News and events
live reef fish

Sixteen new boats for Sri Lankan ornamental fishermen

Source: Ornamental Fish International (http://www.ofish.org/, accessed 17 November 2005)

Directly after the tsunami hit the Sri Lankan coasts, last December, several members of OFI [Ornamental Fish International] asked the OFI secretariat to launch a campaign to help the fishermen in Sri Lanka. Thanks to generous support of the OFI members, the first ever campaign in OFI history raised more than 12,000 Euros.

After thorough consultations with the OFI Advisors located in the respective countries, it was quite early established that it was in Sri Lanka that aquarium industry operators had suffered the largest losses. In a large area around the east, south and west coast of the island, many fishermen who make their living collection ornamental marine specimens had lost their homes, boats and collecting gear. Many had also lost family members.

OFI Executive Board member Vibhu Perera, based in Sri Lanka, assisted in supplying information on the needs of the Sri Lankan fishermen affected by the disaster. On this basis 16 fishing boats, built in fibre glass by Gulf Star Marine and Diyakawa Marine, were procured for ornamental fish collectors in Sri Lanka.

Since boats are shared by as many as 12 divers in Sri Lankan fish collecting communities, around 190 families will benefit from OFI's donation.

The first two boats were handed over to fishermen in Dehiwala, South of Colombo, by OFI President Svein A. Fosså and Vice President Pauline Teo in a small ceremony on 6 June. The remaining 14 have subsequently been handed over by Vibhu Perera.

[For more information on Ornamental Fish International's Tsunami-help-fund, see the announcement on OFI's web site: http://www.ofish.org/data-area.asp?aid=14474&gid=5353]

Tsunami news

For information about the effects of the December 2004 tsunami on fisheries and coastal communities, as well as recovery efforts, useful web sites include those of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (http://www.enaca.org/) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (http://www.fao.org/tsunami/fisheries/index.htm).

Asian Fisheries Forum presentations on mariculture

Source: *Marine Finfish Aquaculture e-News*, No. 19 (11 January 2005)

NACA organized a special session on mariculture for the 7th Asian Fisheries Forum, (Penang, Malaysia, Nov 29-Dec 3, 2004) in partnership with FAO, WFC, ACIAR, TDH and others. There were a total of eight presentations delivered for this special session:

- An overview of marine finfish aquaculture in the Asia-Pacific region
- Environmental trends and constraints in mariculture development in the Asia-Pacific region
- Health management practices in Asian mariculture — current status and challenges
- Escapes of farmed fish: Ecological and genetic impacts on natural populations and how to manage them
- Mariculture in the Pacific
- Salmon farming: A global success story with focus on the impact of vaccines on the Norwegian industry
- Economic aspects of marine fish culture in the Asia-Pacific region
- Industry standards for responsible fishing practices: The live reef food fish trade in Southeast Asia and the Pacific

Grouper production increasing

Source: *Asia-Pacific Marine Finfish Aquaculture e-News*, No. 23 (28 March 2005)

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has released an updated dataset on aquaculture production and value. For the first time, the FAO data set disaggregates grouper production from marine finfish production from China. In 2003, China produced 26,790 tonnes of grouper (Serranidae). This represents just over half of the total global aquaculture production of groupers, which was around 52,000 tonnes in 2003. Although this is a substantial increase from the reported grouper aquaculture production of 23,000 tonnes in 2002, most of this increase can be attributed to the inclusion of Chinese production in the 2003 figures. Grouper production from aquaculture was valued at around US$238 million in 2003, up from US$120 million in 2002. The updated FAO datasets are available from: http://www.fao.org/fi/statist/FISOFT/FISHPLUS.asp

Improvements in live rock assessment and management under development

Source: *MAC News*, 1st Quarter 2005

The MAC [Marine Aquarium Council] Pacific team is working with the industry, communities and other stakeholders in Fiji to develop and test improved methods for assessing live rock resources, creating management plans for collection areas and managing live rock extraction practices, following on from Fiji workshops on the coral and live rock trade in 2004. They conducted the initial research by familiarizing themselves with the techniques of live rock collection, observing village collectors and conducting interviewing collectors on their expertise in identifying the collectable live rock. In the second step, the live rock was examined, weighed and categorized after it had been delivered to a facility for screening and curing before export.

