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It is with great sadness and a feeling of profound loss that we wish to remember and salute our friend Ronnie Morris in this month's edition of Feike News. Who is going to write about the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in Business Report like only Ronnie could?

We remember and salute Ronnie with our selection of thought provoking and we hope controversial articles that we expect will inspire discussion and debate.

In particular, we take a closer look at three highly topical issues. The first concerns the MSC certification of South Africa's hake trawl fisheries. The MSC recently completed its re-assessment of the fisheries. Feike News tries to understand why South African hake is unable to command premium prices on

the EU market despite the eco-label while South African abalone has successfully positioned itself as the second most valuable abalone product on the Chinese and Hong Kong markets.

We also try and understand a recent article by Marine and Coastal Management's DDG where he tries to explain why the Marine Living Resources Fund is for a second time under his stewardship in trouble. Is it a conspiracy of the evil empire, bad luck or simply bad management? Feike News concludes by noting the need for the establishment recently of the "Fishing Desk" by trade unions and fishing NGO's but we question whether the calls by the Fishing Desk for privileged access to current allocated wild quotas is wise and sustainable. We do not believe it is but suggest that coastal communities can be sustained through alternative and long term initiatives that are ecologically and socio-economically sustainable.

Many subscribers of Feike News and regular visitors to the Feike website (www.feike.co.za) will have noticed that we have updated and restructured the site to ensure that it remains relevant. Should you require data or information on natural resource management in South Africa or globally, please do not hesitate to contact Feike.



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1. TRANSBOUNDARY MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Ecosystems and their wildlife do not recognise political boundaries. Therefore, in many cases, ecosystem management must take trans-boundary conservation into account.

The 1999 SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement defines a trans-frontier conservation area (TFCA) as "the area or component of a large ecological region that straddles the boundaries of two or more countries, encompassing one or more protected areas as well as multiple resource use areas". The underlying principle of TFCA's is to promote collaboration in the management of shared natural resources along international boundaries.

A TFCA becomes a trans-frontier park once an international treaty establishing the park has been signed. It denotes cooperation in the management of contiguous protected areas.

Collaboration in managing shared natural resources complements the goals and objectives of various international conservation conventions and can be used as vehicles for advancing regional economic integration while promoting peace and stability.

A trans-boundary protected area can also contribute to a culture of peace and cooperation between nations. Trans-boundary protected areas can play the following geopolitical roles:

- Acting as a symbol of ongoing cooperation between nations with a history of peace;
- Creating an entry point for discussions between neighbouring countries that may be deeply divided over economic, social, environmental, or other interests;
- Increasing security and control over resources in border areas so that their rightful owners can benefit from them;
- Aiding in post-conflict reconstruction;

Feike Calendar 2008

See Feike's 2008 Calendar on www.feike.co.za. An A3 colour version can be ordered at a cost of R100 (incl of SA Taxes, but excluding postage) by emailing ssonday@feike.co.za.

We Salute Ronnie Morris

It was profound shock and sadness that we at Feike learnt of the passing Ronnie Morris on 12 April 2008. Ronnie was an intelligent, committed, insightful and importantly, an independent journalist for the Business Report. Feike's relationship with Ronnie goes back to the days when Feike's Horst Kleinschmidt and Shaheen Moolla worked at Marine and Coastal Management. Ronnie would regularly report on and provide succinct analysis of events unfolding in the fishing and aquaculture industries. He was a subscriber to Feike News and helped break many stories about financial mismanagement at South Africa's Marine and Coastal Management.

Our last memory of Ronnie will be a fierce (yet equally entertaining) discussion we had at the Brass Bell about the merits of the closure of the abalone fishery.

Ronnie, not to worry, this month's edition of Feike News will be issued on time and will be in your mailbox – so don't remind us that month-end is near!

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- Creating shared opportunities for ecotourism and sustainable development ventures on a region-wide scale;
- Developing a rich and resilient web of relationships among protected area managers from the countries involved, other government actors, local and international NGOs, and the international donor community.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, there are at present 227 trans-boundary terrestrial and marine protected areas. Several of these trans-boundary protected areas are designated expressly to further international cooperation and conservation.

