The Pew Ocean Commission report is nothing less than what would be expected from an organization that is dedicated to funding radical environmental lawsuits and adept at planting fabricated crisis messages into the mainstream media.

The article states "Ocean conservationists applauded the report." The spokeswoman for

the Environmental Defense Fund is "optimistic." Why wouldn't they be elated? According to Pew's Web site, Environmental Defense Fund received \$3.3 million from the Pew Charitable Trusts. Oceana, well-known in the Northeast for the frivolous fishery lawsuits that have consumed untold taxpayers' dollars and made lives miserable for hard-working lobster and ground fishermen, received \$10 million. Another litigious group, Earth Justice, received \$9.79 million.

The anti-commercial fishing list goes on and on. Grassroots organizations; not really! Much of the environmental industry roots, including aquariums, have struck oil with the Pew Charitable Trust. The trust has \$280 million in annual grants to push their agenda.

Note from the Editor: "Do not be surprised if the Pew Charitable Trust is called upon to 'help' the IWC Conservation Committee..."

Intrigue in Papua New Guinea Trouble in the Forests

When the World Bank funds a development project, it deals with governments, and in so doing, signals that those governments and their traditional ways of doing business are legitimate. Why, then, would the people of Papua New Guinea, through their environmentally concerned non-governmental organizations, be objecting to any mention of World Bank support for forest development projects? Don't they need help from forestry experts in the safe extraction of timber and other forest products? Don't they appreciate the years of effort that the World Wide Fund for Nature has put in to further ensure that forest development will be done for the good of the people and their resources?

Something is very wrong here, and the WWF has experienced some obviously severe embarrassment in the case of its apparent attempts to cover up the involvement of the World Bank in its Papua New Guinea forest resources development project. The country's terrain is very rugged and infrastructure has been difficult to develop because of the cost of roads and other facilities. Most of the country is very rural in character, and its forest tracts are the third largest in the world. Forests are the common property of the population, who feel that they

are vital to food security and cultural maintenance.

In 2002, local environmental organizations held vigorous protests against the concept of "land mobilization" - which to them meant that the government would control use of forest resources. A government force was dispatched to put down the demonstrations, and five Papuans were killed.

According to the Environmental News Service, rural Papuans object to the fact and degree of government corruption that has been

responsible for poor forestry practices in the country. Logging companies have looted the forests, causing great environmental damage, and government officials have been accused of looking the other way, and allegedly, taking bribes to do so. When the WWF wished to convene

a multinational forestry summit that would have included Papuan government officials, it tried to keep secret the fact that the summit would have been largely funded by the World Bank. Papuan environmentalist NGOs were outraged that their corrupt officials would have been honored by invitation to be a part of such a gathering, and outraged that the WWF had tried to keep secret the fact of World Bank involvement that would legitimize those corrupt officials.



The people of this troubled nation deserve transparency on the part of their government in all matters, and on the part of any agency such as the WWF, that purports to "help" them in true conservation of their natural resources. If it is true that the WWF knew of the corruption of Papuan government officials, and ignored this in the organization process of the forest summit, then their reputation is deservedly tarnished, world wide. IWMC is a proponent of open and transparent process for all nations, and especially in the case of

conservation matters. The natural resources of each nation must be conserved for and by its citizens, in order that future generations may live decent lives in richly sustained, productive environments. If WWF truly covered up its proposal for funding from the World Bank, in order to attract funding despite knowledge of corruption, then all its other projects should be scrutinized before being approved anywhere.

Announcements

Aug. 25-29, 2003 Praga 2003 Landscape and Water Conference, Czech Republic.
For further information, please contact nemec@nature.cy

Sept. 19-21, 2003 8th Annual Elephant Research and Conservation Symposium, Colombo, Sri Lanka. For further information, please contact romalijj@eureka.lk or www.slwcs.org/sherc

Aug. 18-21 CITES Animals Committee Meeting, Geneva.

IWMC Authors Forum on IWMC.org

Our IWMC.ORG FORUM features an excellent article by Jorgen V. Jensen "Wildlife Management from a Hunter's Point of View". This article may be viewed by going to:

<http://www.iwmc.org/sustain/IWMC-Forum/JorgenJensen>

Save the Swamps - Neutralize the Nutria

What do Louisiana's murky swamps and bayous have in common with New Zealand's high and dry forests? The answer is that both were invaded by a pest animal that was originally purposefully imported and then became a nuisance and a menace to the natural environment. Will people ever learn? We think so, because in each case, the people have taken action to rid their land of the creature that should never have been brought there. New Zealanders have taken firm steps to eradicate the brushy tailed opossum, brought to them from Australia. They are trapping the creature for its fur, making high fashion clothing from the stuff, and saving their native vegetation and wildlife habitat from the possum, which has been eating its way through every bit of brush in the country.