MAC participated in several multi-stakeholder workshops that were conducted to develop improvements to methods for assessing and managing live rock. A first comprehensive live rock assessment using the revised methods was carried out at a collection site along the Viti Levu coast near Suva, Fiji, in partnership with the company operating in that area, Water Life Exporters Fiji Ltd (WEF), and with active involvement of the company and enthusiastic assistance from the collectors in the community. The assessment was designed to provide baseline information as a requirement for the development of a Collection Area Management Plan (CAMP), initiate MAQTRAC monitoring with recommendations for an on-going Monitoring Assessment and improve the site-based resource management of live rock collection.

Canadian supported Pacific Marine Ornamentals Certification project comes to a close

Source: *MAC News*, 1st Quarter 2005

The Marine Ornamentals Certification project, funded by the Canadian-South Pacific Ocean Development program, administered by the South Pacific Forum Secretariat and implemented by the Marine Aquarium Council (MAC), came towards the end of its project cycle in late 2004. Through the generous support of the Canadian government significant progress has been made in beginning to harness market forces to transform the marine ornamentals industry in the four targeted Forum Island countries of Fiji, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands and Vanuatu into one based on quality and sustainable use of coral reefs. The project achieved greatest success in Fiji where all five marine ornamentals companies have signed the MAC Statement of Commitment. One of the companies had been MAC Certified and another is very close to achieving MAC Certification. Three other companies in Fiji are committed to becoming certified and have made, to varying degrees, substantial efforts towards this. In Vanuatu, Cook Islands, and Solomon Islands, all operating companies in each country also signed the MAC Statement of Commitment and/or made similar levels of progress towards certification. MAC continues to work with these Pacific countries, and others, to the extent that resources are available and there is interest on the part of the companies.

Ornamental fish certification in Christmas Islands, Kiribati

Source: *MAC News*, 3rd Quarter 2005

During July and August, the MAC [Marine Aquarium Council] Pacific team of Cherie Morris, Greg Bennett and Chris Beta focused their efforts on the major supply region of Christmas Islands, Kiribati.

Part of the work involved resource assessment as the basis for developing a Collection Area Management Plan (CAMP). A baseline survey using MAQTRAC was adapted to the Christmas Islands situation by developing an indicator fish species list and using timed swims. Fifty fish species were chosen as indica-

tors. The survey team of two MAC staff and two fisheries officers conducted 14 transects over five days, within safe scientific survey depths. Results showed high coral cover and a high diversity of fish species. The team found a particularly high abundance of golden gregory damsel (*Stegastes aureus*), Bartlett's anthias (*Pseudanthias bartlettorum*), lemonpeel angel (*Centropyge flavissima*), flame angel (*Centropyge loriculus*), leopard wrasse (*Macropharyngodon meleagris*) and Niger trigger (*Odonus niger*) species.

The MAC team held meetings with all seven of the exporting companies and with officials from the Department of Fisheries, Environment, Tourism, Wildlife and Conservation, and the Ministry of the Line and Phoenix Islands. All stakeholders were in favor of a management plan for the aquarium trade as sustainability was a concern. In addition, the Kiribati National Environment legislation is currently under review in order to comply with requirements of the Convention of Biodiversity (CBD) and the need to ensure that fisheries are sustainable and responsible.

The MAC team also met with 40 Christmas Islands fish collectors to explain best collection and handling practices using the booklet developed by the Pacific team in Kiribati language. Collectors appreciated information in their own language and were generally interested in how they could improve collection and handling of fish. MAC met with the seven companies to explain MAC Certification, provide feedback on collection and handling situations they had observed and suggested improvements to these. The team identified major needs for training/coaching of collectors and operators to address quality maintenance and control. Awareness was raised about the health consequence issues of deep diving. Buyers were informed about other valuable shallow water species that are available from Christmas Islands.

