

FISHBYTES

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Meeting fishers in Raja Ampat, Indonesia: perspectives of a new economist

by Megan Bailey

To leave the realm of biology in hope of becoming an economist involves many changes. I thought one of the hardest things for me to leave behind would be the long and glorious days in the field and that being an economist would mean life behind the computer. Little did I know that becoming a fisheries economist was just a portal to more real-life field studies - with humans as the research subjects.

My first adventure took me to Bali, Indonesia, where I met up with Rashid Sumaila, Tony Pitcher and Cameron Ainsworth for a week's workshop on Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) of the Raja Ampat (R4) Archipelago. The workshop was part of an EBM project

jointly run by Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund and the Fisheries Centre and was intended to clarify responsibilities of the project's different parties.

The real field work began after the workshop, when I flew to the eastern province of Papua - directly over the R4 Archipelago,



Men shop at the local fish market in Sorong, Indonesia. The catch is always mixed, with snappers, groupers, wrasse and tuna available daily. Photo by Megan Bailey

which boasts some of the world's highest coral reef biodiversity. But from 10,000 feet above the water all you can see are richly forested islands and rocky atolls dotting the brightest and bluest ocean imaginable. About 30,000 people depend on these 800 islands for their homes and food. Sorong is the main landing port for fish caught in R4. Upon arrival, I headed straight for the fish market to get a first-hand glimpse of the fish

being harvested and to check their selling prices. I was astounded at the variety. Everything from tiny anchovy, cephalopods, tritons, miniscule shrimps and prawns, to piles of snappers, groupers, fusiliers, parrotfish and rows of yellow-fin tuna. I visited the market daily and became familiar to some of the vendors. They would accompany me around the tables, shouting out local fish names, although I could only understand one word of Bahasa: ikan (fish!).

I also had the opportunity to visit the Pindito, a live-aboard dive boat for tourists. The owner, Edi Frommenwiler, gave me a first-hand account of the destruction that illegal blast fishing had caused in R4: num-

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bers of reef-associated fish and large pelagics had declined throughout the 1990s and dead coral structures could be found in several locations. Edi's story was also one of hope though. Pearl farming started in R4 around 1999-2000. To protect their investments, the pearl farm owners increased surveillance and monitoring of illegal fishing practices in the area. Since then, Edi and his divers have noticed an increase in numbers of reef-associated fishes. Furthermore, Edi has not seen or heard blast fishing while running a tour in the past six months. This is in contrast to the earlier days, when he says they would either see or hear blasting at least twice a month.

My field work took me onto the islands of R4, to meet the people whose interests EBM must take into account. Both native Papuans and migrant fishers depend heavily on the fisheries resources from the R4 waters. The people fish and farm everything they consume, except for rice. It is estimated that 90% of the local island population is involved in fishing for subsistence. As I was leaving the

village of Waisai, an elder handed me a smoked fish, hot off the fire, in thanks for visiting and for being concerned with the state of the ecosystem that sustains life on the islands. As can be seen all over the world, it is often the local fishing communities that first notice changes in their catches and ask for support to make good harvesting decisions.

The migrant fishers come from Sulawesi, a province just west of Papua. They have been fishing the waters for anchovy for seven years, and have set up several "temporary" camps. On average, based on rough calculations of numbers of "baskets" of fish each boat catches per night, it appears that they are harvesting approximately 1.4 thousand tonnes of anchovy each year. At 12,000 RP per kilogram (dried) this group of fishers grosses over 10 million USD annually. This is an unregulated, open access fishery, where the incentive to fish extensively

is very high. The fishers I spoke to have noticed declining catches over the last year. These fishers told me that their catch would have to decrease 30-fold before they would move on to another location.

Although this trip was the briefest of my field experiences, it was amazing in so many ways. Being able to appreciate the beauty and complexity of the ocean from a biologist's point of view is extraordinary, but being able to contextualize that beauty because it means life to humans is an equally rewarding opportunity.



The migrant anchovy fishers of Kabui Bay pose for a photograph with Megan Bailey (front left) and Conservation International colleagues.

Fisheries and Marine Ecosystems Graduate Student Conference 2006

On April 28-30, 2006, more than 65 students from Canada and the United States gathered at Crescent Beach, B.C., for the 2006 Fisheries and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Graduate Student Conference: *Integrating Science and Policy*. This followed on from two previous FAME conferences, held in 2004 and 2005 in B.C. and Washington state respectively. The conferences and resulting FAME network aim to bring together graduate students in marine science, management, economics and social science to share their research and experience.