Feike has long supported and promoted the establishment of a trans-boundary marine protected area between Namibia and South Africa in the Orange River Cone Area. The MPA would serve to primarily aid in the recovery of hake stocks, which remain in serious trouble in both Namibian and South African waters. It would also serve as a focal marine eco-tourism park.

*The above article is based on an article that appeared in **MPA News** Vol. 9, No. 9 April 2008.*

Saudi Prawn Farm Springs from Coega Pilot Project

Sea Ark, which produces prawns at Coega, stated in April that it had signed a R70-million agreement for the use of its locally developed prawn farming system.

Sea Ark will develop a commercial pilot plant at the existing open-pond prawn farming facility of the Al Faulk Group in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Perfected in South Africa after 15 years of research in the United States and locally, the biosecure technology to be deployed in the Al Faulk pilot project is the same as used by Sea Ark at its Coega facility. Sea Ark Africa is 100% owned by the Bosasa Group of companies. In the March edition of Feike News (www.feike.co.za), we reported on the Mail & Guardian's investigation's into SeaArk.

2. REVITALISING THE ABIDJAN CONVENTION

Feike, together with consultants from Nigeria and Togo, was recently appointed to advise the International Conservation Union (IUCN) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the revitalisation of the Abidjan Convention. In 1981, the countries of west and central Africa adopted the Abidjan Convention in recognition of the environmental uniqueness of the region's coastal and marine environment and the threats to these and the necessity for action. The Abidjan Convention or the "Convention on the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region" and its protocol covers the marine environment, coastal zones and related inland waters falling within the jurisdiction of the States of the Western African Region from Mauritania to South Africa. The Convention came into force in 1984 with 12 countries as signatories. With the addition of South Africa, the Convention now has 22 member States out of which 14 countries¹ have signed or ratified the Convention. The Convention designated Cote d'Ivoire as the Depository and UNEP as the Secretariat.

¹ Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Togo. The remaining countries: Angola, Cape Verde, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe are yet to ratify the Convention.



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At the 2007 Conference of Parties (COP) in Johannesburg, the Contracting Parties to the Convention recognised the dismal performance of the Convention in its 24 years of existence and the significant advantages inherent in having a strong and functioning UNEP Regional Seas Program. Accordingly, the Contracting Parties agreed to adopt measures at a Special Session of Contracting Parties in June 2008 to revitalize the Convention, as well as review its instruments for the promotion of sustainable development in the region within the global context. The Contracting Parties requested the Executive Director of UNEP to support the revitalization process by carrying out a number of activities including studies and consultations to facilitate the revitalization process.

In furtherance of the request of the Contracting Parties, a collaborative programme between UNEP and the IUCN Office in Senegal was set up to support and coordinate the activities for the revitalization of the Abidjan Convention. Feike was appointed to advise on the design of a workable roadmap or Action Plan aimed at revitalizing the Convention. Between 1 April 2008 and 3 April 2008, stakeholders of the Abidjan Convention met in Dakar, Senegal, to discuss and adopt recommendations intended for presentation to and adoption by the Special Session of Contracting Parties to be held in June 2008 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Feike has been specifically mandated to advise on, *inter alia*, –

- The legal, logistical and diplomatic requirements for transferring the Abidjan Convention Secretariat from Nairobi, Kenya, to Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire;
- Mechanisms to recover the desperate financial state of the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund and to return to financial health;
- Suitable changes to the title and text of the Convention to accommodate the various regional and international policy and institutional changes in environmental and ecosystem management since the 1980's;
- Strategic institutional changes so as to reinvigorate interest in and implementation of the Abidjan Convention, including its 2008 - 2011 Work Plan.

