

Welcome to the August edition of **Feike News!**. As always, we trust that you find our selection of important and hot issues worth reading. Also visit **Feike's, Breaking News:** www.feike.co.za.

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1. THE FAMILY SILVER SOLD IN A RUSHED FIRE SALE

It is understood that the Eagle Star, the vessel MCM sold in what can only be described as a fire sale, has found a new home. Readers will recall this is the vessel that was forfeited by Hout Bay Fishing (Pty) Ltd as part of the plea bargain after they were convicted of massive poaching of Patagonian Toothfish and South Coast Rock Lobster in 2003. MCM then converted the vessel into a fisheries patrol and training vessel. In 2004, the Eagle Star was valued at between R5 million and R10 million.

Then came MCM's fire sale. They had run out of money and the Eagle Star was auctioned. Without a reserve price, a shrewd buyer got her for R302 738. He then sold the bunker fuel, which MCM failed to remove, for R230 000. As he said at the time "I got an ice-reinforced, well-maintained and highly spec'ed vessel for less than a second hand Volkswagen". Well, it now appears that the lucky buyer can upgrade

from a second-hand Volkswagen as we understand he has sold the Eagle Star to an Angolan-based oil company who intends using the vessel as a helicopter pad. And the sale price, you ask? R4 million! Now that is a return on an investment.

2. FROM PET FOOD TO DELICACY

As a result of over-fishing, Atlantic bluefin tuna has become a prized delicacy a century after the fish was regarded as being worth nothing more than pet food in Europe. Bluefin tuna teemed during summers in the North Sea and the Norwegian Sea a century ago as part of migrations that can take them 16 000km a year but are now rarely seen in the region after substantial increases in industrial fishing effort between 1910 and 1950.

A century ago people would sometimes use tuna as pet food according to research of sales records, fisheries yearbooks and other sources in north Europe which will be published in the journal, *Fisheries Research*.

The sudden popularity of tuna in northern Europe might have been linked to a surge of consumption in Germany during World War 1 when other food was scarce; it then caught on more widely.

Bluefin tuna, which spawn in the Gulf of Mexico and the Mediterranean, can be worth approximately R70 000 and R107 000, respectively, on the Japanese sushi market. The Atlantic bluefin stock has plunged in recent years to such a level that even a total halt in fishing might not help stocks recover.

Denmark opened the first tuna cannery in 1929 and Norwegian catches reached 10 000 tons a year during the 1950's compared to total catches of Atlantic bluefin in 2005 of approximately 23 000 tons from Canada to the Mediterranean. People in northern Europe have largely forgotten about the vast tuna catches that filled market halls during the last century.

Another study that was based on electronic tagging showed how bluefin tuna often cross the Atlantic. Two fish hooked at the same time off Ireland were found 6 000 km apart 6 months later. One was found off the Bahamas and the other in the Strait of Gibraltar. The large distances travelled by bluefin tuna means sustainable management of the stock should increasingly become a global management challenge as a matter of urgency.





3. THE COLLECTIVE FISHING INDUSTRY IS HAVING A 'FITT'

For the uninitiated in the fishing industry: You have a voice and the Minister himself is, well, going to listen to you. Sound strange? Well that is what he wants you to believe. The Minister has asked for the formation of a FITT that will lead to a CAF (Consultative Advisory Forum).

In official circles FITT stands for Fishing Industry Task Team, a more appropriate term might be the: Fishing Industries Toy Telephone. The Minister says he does not have much time – and neither seem the officials to have any time – which is why they seek a forum of no more than 5 persons through which to talk with the 22 commercial fishing sectors, the two independently growing non-consumptive sectors, the numerous recreational fisheries and the artisanal and the subsistence sectors.

Who cares if its 5 or 12? Given the inevitable divisions caused by lack of adequate resources in the sea, given the contestation for rights in a transitional society from apartheid to democracy, and given the nature of suspicion and strife inevitable in the industry, the Minister has struck gold. He has succeeded to make his problem, the fishing sectors problem. Every possible faction and sector wants to be one of the 5 or twelve. Inevitably there are appeasers, doubters, grumblers both vocal and of the corridor variety, and a few clear cut opponents to this form of representation. Hand it to the Minister, what was his problem, through a clever ploy has set the industry against each other. Who says divide and rule is dead?

Those content with playing with the toy telephone: history will not judge you kindly.

