

News Round-up

Jails beckon

The **Japan** Fisheries Agency reports that there were six cases of illegal fishing by 18 South Korean vessels in July. These were recorded in the northwestern waters of Kyushu, near Tsushima.

There were also five seizures of illegal fishing gear and two of these led to an arrest. On 18 July, the crew of an illegal fishing vessel attacked the patrol boat, the *Hakuho Maru*, physically injuring its crew.

The Japanese government has complained to the South Korean government regarding this incident, but the illegal fishing has not yet ceased.

In 1999, when the new Japan-Korea Fisheries Agreement became effective, there were five cases of illegal fishing by foreign vessels in the waters of Kyushu.

In 2000, the cases of illegal fishing rose to 38, of which 19 led to arrests. This year, between January and July, there have been 36 cases of illegal fishing and 13 cases of arrests. One of these arrests was of a

Chinese vessel, while the rest were South Korean.

Junta diktats

Thailand has rejected a set of regulations proposed by **Myanmar** as a condition for the lifting of a ban on Thai fishing trawlers operating in its waters, saying it would be a financial burden.

Myanmar cancelled Thai fishing licences in October 1999 after the Thai government supplied an escape helicopter to five anti-junta gunmen in exchange for the

release of 38 hostages held captive at Myanmar's embassy in Bangkok.

Despite a series of talks, the two sides have failed to reach agreement on the revival of fishing concessions, in a stand-off that has cost Thai fishermen dearly.

Thai Deputy Prime Minister Pitak Intarawithayanunt said Fishery

Department and Foreign Ministry officials would travel to the military-ruled nation in the hope of negotiating a workable deal for Thai trawlers.

Myanmar is proposing a range of conditions, including that Thai fishermen pay a special tax in addition to a percentage of the profits from fish caught off its coast. Thailand has countered with a plan for a single licence fee.

Opening up

The government of **South Africa** has launched a campaign to open up the fishing industry—worth 2.5-bn rand a year—to small-scale and subsistence fishers. The campaign also includes provision for poverty alleviation so, unlike commercial

fishermen, those who fish for food security purposes don't have to apply for fishing quotas. The announcement follows the expiry of

existing fishing quotas at the end of the year and no extensions are allowed.

Until noon on 13 September, 27 information stations, staffed by 60 people, will operate along the coast from Richard's Bay in KwaZulu-Natal to Port Nolloth in the Northern Cape to help quota applicants.

Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Mohammed Valli Moosa says his department "supports the establishment of micro and small and medium enterprises, which is closely linked to transformation and, by the same token, the department will also move away from unviable allocations of fishing rights so as not to encourage 'paper quota' rights holders".

Legalese

Eritrea has accused **Yemen** of disregarding the clarification of the Hague arbitration court, which settled a dispute over fishing rights in the Hanish Islands, the London-based Arabic-language newspaper *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* reports.

The two countries fought a brief war in 1996 over the islands, which were being claimed by both. The

conflict was resolved in 1999 by international arbitration. Tewelde Medhin, the deputy head of mission in the Eritrean Embassy in Nairobi, said that the marine border had also been agreed on after the dispute over the islands dispute was resolved,

and that "relations between the two countries are good and have been getting better".

Eritrean sources expressed surprise and dismay at what they described as inaccurate reports to the effect that Eritrea had earlier this month seized 106 Yemeni fishing boats, *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* said. The Eritreans expressed concern that some individuals may be trying to damage relations between the two countries by circulating such reports.

The differences between the two countries' interpretation of fishing rights arises from Eritrea's stance that traditional fishing rights are guaranteed for nationals of both countries in the disputed area, which was later given to

Yemen by the Hague court. The court, however, did not give Yemeni fishermen the right to fish in Eritrean territorial waters, said the paper.

The paper quotes Eritrean sources as saying, "despite the court's clarifications, the Yemeni brothers continue to ignore the court's clarification and are still interpreting the ruling in the way that suits them".

Eviction threat

About 2,100 small-scale fishermen operating along the Dar es Salaam shore face eviction following an order by **Tanzania** Harbours Authority (THA) to clear the harbour of small boats and trawlers.

The chairman of the Association of Small Fishermen in Dar es Salaam (Uwawada), Addy Haidari, told *The East African* that THA has ordered small fishermen to move their vessels

out of the Magogoni area where they currently operate.

Haidari says the move will adversely affect the lives and

incomes of 2,098 fishermen as well as the Dar es Salaam residents who depend on fish for their daily food. About 187 fishing vessels would be affected by the move, which could lead to a shortage of fish and force consumers to pay more.

Forthcoming

On 30 August and 1 September 2001, MARE (Centre for Maritime Research) and SISWO/ **Netherlands** Institute for the Social Sciences will organize the international conference *People and the Sea: Maritime Research in the Social Sciences—An Agenda for the 21st Century*.

Participants in the three-day conference will examine cross-disciplinary issues in maritime research.

Core sessions will focus on the following topics: integrated coastal zone management; property rights and multiple-use conflicts; stakeholders and policy-making processes; maritime work worlds and cultures; theory, methodology and ethics; and development and change.

The month after that will see another international meet. The Reykjavik Conference on

Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem, organized jointly by the Government of **Iceland** and FAO, with the co-sponsorship of the Government of Norway, will be held between 1 and 4 October, 2001 at Reykjavik, Iceland.

From 3-7 December 2001, the *Global Conference on Oceans and Coasts at Rio+10: Assessing Progress, Addressing Continuing and New Challenges* will be held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. It will

provide an overall assessment of progress achieved on oceans and coasts since the Earth Summit. It will also provide input to the discussions by governments which will take place in June 2002, when nations will converge at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10) in Johannesburg, **South Africa**, to assess progress made in the implementation of all aspects of the world agenda on environment and development agreed to at the 1992 Earth Summit.