The revitalisation programme is scheduled to be completed within 2 years. South Africa is the current Chairperson of the Bureau of Ministers charged with guiding the political implementation of the Work Plan. South Africa is represented by Mrs Rejoice Mabhudafasi (Deputy Minister of Environmental



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Affairs and Tourism) and Mr Lucas Williams (Director: Marine and Coastal Management)

3. PREMIUM PRICES FOR FISH: WHY ABALONE AND NOT HAKE

South African wild and farmed abalone has historically been able to command premium prices in China and Hong Kong. These premium prices have been paid regardless of demand and have traditionally been informed by factors such as taste, branding and packaging and appearance. The question we ask in light of the recent Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) re-evaluation of the South African hake trawl fishery, is why has MSC certification not allowed our hake to be marketed and sold at premium prices?

Abalone Premiums

Wild South African abalone that is processed and canned is currently selling at approximately US\$850 a carton on the international market.

However, South African dried abalone under the **Fei zhou bao** brand sells in Hong Kong for up to US\$1239 (R9900) / kg while abalone under the **Da wang bao** brand sells for up to US\$855 (R6800) / kg.

Although these prices are about US\$600 cheaper than Japanese products, South African abalone commands on average a US\$400 / kg premium over abalone originating from other regions, including South and Central America and the Middle East.

With the closure of the legal South African wild abalone fishery, nine of the South Africa's largest abalone farmers have come together to establish the South African Farmed Abalone Export Council. In an approach similar to that of Wines of SA, the new abalone association's mandate is to promote all SA farmed abalone in key international markets. Cultured abalone will be heavily advertised, with the aim to growing the brand. The council plans to grow market share by building brand awareness among consumers and in the trade in primary markets, beginning with Hong Kong and moving on to mainland China. The decision to promote and market *South African abalone* as opposed to individual brands must be welcomed as countries that have long tried to (unsuccessfully) compete with South Africa, such as Australia, Chile, New Zealand, the USA, Iceland and Israel are rapidly increasing their capacity for production and export. In addition, the incomprehensible size of the Chinese market, coupled with the shortage of South African product, reduces the need for SA abalone to compete with itself. Membership to the council is open to all South African exporters of farmed abalone. The nine founding members represent in excess of 80% of South Africa's farmed abalone product.

So why has South African hake, which underwent an expensive and rigorous ecological certification programme in a bid to promote the sustainability of the fishery, not been able to convince European supermarkets and consumers generally that they should pay premium prices for South African hake products? Are there lessons to be learnt from the abalone fishery?

Perhaps the first point to note is that not all four South African hake fisheries are certified by the MSC. Only the trawl fisheries are MSC certified. South Africa's hake long line and hake hand line are not certified, yet much of this product is exported to Europe. Secondly, there does not appear to be a concerted



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strategy by the South African hake industry to market **South African hake** on the European or for that matter, any international market. By and large, South African hake right holders appear to desperately compete with each other to provide fish to the limited number of buyers in Vigo or elsewhere without any explicit targeted strategy to sell certain fish and products to certain markets only. Should we not be selling specific products to specific segments of the market and demanding a premium on a commodity which last year saw a 4 million ton global supply shortfall? This internal competition may benefit a few right holders but the large majority of hake right holders in the trawl, long line and hand line fisheries simply do not see any benefit of MSC certification. Thirdly, unlike abalone, South African hake is marketed together with other premium quality white fish and therefore has not distinguished itself from other white fish products from around the world. Finally, South Africa's primary market – Spain – is not known for its unrelenting support for sustainable fishing practices and MSC certification (or the lack thereof) is not a major deciding factor for the Spanish consumer.

4. FUNDING THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES FUND

In an article published in the March/April 2008 edition of *Maritime South Africa*, Dr Monde Mayekiso, the Deputy Director-General of Marine and Coastal Management discusses MCM's budgetary constraints. Mayekiso states that he is of the opinion that it might be time to review MCM's funding model and to question whether it is feasible for an organisation like MCM to continue funding the operation of a sophisticated and well equipped fleet of ocean going vessels. At present, the costs of running the fleet of patrol and research vessels – even at suboptimal levels – is causing MCM to cut back on research and development. This acknowledgement is contrary to assertions made last year that despite the shrinkage of the research budget to 2002 levels, fisheries research would not be compromised. According to Mayekiso, MCM will only be able to keep its patrol ships at sea for 175 days this year instead 245 days.

