

SAFETY AT SEA

## Racing to the bottom with fishing crew safety

The Irish branch of the International Transport Federation (ITF) has warned of a “race to the bottom” which is jeopardizing the safety of fishing crews in Irish and European waters, reports *The Irish Times*.

Federation inspector and Siptu official Ken Fleming said serious loss of life could have occurred on two British-registered Spanish vessels working in Irish waters, due to poor conditions on board which contributed to marine emergencies. He was commenting on the publication of British investigations into rescue of 34 crew in total from two British-registered Spanish vessels which got into difficulty off the southwest and northwest Irish coasts earlier this year. In the case of one of the two vessels, none of the 18 crew had a common language and the Portuguese skipper and mate could not understand safety notices published in English and Spanish.

The British Marine Accident Investigation

Bureau (MAIB) said it was so concerned about the common issues raised by both inquiries that it decided to issue a joint report, which includes recommendations for British authorities and Spanish owners. As both vessels were of British registry,

averted serious loss of life on these vessels,” Mr Fleming said.

In the first incident, the British-registered Spanish-owned vessel was fishing 120km northwest of Malin Head, Co Donegal, on January 19th, 2008, when a fire broke out, causing extensive damage.



the official inquiries were its responsibility. The MAIB has already recommended that an urgent programme of inspection of foreign-controlled British-registered fishing vessels be conducted in relation to survey. “It was pure luck, plus the prompt response of the Naval Service and a nearby French trawler, that

The Naval Service flagship LE Eithne managed to extinguish the blaze and rescue the skipper and 15 crew. The vessel was also towed to Killybegs for inspection. It is understood that the Naval Service personnel have been nominated for a State marine award later this year for their actions. The British inquiry found that the

fire was probably caused by the improper use of electrical equipment and chafed wiring.

VENEZUELA

### Venezuela bids goodbye to trawling

Trawl-fishing is on its way out in Venezuela, amid demonstrations by artisanal fisherfolk who support the new law as amended by President Hugo Chávez, reports Inter Press Service (IPS).

“Trawling is killing off fish species. In our case, we fish with hooks, catch a ‘pargo’ (sea bream), try again, catch a ‘mero’ (grouper), and clean them as we go. We used to fill the boats in a single night, but for years now that hasn’t happened, and sometimes we come back empty-handed,” said Manuel González, a veteran member of the Fishers’ Association of Río Caribe, a town on the Caribbean coast 550 km northeast of Caracas.

Fisherfolk have been marching in the capital, some of them driving trucks carrying their boats, to show their support for the Law on Fisheries and Aquaculture, amended by Chávez in March by a decree-law banning trawl-fishing.

The previous law only prohibited trawling less than six miles (10 km) from the mainland or less than 10 miles (16 km) from island shores. But the amended law bans trawl-fishing in all Venezuelan waters, where González said “Italian and Spanish ships used to trawl, not only Venezuelan fishing vessels.”

Franklin Hernández of the Socialist Fishers’ Front in the state of Sucre, where Río Caribe is located, said that “we artisanal fisherfolk are the ones who really supply the country. There will be no shortage of fish, and we support the new law 100 per cent.”

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ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

## Sustainable Development Foundation Thailand

The Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) was established to promote and expand sustainable development ideas and approaches. Its mission is to support and strengthen non-governmental organizations, peoples’ organizations and local groups by promoting sustainable development, learning through doing, developing holistic visions, improving understanding of development, and strengthening the co-operation between various groups in society. Sustainable development tries to bring benefits to the most disadvantaged in society, especially to those who lack opportunities, with the goal of strengthening the self-reliance of the community.

SDF works with the Asian Forest Network (AFN) in participatory forest management, with

a specific focus on capacity building. SDF also partners with the Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), focusing on women and natural resource management. SDF is also supported by the Asia-Pacific Research Network (APRN) to work on women’s labour in fishery and agriculture.

The foundation brings out a quarterly publication, the SPARK newsletter, produced in Thai, Bahasa and English. The newsletter is aimed at practitioners of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. The newsletter is intended to serve as a networking tool to encourage the sharing of knowledge, experiences, ideas, and co-operation among different groups implementing CBNRM activities. For more information, visit [http://www.sdfthai.org/web\\_pages\\_index/index.html](http://www.sdfthai.org/web_pages_index/index.html)



EXCERPTS

# Who is a fisher?

Some are born fishers, some become fishers. The sons of fishermen as a rule become the fathers of fishermen to be. Among us we have a whole caste of them. Once of the fisher caste always of the fisher caste, no matter whether you fish for fish or you fish for bigger fry. There are certain characteristics of the caste perpetuated from generation to generation. For an island race fishing as a pursuit is inevitable, but it would be interesting to know how far back fishers became a caste. The question becomes all the more interesting because, unlike the fisherman in India, the fisherman in Ceylon is also a farmer-man.



your voice across the defile of a forest is an act of conformity with Nature. To drown the day long moan of the sea and to slice through the roar of the wind you must condemn the elements. That is why our fisher-caste people are so loud voiced. It has now become a national custom to subdue an angry person by asking him not to shout like a fisherman.