In Louisiana, the culprit species is the nutria, an unlovely rodent between the size of a large muskrat and an average to large beaver. Nutria were originally imported from South America by those who felt they could be profitably raised for their fur. When they escaped their pens and began eating their way through the swamps, environmental damage came quickly. Nutria ate the water vegetation down to the roots, and the habitat changed from productive swamp for fish, wildlife and waterfowl, to muddy, empty lakes. The swamps had been a barrier for drier land in times of hurricanes, but when they were removed, floods resulted. Those gulf fish species that came into the swamps to spawn, were lost when the swamps were eaten up by the nutria. An entire ecosystem needed fixing.



Louisiana state officials and the US Congress agreed on a plan to solve this nutria nemesis. Bounties for nutria are now being paid to trappers, from state and federal funding. The goal is to encourage trappers to remove as many of the animals as possible in order to conserve the swamp environments of coastal Louisiana. Because the fur market is depressed, trappers did not feel that trapping these animals was worth their time. The Louisiana state nutria control program pays approved trappers \$4 each for nutria tails. If the trapper can in addition, sell the pelts and then also sell the meat to alligator farmers, he stands to make a profit from trapping nutria.

The effort is a vital conservation tool. Renewed swamplands help to protect the rest of the coastal environment. This benefits fish and waterfowl, people's homes, roads and farms, and native beaver, fish

and muskrats. The nutria trapping program benefits the local economy and gives hope to Louisiana's citizens that there is a viable future for them, their communities and their children.

IWMC applauds the courage and foresight of those in Louisiana and the US Congress who have shrugged off the political fall-out from activist organizations and their vigorous anti-trapping campaigns. We appreciate the irony of the situation: Those who once profited immensely from opposition to trapping in the name of humane behavior and environmental harmony, are now widely seen as obstructing the process of environmental healing.

Finding Nemo - Making Vegans A "Fish have Faces, Family Ties, & Feelings" Message

The summer 2003 Disney/Pixar animated film is advertised as wildly funny, and it has a few such moments. On opening weekend in our area, all three afternoon and evening showings were sold out before the beginning of the first one. Parents and disappointed kids were seen sadly walking back to their cars, having stood in line for nothing, because when they approached the window, the sad "Sold Out" news became apparent. By the middle of the week, the lines were gone and one could pick a convenient, after-school time to go. The six-year-old found it somewhat entertaining, somewhat funny in spots, and very, very loud. The graphics were impressive, and they and the noises were pretty scary for anyone under six years old, so keep that in mind if younger kids might be included in the theater party.

Here are some of the messages that the film makes explicit: Fish, like people, love their children and speak with them, protect them, play with them, and take them to school, where they play with a diverse fish population. Fish have faces that are actually quite human. Bad big fish eat up smaller fish, destroying families and scaring everyone. Bad people catch fish for aquariums, which are like jails. The fish in them wish they could get out and go back to the friendly ocean with their families. Bad human children unwittingly kill fish by shaking them in their plastic carry bags. Bad people use purse seine nets to catch schools of fish, which are terrified and try to escape out the bottom.

Some big fish are trying to be good. They have a support group to encourage them to quit eating the poor smaller fish. The support group mimics Alcoholics Anonymous. Its motto is, "Fish are our friends, not our food".

When Nemo, a clown fish, manages to escape from the bad aquarium in the dentist's office, he goes through the Sydney, Australia sewer system which empties into the sea, where he is ultimately reunited with his father. It is very touching to see how much they love each other. Heroes in the film include a humpback whale, a few good (non-fish eating) sharks, a dim witted female reef fish, a non-fish-eating pelican, and a few unfortunate aquarium inmates. Some sea turtles and their happy turtle children add a light touch.

If you are a vegan, and want your children to follow your example, this film is for you. If you are not, and you want your children to enjoy aquaria, zoos, meat, and fish as food fit for humans, then you will not appreciate this blatantly message-laden excuse for innocent entertainment. Finding Nemo is as agenda-driven a movie as the Disney/Pixar people could possibly create. It is advertised as being very humorous, very light, and fit for little children. It comes off as graphically impressive, loud and scary, and will drive children away from choosing fish as food, or as educational exhibits, by instilling kids with lasting guilt for consuming or imprisoning them. Our advice regarding this film: Don't swallow this bait. It leaves a very bitter taste.

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IWMC publishes the Sustainable eNews newsletter on a monthly basis as a free service to the sustainable use community. Please share it with others who may be interested in these issues. We welcome any short stories you might want to contribute and would like to remind you that archived copies of the Sustainable eNews are available online at:

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IWMC World Conservation Trust

A global voice for sustainable use of the earth's resources and the preservation of the cultures and traditions that depend upon them.