Recommendations were also developed on improving basic post-harvest handling, husbandry and transport techniques, and improvements in the design of operator's facilities and the cold storage facility at the airport.

APEC adopts plan of action to guide ocean policy

Indonesia hosted the 2nd Oceans Related Ministerial Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) on 16-17 September 2005, in Bali. Participants produced a Joint Ministerial Statement (http://www.apec.org/apec/ministerial_statements/sectoral_ministerial/ocean-related/2005_ocean-related.html) and the Bali Plan of Action (http://www.apec.org/apec/ministerial_statements/sectoral_ministerial/ocean-related/2005_ocean-related/bali_plan_of_action.html). The latter, titled "Towards Healthy Oceans and Coasts for the Sustainable Growth and Prosperity of the Asia-Pacific Community", is intended to guide APEC's ocean-related work towards three objectives: (1) ensuring the sustainable management of the marine environment and its resources; (2) providing for sustainable economic benefits from the oceans; and (3) enabling sustainable development of coastal communities. With respect to the third objective, the plan specifically calls for actions to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters and climate extremes.

Farming success with barramundi cod

A commercial hatchery in Bowen, Queensland, Australia, has succeeded in producing 100,000 juvenile barramundi cod (*Cromileptes altivelis*), according to the Queensland Government. See the article at: http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/aquaculturenews/17314.html.

Waterless transport of live fish

According to the Government of the Philippines, an aquaculturist has developed a method to transport fish alive with no water. The method involves conditioning the fish by withholding food, controlling the water temperature, and immersing the fish in a liquid solution called "Buhi Blend", which stuns the fish. Groupers that underwent this treatment were reported to regain consciousness after eight hours of travel. See the article at: http://www.da.gov.ph/updates/waterless.html.

Live fish farming in the Marshall Islands?

According to an 18 April 2005 story in the *Marianas Variety*, aquaculture experts in Taiwan are urging their government to invest in a pilot live grouper culture project in the Marshall Islands. The project would initially set up a hatchery, followed by development of a cage culture system to produce live groupers for export to Asia.

Live fish in encyclopedia

There is a new entry called "live food fish trade" in Wikipedia, an online free-content encyclopedia. Anybody can contribute and edit articles in Wikipedia, making it a rapidly growing and fluid resource. It currently has almost 2 million articles in more than 100 languages. Articles are not necessarily attributed to specific authors and they are not subject to "peer" review (but they may be edited by anybody who wishes to, and their history of edits can be viewed). See the encyclopedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page and look up "live food fish trade."

Marine Ornamentals 2006

Marine Ornamentals 2006, the fourth in a series of conferences for the marine ornamentals community, will take place 13–16 February 2006 in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. The conference will be held as a special session of Aquaculture America 2006, the Annual Meeting of the US Aquaculture Society.

The goal of the conference is to contribute to the worldwide goal of creating an economically and environmentally viable future for the dynamic marine ornamentals industry and its diverse clientele by:

- improving the methods for the collection, distribution, and management of wild marine ornamental species;
- increasing the variety, quantity and availability of cultured marine ornamental species; and
- encouraging education and outreach activities in the husbandry and conservation of marine ornamental species.

Conference information can be found at: http://www.hawaiiaquaculture.org/marineornamentals06.html

Workshop on the future of mariculture in the Asia-Pacific region

Source: *Marine Finfish Aquaculture e-News*, No. 28 (23 September 2005)

The Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia-Pacific (NACA) has just agreed formally with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to arrange a regional mariculture development workshop.

The tentative title of the workshop is "The Future of mariculture: A regional approach for a responsible development of marine farming in the Asia-Pacific Region", planned to be held in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China from March 6–10, 2006.

The mariculture workshop will bring together expertise from major producing countries in the region to identify common issues in mariculture development, and establish a collaborative research and development program to support responsible mariculture, and social and economic development, among coastal communities in the region.

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