Their loud-voiced speech, the coiffure of the women arranged high up on the nape of their necks, the profiles of both men and women betraying more virility than classicism; these are the distinguishing marks of our fisher caste. Though not so rooted to the soil as the farmers they are an equal part of our island

heritage. An island's foster-mother is the sea. Those of her foster-children who frolic with her become thereby her favourites, and these are the born fishermen.

The fisherman who makes himself a fisherman is, I believe, a very recent phenomenon. He is a commercial product as much as the fishing tackle and the fishing "literature" which turns him into a fishing enthusiast. He is a much written of person and I do not intend to glorify him.

But as with the growth of every other caste, it is easy to imagine how the men who dwelt by the sea perfected their pastime until it became a traditional pursuit, ending up as a profession. It is also easy to imagine how these people became bolder and more enterprising and voyaged further and further away from their coasts until they touched the Maldives and Malabar and even Arabia. People who live by the sea naturally tend to raise their voices in speech. Shooting

— from *Grass for My Feet*, a little book of short stories by Sri Lankan author, J Vijaya Tunga, published in 1935



VERBATIM

Today in Gloucester an old proverb has a new twist. They now say, "If you give a man a fish, you feed him. If you teach a man to fish, he will starve."

MARK KURLANSKY  
IN *THE LAST FISH TALE*

MARINE CAPTURE FISHERIES

Rough Estimate of Some Aspects of The Economics of Operation of Marine Fishing Crafts in India (2004)

ESTIMATED ITEMS	LARGE-SCALE	SMALL-SCALE	
	Trawlers, Gillnetters etc.,	Motorized	Non-Motorized
No. of Units <sup>1</sup>	 58,349	 74,937	 104,059
Investment <sup>2</sup> (In mn US\$)	 2,524.99	 476.29	 86.58
Total Crew <sup>3</sup>	 379,158	 261,110	 253,533
Reported Catch <sup>4</sup> (tonnes)	 1,736,910	 618,686	 182,509
Discards	Occasional	Negligible	Negligible
Own Consumption <sup>5</sup> (estimated in tonnes)	 17,369 (1%)	 43,168 (7%)	 12,775 (7%)
Estimated Catch (tonnes)	 1,754,279	 661,854	 195,284
Value of Catch <sup>6</sup> (In mn US\$)	 2072.00	 738.06	 217.71
Operating Costs <sup>7</sup> (In mn US\$)	 745.49	 207.39	 43.48
Of which Fuel <sup>8</sup> (In mn US\$)	 300.38	 173.29	nil

<sup>1</sup> CMFRI and GOI 2006

<sup>2</sup> Estimated from South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) data. Also data from Depts. of Fisheries of the Indian maritime States

<sup>3</sup> Calculated based on field knowledge

<sup>4</sup> CMFRI data for 2004

<sup>5</sup> Based on Kurien & Willmann, 1982

<sup>6</sup> Calculated from CMFRI, 2005 and GOI, 2007

<sup>7</sup> Estimated from data maintained in SIFFS. Operating costs, which include fuel costs, are shared between crew and owners. Crew shares are paid out from the Gross Value Added (Divisible Earnings)

<sup>8</sup> Estimated from FAO and SIFFS data

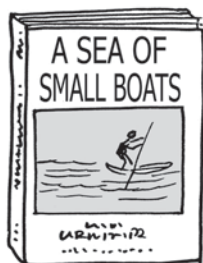
—This table has been compiled by John Kurien, Member, ICSF, using data from the abovementioned sources.

## BOOKSHELF

### Sea tenure systems

A SEA OF SMALL BOATS  
Cultural Survival Report No. 26,  
Edited by John Cordell, Cultural  
Survival, Inc., Cambridge, Mas-  
sachusetts, US. 418 p. 1989.  
ISBN 0-939521-31-8

In this collection of readings about various community sea tenure systems around the world, the authors present a new perspective on the significance of marine territory. They offer an insightful look at inshore sea rights issues from the inside—from the standpoint of local communities whose sense of belonging to a seascape and territorial behaviour cannot be explained by conventional Western economic models of fisheries.



