

News Round-up

Caviar, anyone?

In late January 1998, Russian Fisheries officials announced that **Russia** would issue export certificates for black caviar produced in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), export certificates for black caviar produced in

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), export certificates on sturgeon products (e.g. caviar) will be required after 1 April 1998. While Russia is a member of CITES, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are not. However, Russia asserts that it can issue export certificates for CIS countries that are not CITES members.

Good riddance!

Early this year officials in **Japan** announced their unilateral decision to terminate a 1965 fishery agreement with **South Korea** in a year's time. Negotiations on a new agreement to accommodate

intersecting exclusive economic zones have become stymied by conflicting territorial claims, with 10 rounds of bilateral talks held since May 1996.

Negotiations are likely to resume.

In response to the Japanese decision, South Korean officials stated that their fishermen would no longer be required to observe voluntary restricted areas agreed to outside Japan's 12-nautical-mile exclusive fishing zone.

In late January 1998, eight South Korean fish trawlers protested the Japanese decision by entering and fishing in a restricted area off the Japanese island of Hokkaido.

At least five Japanese Fisheries Agency patrol boats have been sent to monitor the South Korean trawlers. Japanese fishermen reported damage to gill-nets in restricted waters off Hokkaido and suggested that South Korean vessels could be at fault.

Food alert

Close on the heels of similar action by the European Union, the Food Inspection Agency of **Canada** placed **Bangladesh** seafood on an 'import alert list'. Concerns had been raised after June 1997 EU inspections of Bangladeshi plants found that proper

sanitation was questionable for some Bangladeshi products. The Canadian alert requires that all shipments be subject to evaluation to detect any improper condition.

Boo to taxes

Fishermen in **Greece** blockaded island fishing ports in the southeastern Aegean Sea in protest against new tax regulations that require fishermen to pay a value-added tax (VAT) on their catches. This revision is part of Greek efforts to align national laws with the European Community, and places fishermen in a different tax category from farmers.

Oil spoils

A ruptured oil pipeline, operated by Mobil Corp. and serving the Qua Iboe terminal in Akwa Ibom state, **Nigeria**, released about

40,000 barrels of light crude oil about three miles offshore into Nigerian coastal waters. Several small fishing villages have been affected, with residents reporting fish mortality and damage to fishing gear.

Dutch courage

Nutreco Holding NV, a company from the **Netherlands**, has announced acquiring a Chilean hatchery and fish farm from Caican, with the potential for 3.5 million juvenile salmon from the hatchery and 2,000 tonnes of market-ready salmon from the fish farm. Nutreco's annual revenues from fish farming and fish feed operations in Chile was reported to total about 300 million guilders (about US\$145 million).

Chile chided

Meanwhile, the US Department of Commerce made a preliminary antidumping determination on salmon from Chile, with two of the five companies surveyed assessed duties of 8.27 per cent and 3.31 per cent. The other three companies surveyed were found to have dumping margins so low that no retaliatory tariffs were levied. More than 35 additional Chilean companies will have the average finding, 5.79 per cent, levied as an import duty on their product. This is substantially lower than the 42 per cent duty sought by US salmon farmers. Further investigations will be conducted in Chile before a decision on any final duty is made in late May.

Turning turtle

Biologists and environmentalists in **Nicaragua** have asked for international support to protect one of Nicaragua's (and the world's) most important nesting beach for the olive ridley is an endangered species

protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and several other international treaties. Nicaragua is home to two critical nesting sites for this species at Playa La Flor National Wildlife Refuge and Chococente National Wildlife Refuge. These Beaches are two of only

approximately six such sites in the Eastern Pacific.

Leatherback sea turtles also nest at the site regularly and green and hawksbill sea turtles have also been reported to nest there occasionally.

Recent information suggests that Playa La Flor is threatened by a hotel construction project which has already brought and dumped many truckloads of river rock inside the reserve. Concerned activists have been sending letters of protest to the President of Nicaragua, asking him to ensure protection of the wildlife refuge.

Red China

Hong Kong officials recently closed five popular beaches because of red tides of *Gyrodinium aureolum* of *Gymnodinium mikimotoi*. These tides were also said to have killed around, 1,500 tonnes or about as much as half of Hong Kong's annual farmed fish production.

These tides began in mid-March 1998, and are claimed to have caused at least US\$32.3 million damage to 80 percent of Hong Kong's 1,500 fish farms.

However, government officials estimate the loss at only about US\$10.3 million. About 100 fish farms were provided with emergency subsidies of about US\$1,282 each. Officials of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department deemed the fish safe to eat, but Health Department officials advised caution.

About 500 tonnes of dead fish had been collected and dumped in landfills. The Hong Kong government announced efforts to develop a red tide monitoring and warning system. The red tide has since

spread to neighbouring Guangdong province, where more than 350 tonnes of fish were reported killed. The economic loss was estimated to exceed US\$4.3 million. In addition, more than 328 acres of shellfish beds were reported to have been ravaged.

China sees red

Fishery officials in **China** have announced that China will ban fishing in its coastal waters from 15 June 1998 to 15 September 1998, to protect declining fish stocks.

This ban period is longer than the two-month annual closure imposed from 1995-1997.

Holding hands

A flurry of co-operation. **Iran** and **Venezuela** have agreed to co-operate in fisheries and fish farming, through an exchange of scientific and technical expertise.

Japanese officials have announced a US\$3 million grant to the government of **Jamaica** for the development of small-scale fisheries.

Elsewhere, Forbes & Company, the US multinational based in Rhode Island, has offered to invest US\$519 million over five years in a fisheries development project by the **Pakistan** government.

The project includes port development, processing plant construction, a fleet of fish trawlers, and a shipyard.

EI Niño again

Thanks to EI Niño conditions, fishmeal production in **Peru** for the first two months of 1998 was almost 81 per cent lower than for the same period in 1997 (72,400 tonnes vs 376,200 tonnes), while fish oil production had fallen more than 87 per cent for the same period (6,200 tonnes vs 48,700 tonnes).

Gasping in Gaza

Patrolling by Israeli gunboats is preventing fishermen from the **Palestine**-ruled Gaza Strip from setting out to

fish in the eastern Mediterranean. **Israel**, however, says its presence discourages guerrilla activity in the Gaza Strip.

The 1993 peace agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel limit Gazan fishermen to 32 km off their coast. But the number of Gaza fishermen has more than doubled in recent years to cross 2,000.

Prior to the peace agreement and self-rule in the Strip, Gaza fishermen used to trade with their Egyptian counterparts at sea.

Oyster wars story

Bonnie J. McCay, professor of anthropology and ecology at Rutgers University, has just published *Oyster Wars and the Public Trust: Property, Law and Ecology in New Jersey History*, a book which deals with historical and legal anthropology, institutional economics and resource management, and

environmental and legal history.

Calling it a "footnote that got away," McCay says her work explores the "archaeology of the idea of public trust, and its relations to other cultural symbols and sentiments, including the free right to fish, on the one hand, and the sacred right of private property, on the other."