

News Round-up

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Fishes live

Some 500 assorted live fish species confiscated from 24 Chinese fishermen last October by the Philippines' authorities were released back into the sea, reports *Balita*.

Provincial Fishery Officer Panciano Gianan identified the live fish species as the endangered Napoleon Wrasse or *mameng*, sharks, *maya-maya* and the coral-dwelling groupers or *lapu-lapu*.

The release was done at the Puerto Princesa bay by personnel of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and members of the Provincial Committee on Illegal Entrants.

Gianan said the confiscated fish underwent re-conditioning for them to survive and reproduce in the sea. He noted that the fishes were contained in a Chinese vessel's built-in aquarium when seized by PCG

and BFAR operatives off Mangsee Island, Balabac town. Also confiscated were frozen *dalagang bukid*, confirmed to be caught by dynamite fishing.

The 24 Chinese fishermen detained at the Palawan jail are now facing three cases of violation of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 before a local court. These are Section 87 (poaching in Philippine waters), Section 88 (fishing with explosives, noxious or poisonous substances) and Section 97 (fishing or taking rare, threatened or endangered species).

High-tech fish lure

If you like to fish and find that there are far less to bring home, you're not alone. From everyday anglers to giant commercial fishing fleets, they face the same problem. The solution may just be in a new way to bring fish from far away by making them mad at you, according to a report from *MMD Newswire*.

Just ask Captain Bob Swift, a six-boat charter operator in Valdez, Alaska. He was sceptical until only one of his customers caught giant fish with a beta

version of something called 'SONARLURE' while the others on the boat did not. No pipe dream, creating

fishy aggression by sending sub-surface signals to encourage aggressive behaviour somehow seems to attract hungry 'denizens of the deep' to the hook or net.

Results of tests on Prince William Sound (Alaska) and off the Shetland Islands (Scotland), both areas where fishing has seen a major decline, has created a worldwide buzz, prompting a flood of demands from charter and commercial operators whose livelihood depends upon bringing in a bigger catch.

'SONARLURE' is a variation of a once hush-hush government idea to signal dolphins to deliver explosives under enemy shipping; supposedly ended when the finny creatures forgot to leave afterwards. No longer electronic, it uses a patented design to apply the

science of fluid dynamics to send out signals. When pulled through the water (what fishermen call 'trolling'), carefully crafted external 'lobes' vibrate at repetitive frequencies from the friction, which seem to act like a 'dinner bell'. The fish attack a lure dangling behind the sending device thinking they are about to eat a smaller fish that got there first. The same patented design is incorporated into seven lures, four for salt water, and three for freshwater fishing using hooks but no bait whatsoever. The sending device for trolling is aptly called the 'A-TRAC-TER'.

Anchovy ban

European Union experts have demanded an emergency ban on all anchovy fishing in the Bay of Biscay off Spanish and French States this year, saying stocks were

dangerously low, reports *eitb24.com*.

The European Commission said it will shortly impose a ban until the end of the year after fisheries advisers estimated that there were only 18,640

tonnes of adult anchovies in the Bay of Biscay this spring, far beneath a 28,000-tonne limit to stop fishing during spawning time.

“This is well below safe biological levels and the decision to close the fishery reflects the recognition by member states of the severe risk of collapse which the anchovy stock in the Bay of Biscay is now facing,” the Commission said.

This is the second year in a row that anchovy stock levels have been so low the EU has had to impose an emergency ban on fishing.

Coastal damage

Environmental activists in Indonesia are calling on the government and the public to halt the degradation of marine resources in order to prevent the kinds of disasters that have already caused suffering for millions of people, reports *The Jakarta Post*.

Riza Damanik, campaign manager for marine and coastal areas at Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (Walhi- Friends of the Earth Indonesia), said the rapid damage to coastal areas has left 750 villages along some 81,000 sq km of the country's coastline subject to chronic erosion. A study by Walhi showed that 90 per cent of the

disaster-hit villages were located in areas where coral reefs and mangrove forests were damaged. The 2005 State of the Environment report says that of the country's 51,000 sq km of coral areas, only 5.8 per cent are well-preserved, a decrease from 2004 when 6.8 per cent were in good condition. Meanwhile, about 57 per cent of the country's 9.2 mn ha of mangrove forests are in critical condition.

Experts say mangrove trees could halt erosion and mitigate the negative impacts of large sea waves on coastal areas, where some 16 mn Indonesians live.

“These villagers are suffering from ecological disasters, a natural result of our accumulated failures in preserving the environment and managing marine resources,” Riza said. He blamed the government for not stopping the conversion of coastal areas into big fishing ponds, which has decreased the ability of coastal areas to mitigate the impacts of disasters.

“Last year, my study estimated that fish farming areas totalled 800,000 ha, increasing at an average rate of 14 per cent per year,” he said.

Marine and Fisheries Ministry spokesman Aji Sularso said the government was fully aware of the situation and had drawn up various community-based programmes to improve conditions. “We are working not only to increase yields from the fishery industry but also to practice preservation,” he said.

Salmon Indica?

Indian authorities have recently decided to lower the duty rate on salmon from around 30 per cent to 10 per cent. “This is very good news because India is a market with a substantial long-term potential for Norwegian fishery and aquaculture industry”, Helga Pedersen, the fisheries and coastal minister said in a statement, according to *Fish Update*. “We must see this in the context of the long-term effort put in from the Norwegian side to reduce the Indian duty rates.”

India is one of the biggest markets in the world, with more than 150 mn inhabitants with approximately Western European living standards. Of new markets with

significant long-term potential for the Norwegian fishery and aquaculture industry, India, therefore, is one of the most important. So far, however, it has not been on the cards for Norwegian exporters to aim for the Indian market due to the country's high duty rates on imports of seafood.

Norwegian authorities have, therefore, been working for a long period on having these duty rates lowered, and, in the first instance, for Norwegian salmon.

At the political level, the Norwegian Prime Minister Stoltenberg raised the question during both his visits to India, in April 2001 and December 2005.

At another level, Norwegian fishery

authorities have had a good dialogue over the last year with the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) — a governmental agency subordinate to the Indian industry and trade department — in relation to a possible co-operation between Norwegian and Indian industry players within the fishery and aquaculture sector.