The editor's overview of sea tenure studies focuses on problems of cross-cultural interpretation and explains why prevailing common property management and limited entry paradigms are inappropriate for developing or regulating many Third World and indigenous fishing systems. As the book documents the extent and variation of informal property relations in fisheries once thought to be unknowable, it simultaneously encourages planners and governments to take heed of the logic and benefits of preserving traditional sea rights.

## FLASHBACK

### Basing it Just Right

Rights-based approaches to development that use human rights—economic, social, cultural, civil and political, as established by international law—as the framework to guide development agendas, have been increasingly adopted in recent years and particularly in the last decade, including by the United Nations and its agencies. In essence, it is recognized that all development initiatives should contribute directly to the realization of human rights.

In this context, the paper prepared by the Secretariat of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for the Agenda item on “Social Issues in Small-scale Fisheries” (COFI/2007/6), stressing a human-rights perspective to foster social development and effective resource management, is timely and needs to be welcomed. The paper notes that a rights-based approach to development in fisheries needs to focus as much on promoting human rights, raising living standards and addressing the vulnerability and social exclusion of fishing communities, as on improving management of fisheries resources. A narrow focus on the latter may be ineffective if undertaken in isolation from the broader social and cultural conditions in fishing communities and societies at large, it stresses. In a context where fishing communities in some parts of the world, and particularly in countries



of the South, are known to live in poverty, with minimal access to basic services or representation in decision-making processes, there is no denying the essential logic and desirability of this approach. Viewed through the lens of equity and poverty reduction, certain fisheries-management measures, such as the creation and effective enforcement of artisanal trawl-free fishing zones—long demanded by artisanal and small-scale fishworkers from countries like Peru, Chile, Thailand, India and Indonesia—would make sense, particularly if accompanied by measures like ensuring gear selectivity and use of labour-intensive techniques, among others.

-- from “Basing it just right”, Comment in SAMUDRA Report No. 46, March 2007

## WEBSITE

### FAO and CITES

The CITES-Fisheries website ([www.fao.org/fishery/cites-fisheries](http://www.fao.org/fishery/cites-fisheries)) intends to provide selected and updated information on the work undertaken by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department on the main issues raised by the harvesting and trade of commercially exploited aquatic species listed in CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) Appendices.

FAO and CITES have jointly addressed some of the technical

difficulties of countries in fulfilling the requirements of a CITES listing and in an attempt to reconcile some differences of opinion regarding the role of CITES as a complementary fisheries management tool.

A number of the FAO activities reported in this website have been funded by Regular Programme funds and, since 2005, also by the Japan funded Trust Fund Project on “CITES and commercially-exploited species, including the evaluation of listing proposals”.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CONFERENCE

**CZAP 2008**  
**Coastal Zone Asia-Pacific**  
**Conference**  
**19-22 October 2008,**  
**Ocean University of China,**  
**Qingdao, Shandong**  
**Province, China**

The first CZAP Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2002, explored ways of ‘Improving the State of the Coastal Areas’.

In Brisbane, Australia, ‘Improving Quality of Life’ was the focus of CZAP 2004, while CZAP 2006, in Batam, Indonesia, attempted to

make the connection between natural and social systems by ‘Linking People and the Coasts’.

The upcoming fourth CZAP will emphasize the importance of sustainable development of coastal resources towards a better future for the people.

The main theme for CZAP 2008 is ‘Sustainable Coast and Better Life’, with a focus on how to manage coasts to cope with climate change and expanding populations.

### PUBLICATIONS

**Human Dimensions of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries: An Overview of Context, Concepts, Tools and Methods** by A Charles, C De Young and A Hjort. FAO Fisheries Technical Paper No. 489. Rome, FAO. 152 p. 2008.

This document aims to provide a better understanding of the role of the economic, institutional and sociocultural components within the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) process and to examine some potential methods and approaches that may facilitate the adoption of EAF management.

### CONGRESS

**Fifth World Fisheries Congress**  
**20-24 October 2008,**  
**Yokohama, Japan**

The five-day Congress will focus on current global aquatic issues and sustainable fisheries, including, among other topics, fish habitats and ecosystems (marine and freshwater), and the effective utilization of fish, shellfish and algae resources.

[www.5thwfc2008.com/index.html](http://www.5thwfc2008.com/index.html)