4. SOUTH EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANISATION

(see: www.seafo.org)

SEAFO is a regional fisheries management organization in the South East Atlantic Ocean established in line with the provisions of the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention and the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement. The Convention was signed in April 2001 in Windhoek by Angola, the European Community, Iceland, Namibia, Norway, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, the United Kingdom (on behalf of St. Helena and its dependencies of Tristan da Cunha and Ascension Islands) and the United States of America. It entered into force on April 2003 after the deposit of instruments of ratification by Namibia and Norway and approval by the European Community as required under the Convention. States that have participated in the negotiations but have not signed the Convention are Japan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The objective of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Fisheries Resources in the South East Atlantic Ocean is to ensure the long-term

conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources in the Convention Area through effective implementation of the Convention.

The Convention is the first to create a regional management organisation after the adoption of the UNFSA.

SEAFO comprises of the Commission, the Scientific Committee and the Compliance Committee as subsidiary bodies and the Secretariat. The Compliance Committee is yet to be formalised. The Commission may establish other subsidiary bodies from time to time to assist in meeting the objectives of the Convention. The Commission has an oversight responsibility. The Scientific Committee provides scientific advice on the status of resources and on harvesting levels taking into consideration, *inter alia*, the ecosystems approach and precautionary approach principles. The institutions are designed to function according to the principles of cost-effectiveness and to expand only at the same pace as its workload.

Economically important SEAFO fish species in the Convention Area include species such as alfonso, orange roughy, oreo dories, armourhead, sharks, deepwater hake and red crab. The inclusion of discrete high seas stocks takes the SEAFO Convention beyond the scope of the UNFSA.

The SEAFO Convention Area is subdivided into four large Divisions (A-D) stretching from the western boundary of the SEAFO Area at 20°W, to the coastal EEZ Area and to 30°E, south of the African continent. One Sub-division Area has been identified within each of these four divisions bringing the total number of divisions to 8. The basic criteria used for creating the sub-divisions were:

- ▶ Areas with a catch history of more than 10 tonnes per species per year; and
- ▶ Ecological sensitive areas such as seamounts where known by-catches have been reported in significant numbers.

The SEAFO Area has a number of topographical features including:

- ▶ Walvis Ridge
- ▶ Agulhas Ridge
- ▶ The Mid Atlantic Ridge
- ▶ A number of seamounts and rises

At the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Commission in October 2005, various recommendations were made by the Scientific Committee to the Commission with the aim of establishing conservation measures, including –





- ▶ the obligation for vessels fishing in the SEAFO area to have scientific observers on board in order to provide the required catch and biological data on fishing stocks;
- ▶ the introduction of an automatic satellite vessel monitoring system for all vessels fishing in SEAFO area; and
- ▶ an interim Port State inspection scheme that would require Port States to inspect foreign fishing vessels and transmit information and results to the SEAFO Secretariat.

These measures were accepted by the Commission in 2005.

During the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Commission, which was held in 2006, urgent measures to prohibit fishing activities in 10 marine areas with prominent seamounts until 2010 were discussed. These areas have in the past been subject to little or no fishing activity. In addition, the Commission decided to –

- ▶ ban transshipments at sea in order to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported fisheries (IUU). It also adopted procedures to identify and blacklist IUU vessels;
- ▶ control and monitor the fisheries through the establishment of a record of vessels, placement of scientific observers, VMS and catch reporting requirements;
- ▶ reduce incidental mortality of seabirds, especially petrels and albatrosses;
- ▶ prohibit the practice of “shark finning”; and
- ▶ reduce the incidental mortality of sea turtles in fishing operations, notably by requiring that turtles entangled in fishing gear be cut loose immediately.

5. IUU FISHING IN THE STRAIT OF SICILY

Italian vessels that had departed from Maltese ports were seen fishing illegally for bluefin tuna in the Strait of Sicily according to the World Wildlife Fund for Nature.

WWF noted that the Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishing season closed on 1 July. WWF field observers observed “an Italian fleet of industrial vessels” set sail from Malta to operate in the Strait of Sicily, supported by a spotter plane during the first days of the month of July. Boats towing cages were also on hand to transfer any fish caught to Croatian tuna farms.

The WWF has reported the matter to the European Commission, the new European Community Fisheries Control Agency and the Italian Government. An investigation into the alleged illegal fishing is underway.



6. MOZAMBICAN SHRIMP

The Mozambican government is studying ways to reduce the tax on diesel used by vessels fishing for prawns. Fisheries Minister, Cadmiel Muthemba also noted the problem for the fishing industry is not simply the tax on fuel, but also the fall in the price of prawns on the European market due to competition from aquaculture prawn producers in Asian and Latin American countries. Their prawns are cheaper due to lower production costs.