There is no disputing that the rise in fuel costs, coupled with the higher than inflation increases in salaries for skilled and semi-skilled labour, has contributed to the significant increase in the costs of operating the fleet of research and compliance vessels. However, we do question the reasons for the inability of the once cash-flush Marine Living Resources Fund (MLRF) to adequately fund the administration, management and research of South Africa's marine living resources sector and fish farming industry.

Whats Up with the MCM Website?

Have you noticed that official correspondence from MCM lists their website address as www.mcm.deat.gov.za. We must advise MCM that this web address simply does not exist. Instead the address should read: www.mcm-deat.gov.za.

Sadly though, when you do go to the "correct" site, you are confronted with a mock site, which shows that virtually the entire site was last updated either in August 2007 or July 2007.

Our advice is to rather visit www.feike.co.za where you will find the **latest** and most **relevant** information and data on trends in fisheries and aquaculture management.



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If one considers the 2006/2007 Annual Report of the MLRF, the reasons for the collapse of the MLRF become somewhat clearer. Firstly, pages 10 to 14 of the Report titled "Basis for qualified opinion" leaves one with the distinct feeling that the senior management at Marine and Coastal Management and its Accounting Officer, the Director-General of DEAT, are incapable of carrying out their legal obligations of managing the fund under South African law. The Auditor-General notes that there is a general inability to explain accounting practices, expenditure and the statement of values. In addition, the financial statements approved by the top management of MCM and DEAT in July 2007 were subjected to 113 material corrections by the Auditor-General between 16 November 2007 and 18 December 2007. Of concern to the taxpaying public will be the fact that although the National Treasury allocated R52 million to MCM for the construction of vessels, MCM spent R24 million of this money on "other projects" without any Treasury approval and although approval was given to spend the remaining R28 million on "other projects", MCM could not provide any documentation indicating how these funds were spent!

Explosion in the Number of Exemptions Issued

According to MCM records accessed by Feike in terms of Access to Information laws, no less than 7765 "subsistence exemptions" were issued in the Eastern Cape during 2007. In 2004, this figure stood at 2491 and included the 965 XLT permits issued in the line fishery in the Western and Northern Cape.

This disclosure provides a further indication of a department in total chaos. How can we sustainably issue 7765 permits without any form of scientific study on the fisheries concerned (including the collapsed line fishery (1911 permits) and the void of legally required TAC's or TAE's?

During 2007 MCM issued 900 oyster, 1911 line fish, 1194 mussel, 647 bait and 2325 east coast rock lobster permits without any TAC/TAE determination and for free!

A further reason may be that MCM is not entirely certain as to how many fishing quotas it has allocated on a long term basis across the 22 commercial fisheries it regulates. Feike calculates that 2686 quotas were allocated on a long term basis since 2005. A total of 2993 long term quotas were allocated since 2004. Coupled to this, it is widely understood that MCM does not fully appreciate the extent to which quota holders may or may not owe it levies for fish landed.

An examination of MCM's operating revenue should also raise concerns. Ordinary operating revenue fell from R129 million in 2006 to R117 in 2007. In the same period, salaries and bonuses increased from R76 million to R89 million. Of greater concern is that during 2007, MCM's reliance on income from the sale of IUU fish and fish products (mainly poached abalone) grew from R13 million in 2006 to more than R57 million in 2007. In 2006, fines to the value of more than R4 million were issued. By 2007, this figure shrank to R2,4 million. In 2006, R58 million in grants and transfer payments were received from the National Treasury. This figure ballooned to more than R166 million in 2007. The manner in which the MLRF is being managed is unsustainable.

The 2007 MLRF Annual Report does not indicate that there is a need to change MCM's funding model; rather there is an urgent need to change MCM's management team as the above analysis shows that it is the manner in which the fund is being (mis)managed that is resulting in it being unable to meet its various domestic and international obligations.



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5. IUU FISHING IN THE ARCTIC

According to a press release published by WWF International, pervasive and hugely profitable illegal fishing for Atlantic cod and Alaskan pollock in the Arctic threatens the health of these important fisheries and their resilience to climate change.

According to Norwegian government figures, more than 100,000 tons of illegal cod, valued at US\$350 million, was caught in the Barents Sea in 2005. Concerted efforts by industry, government and NGOs to clamp down on this illegal activity has seen illegal landings cut by 50 per cent, but illegal fishing for Alaskan pollock in the Russian Far-East remains a problem.

While investigations into illegal fishing in the Russian Far-East is less exhaustive than in the Barents Sea, a report titled *Illegal Fishing in Arctic Waters*, shows that in the Sea of Okhotsk alone, illegal landings of Alaskan pollock worth more than US\$70 million annually are landed. The economic loss to the legitimate fishing industry and public purse is estimated at US\$327 million.

About 70 per cent of the world's white fish supply comes from the Arctic, with the world's last large cod stock found in the Barents Sea. The Russian Alaskan pollock and Barents Sea cod catches together account for about a quarter of the world's white fish supply.

Barents Sea cod is taken mainly by Norwegian, Russian and EU fishers, while the bulk of the Alaskan pollock catch, fished mainly in the Western Bering Sea and Sea of Okhotsk, is taken by Russian fleets with China the largest buyer. With markets spread across the globe, the distribution of black market cod and pollock is a global problem.

WWF is concerned about the ability of Arctic fish to cope with climate change, with illegal fishing being an added stress that can reduce the capacity of fish populations to adapt and survive. WWF is also alarmed that several EU member states are opposing the current European Commission proposal to address illegal fishing, and the EU risks losing a key opportunity to tackle this problem.

The full report *Illegal Fishing in Arctic Waters: Catch of Today – Gone Tomorrow?* can be obtained from David Arnott via e-mail at darnott@feike.co.za.

Aquaculture Tour to Australia

Subsequent to the successful aquaculture tour to Australia in 2007, the Aquaculture Association of South Africa is once again taking a group of Southern Africans to Australia to see a wide range of aquaculture being conducted. The 2007 Tour was able to witness abalone, oysters, mussels, ornamental fish, trout, murray cod, barramundi, trout, eels, yellowtail and bluefin tuna being farmed under a variety of conditions.

The 2008 Tour has been expanded to include the above-mentioned species as well as an offshore abalone farm and two national fish markets. An opportunity to visit commercial aquaculture producers in such an open forum is extremely rare, and interested parties are encouraged to book early as only 10 people will be taken on this Tour. The tour ends immediately prior to the Austasian Aquaculture Conference, making it possible for Tour members to attend before returning home. Interested parties are invited to obtain further details from Carolyn on info@aquaatfrica.co.za



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6. NAMIBIAN TAC's ANNOUNCED

The Namibian Minister of Fisheries announced the 2008 TAC's for a number of Namibian commercial fisheries in mid-April. Although there is said to be evidence that hake stocks in Namibian waters are recovering, even justifying an increase in TAC, Government and industry in Namibia decided to leave the coming season's hake TAC unchanged at 130,000 tons. The biomass of hake, according to scientific reports had increased by 34% from 701,000 tons to 936,000 tons year on year. Given the crisis over hake stocks in recent years, it was however decided that stocks should be slowly rebuilt, which prompted the cautious approach. Once again, October has been declared as closed season for the hake industry "to allow for breeding".

If the full quota were to be caught, hake will contribute N\$47 million to government revenue. This figure may increase if the N\$ weakens against major currencies in concert with the SA Rand. It may further increase if the price of hake increases further on international markets.

The TAC for monkfish - a separate fishery in Namibia - also remains at 9,000 tons. Monkfish is expected contribute N\$6.75 million in revenue. The TAC for orange roughy was reduced by 500 tons to 9,000 tons. This fishery is expected to contribute N\$1.35 million to government coffers.