In Mozambique, of the 13, 000 tons of prawns exported in 2006, only approximately 1,000 tons came from aquaculture. Adding to their difficulties, most Mozambican fishing companies hire their vessels and now face difficulties in paying the boat owners due to the low profits. The semi-industrial fishing companies who use ice to preserve the catch also face the problem of not being able to access the European market due to the fact that this technology does not guarantee proper conservation, and so falls foul of European Union health regulations.

Muthemba said that prawns represent about 8% of Mozambique's export earnings, bringing in more than US\$96 million in 2006.

7. FROM CHICKENS TO FISH

Country Bird, a prominent poultry producer operating in South Africa, Botswana and Zambia is venturing into fish farming. The company which currently has approximately 10% of the poultry market says the demand for protein is high and it was confident the growth trend would continue. The CEO, Kevin James, says the company is investigating fish farming in Zambia, as well as another chicken operation in Namibia. The company is also focusing on growing fish organically. James says he hopes that the facilities will be operational by the end of 2008. The company anticipates starting a tilapia farm on the Zambezi River in Zambia.

8. THE 2007 VENICE STATEMENT

The International Court of the Environment Foundation (ICEF) presented a policy paper to the participants of the International Conference on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Mediterranean-Black Sea Ecosystem which was held in Venice between 24 and 26 May 2007.

The policy paper considers the overall situation of the area constituted by the connected Mediterranean-Black Sea ecosystems, which cover approximately 30 countries on 3 continents (Europe, Asia and Africa) with a population of half a billion people.



The statement recognises that the rivers that flow into the Black Sea carry large amounts of pollutants due to the activities of the inhabitants who live on the banks of these rivers and that similar problems affect the Mediterranean.

Furthermore, the threat of climate change and the resultant threat of desertification, together with floods, water scarcity and other extreme weather, pose a significant threat to marine ecosystems in the region concerned. Agriculture, forestry, industrial and mineral production techniques, tourism and recreation are in many cases accelerating the transformation or degradation of landscapes.

ICEF stressed that there is an urgent need for coastal states to introduce and strengthen administrative, civil and criminal sanctions for all potentially harmful activities and that states take measures to control risks and serious offences. A special appeal was also made for the creation of marine reserves in international waters, according to a similar model to the International Sanctuary for Marine Mammals in the Tyrrhenian Sea.

9. FISH GENETIC RESOURCES

The UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has called for better policies to conserve fish genetic resources and enhance global food security, warning that failure to do so would lead to adverse environmental and social consequences.

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which consists of 167 countries and the EU, is to tackle the issue of how best to manage the genetic diversity of the oceans, seas, lakes, rivers, wetlands and fish farms to safeguard their contributions to food security.

The rapid expansion of aquaculture and the over-exploitation of many fisheries have created conditions where "irresponsible" use of natural resources can result in adverse environmental and social impacts, conflicts and unsustainability according to a paper by the FAO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. The paper argues that a successful transition to more responsible, sustainable and productive aquaculture and fisheries will depend largely on effective management of fish genetic resources.

According to the FAO, most of the world's fisheries are already at least fully exploited or in decline and their production levels have reached a plateau. By 2030 an additional 40 million tons of fish will be needed to meet global seafood demand.

10. NORWAY'S FRIDTJOF NANSEN PROGRAMME WINS SWEDISH SEAFOOD AWARD

The aim of the Swedish Seafood Award is to promote the development of trade and the fisheries, food production and restaurant industries by highlighting efforts which indicate a belief in the future and the efforts which, on all levels, serve to increase knowledge of the sea and lakes as a source of food.

The Fridtjof Nansen Programme won an award in Category A, Sustainable Fisheries, relating to the development of methods and technologies in resource management and research relating to the fishing industry.

The motivation for awarding the prize to the Fridtjof Nansen Programme is because the programme's worldwide and longstanding work is unique. Since 1975 it has been helping the world's coastal countries manage their fish stocks, and its efforts to encourage developing countries to adopt sustainable fishing policies have been ground-breaking. The majority of the world's 40 million fishermen live in developing countries and the programme's services are in high demand. In cooperation with the UN, Fridtjof Nansen vessels have surveyed the seas around 60 countries and at the same time educated these countries' researchers and technicians in survey techniques. Through its determination and continuity the Fridtjof Nansen Programme has achieved remarkable results in the global drive for sustainable fishing.