7. THE COSATU FISHING DESK

There can be little doubt that the establishment of the "fishing desk" by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and other fishing bodies is a consequence of the failure by Marine and Coastal Management to effectively manage and regulate the fishing industry. There is also no doubt that the business of fishing and access to fishing quotas is an emotive and highly complex matter involving the equitable balancing of socio-economic and ecological interests. It is an internationally recognised requirement that fishing quotas are necessary to avoid the kinds of calamities that have befallen the traditional fishing communities of Newfoundland and Labrador for example. We have now witnessed - albeit rather passively - the adverse impacts of the collapsed abalone fishery in the Overberg. As opposed to the Provincial Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the closure of the abalone industry has not been supported by any form of government support to the now unemployed abalone fishermen. There are no social or economic support programmes such as quota buy-backs or the provision of access to alternative fisheries. The result has been to continue fishing, albeit illegally,

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Coastal Management Bill

The Namibian Government has commenced formal consultations with the Namibian public over its proposed Coastal Zone Management legislation.

The drafting of Namibia's coastal zone management legislation, together with the design of institutional systems to manage the implementation of the bill is being overseen by a specialised agency that was set up by the Ministry of Environment. It is understood that Namibia may be promulgate its Coastal Zone Management Act during the course of 2008. The process of drafting the legislation commenced in 2006.

COSATU, Hake & Human Rights

It was reported in the Sunday Times of 26 April 2008 that COSATU was considering approaching the South African Competition Commission to investigate claims of potential price collusion apparently causing high hake prices and that the industry remains largely controlled by white capital.

COSATU has also approached the Human Rights Commission with a complaint that the hake resource is being taken away from traditional fishing communities.



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Fish Farming Conference

Jagido Fisheries in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) have for the past four years been building on a model of commercialising fresh water fish farming.

While the facility in Pacaltsdorp in George was initially established as a research facility, the conclusions of the research have led the owners to believe that they are now able to offer a solution for African fish shortages.

Socia-Economix, mandated to support this fish farming project with a sustainability solution and position this research project to roll out Nationally as a job and enterprise project, are now ready to implement the process. Farmers that may be interested in participating in a process which creates an initial or secondary commercial income stream are invited to apply to participate in this programme.

The Conference is to take place at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Saasveld Campus, George on the 7th May 2008. Costs are R250 per person. For more information contact fish@socialeconomix.co.za

which will only undermine the initiatives to recover the abalone fishery. Initial promises – albeit ludicrous – by Marine and Coastal Management to accommodate abalone fishermen by allocating them access to boat based whale watching and shark cage diving permits are now also being renegeged on.

So, it is completely understandable that as Marine and Coastal Management fails to support the fishing industry and its 43000 fishermen and fish workers and as our 22 commercial and artinsal fisheries shrink in size annually, small-scale fishermen who are unable to diversify activities like large scale industries, begin making the type of demands that the fishing desk has started making.

While these are understandable, we do not believe that they are sound, sustainable and definitely not in the long term best interests of the small-scale commercial or artinsal fishermen. Firstly, there is this continued romanticised notion about access to fish stocks. Yes, generations of fishermen have traditionally set sail for sea from Kalk Bay, Simonstown, Hondeklipbaai, Arniston and Struisbaai in magnificent wooden deck boats or little row boats to harvest lobsters, snoek, kob, yellowtail and other fish we have all bought off the quayside in Kalk Bay or at Sunrise Circle, but over the last decade, these traditional boats have themselves been equipped with modern sonar equipment to better track and catch shoals and the competition has increased as previously excluded (African) communities have rightfully also re-claimed access to quotas between 2001 and 2006. Secondly, it is simply not true that small-scale fishermen are deprived of quotas by large-scale fishermen. Such statements are simply populist and false. If we take away 10 tons or 100 or even a 1000 tons of hake trawl from I&J or Sea Harvest, how will a wooden deck boat sail 50 to 80 nautical miles out to sea to catch the hake we need to consume in South Africa and sell to our international markets in the EU? How will a west coast rock lobster bakkie boat with a ring net be able to row out 20 miles to sea and catch the lobsters on the seabed 50 to 60m below the surface? South African fisheries policy has in fact exclusively guaranteed access to every one of our inshore fisheries (inshore lobsters, line fish, hake handline, oysters, mussels and the net fisheries) to individual small scale or artinsal fishers. Thirdly, climate change, the warming Atlantic current and the changing Benguela Current on our west coast are also impacting on the productivity of our oceans and the ability of our stocks to recover from the impacts of fishing. Hake for example, are said to moving to even deeper waters requiring the largest fishing companies to invest many hundreds of millions of rands in more fuel efficient vessels capable of going further out to sea for longer periods. How will small-scale fishermen in deck boats and row-boats be able to harvest this fish? The failure to appreciate the importance of



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large scale industries in the provision of food results in what we are now witnessing with regard to global maize and rice shortages. Yes, it does sound nice to say "give the fish to small-scale fishers" but how do we see them catching, processing and competitively marketing this fish in a global economy where success is entirely dependent on the economies of scale? In 2007, there was already a 4 million ton global seafood deficit, which is growing year on year.

Rather than being populist in rhetoric, we need to urgently lobby for practical solutions that will yield better access to fish stocks and provide the much needed (even more so now) food security for poor coastal communities. These solutions are not novel but have been on MCM's agenda since at least 2003/2004 but due to the failure of management and leadership, the poor and marginalised fishing communities have suffered the most. In 2003, the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism committed his department to open 12 new fisheries over 4 years so as to alleviate pressures on current fisheries and to provide further opportunities to small-scale fishers. In 2004, 4 new small scale and large scale fisheries were established, including a lobster fishery east of Cape Hangklip reserved solely for fishermen in that region and an octopus fishery. Since 2004, there has not been a single new fishery. Why has COSATU not held MCM liable for this fundamental failure? For example, why have we not looked into a "perdevoet" fishery, which could be as valuable if not more valuable than abalone and can be harvested by local artisanal fishers such as those 350 who lost their abalone rights? And what about aquaculture? But we are not talking about land based fin-fish and abalone farming which requires many tens of millions of rands to simply start and requires skills that are not readily available in coastal communities, but rather the type of sea-based ranching and fish farming that have been so successful in job creation and entrepreneurship in countries like Vietnam, China and Chile. Instead, MCM is ploughing millions of rands into a single state of the art cob fin-fish facility in the Eastern Cape that will create a handful of high skill job opportunities. Why not invest half that amount in state funded (not run or managed) hatcheries to provide the spat required to kick-start abalone ranching (to help recover our collapsed fishery and create literally thousands of jobs) or small-scale high value urchin, sea cucumber and fin-fish projects.

These are the types of initiatives that small scale fishermen and COSATU ought to be pursuing. There **are no more quotas** to be sustainably allocated. The longer we delay this realisation and stall investing in sustainable alternatives to our current 22 commercial fisheries, the louder and more reasonable the sound of desperation will be become.

Aquaculture Courses in 2008

13 - 14 May 2-day Aquaculture Course, Pretoria

20 - 21 May 2-day Aquaculture Course, Durban

09 - 13 June 5-day Practical Aquaculture Course, Aquaculture Academy, Grahamstown

Contact Carolyn Nel
info@aquafrika.co.za for more information

International Aquaculture Events

22 - 24 April: EUROPEAN SEAFOOD EXPO / SEAFOOD PROCESSING, Brussels, Belgium
(www.euroseafood.com)

19 - 22 May: WORLD AQUACULTURE 2008 Busan, South Korea (www.was.org)

12 - 14 June: VIETFISH - VIETNAM FISHERIES INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION 2008, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (www.vietfish.com.vn)



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Cell: 082 652 2615

Office: 021 386 5680