Mainly focused on the Pacific Northwest, the conference attracts students from all over Canada and the

United States and there is now an eastern version, FAMEast, held for the first time this year in Florida (<http://imars.marine.usf.edu/%7Ecwall/FAMEast/home.htm>). This year's Crescent Beach conference, hosted by the Fisheries Centre, drew students from Simon Fraser University and the Universities of British Columbia, Victoria,

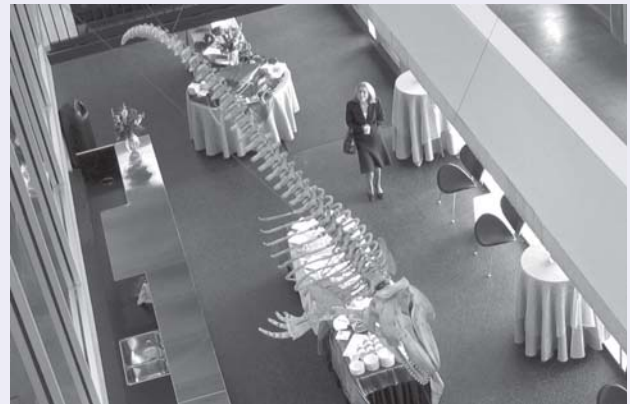
Washington, California (Santa Barbara), Dalhousie, Waterloo, Manitoba and Newfoundland. The keynote address was given by The Hon. John A. Fraser, former speaker of the House of Commons and Fisheries Minister, and now Chair of the Pacific Salmon Forum. Students presented talks and posters on a huge range of local and international topics and took advantage of evening social sessions to network and have fun.

The 2006 conference schedule and programme of abstracts can be downloaded from www.fisheries.ubc.ca/fame/. For more information about the FAME network see www.sfu.ca/fame/.



Official opening of the Aquatic Ecosystems Research Laboratory

On March 10, 2006, the Aquatic Ecosystems Research Laboratory (AERL) - home to the Fisheries Centre and to the Institute of Resources, Environment and Sustainability (IRES) and its graduate programme in Resource Management and Environmental Studies (RMES) - was officially opened. The day featured a full schedule of events, including exhibits by the building's research groups; a public open house; presentations by Fisheries Centre and RMES students; official speeches; and tours for invited guests, who included the UBC President, MPs and MLAs. Finishing touches, such as hanging of artwork in common spaces, completion of the *Sea Around Us* project's Scenario Laboratory (see *Sea Around Us*, Issue 33) and the suspension of a complete killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) skeleton in the lobby, helped make the opening a success. The following pictures show some moments of the day.



Clockwise from top left: 1. The official unveiling; 2. Official speeches were given by Professor Douw Steyn (Associate Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies), Hon. James Moore (MP for Port Moody-Westwood-Port Coquitlam), Hon. Murray Coell (BC Advanced Education Minister), Dr Martha Piper (UBC President), Dr Freida Granot (Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies) and Ms Line Bang Christensen (Graduate Student); 3. Dr Granot looks up from the lobby at the suspended Orca; 4. Centrepieces featured a marine theme - these fishes carved from radishes and other vegetables; 5. Dr David Suzuki shares a conversation with his wife, Dr Tara Cullis, and Prof. Daniel Pauly in the Scenario Laboratory; and 6. The Sea Around Us exhibit on the third floor.

News and Notes

Five new babies!

The stork has been busy this year, so far bringing five new babies to members of the Fisheries Centre. Please join us in congratulating all of the new parents.

Annabelle Juliette Jacques (right), new sister to **Éliane**, was born on January 5th, 2006 to PhD Candidate **Lyne Morissette** and husband **André Jacques**, weighing 9 lbs 2 oz. Annabelle was born after a labour of just two hours!



Fisheries Centre IT technician, **Rosalie Casison** and husband **Frank** (left) celebrated the birth of **Yusuf** (Arabic for Joseph) on February 27, 2006. Yusuf is very cute and weighed 8 lb 8 oz at birth.

Graeme Townsend Booth

(right) was born on April 13, 2006 to proud new parents **Gwynne Prodan** and *Sea Around Us* team member, **Shawn Booth**. Graeme weighed 7 lbs 3 oz at birth and has made his parents very happy.



Tania Tripp and PhD Candidate **David Preikshot** are ecstatic to announce the birth of **Marina Vida Preikshot** (left), who arrived on April 16, 2006, weighing 8lb 5 oz. Flash cards to teach her rote multiplication have been heavily drooled on, suggesting that math skills may be beyond the grasp of a new baby.

Phoebe Marie Okey-Dobie (right) was born on April 20, 2006, weighing 6 lb 9 oz, in Brisbane, Australia, to **Kathy Dobie** and FC graduate, **Tom Okey**. Phoebe tried to crawl out of her incubator an hour after her birth and would have succeeded if not for a vigilant nurse!



Congratulations

Heather Keith successfully defended her MSc thesis, "A Bio-economic Model Approach to Predict the Spatial Fishing Effort in the Global Longline Tuna Fishery" on March 31, 2006. Heather is now working as a research assistant for the *Sea Around Us* project, where she is working on a global fisheries model with Villy Christensen.

Cameron Ainsworth successfully defended his PhD thesis, "Strategic Marine Ecosystem Restoration in Northern British Columbia" on April 28, 2006. Cameron has accepted a post-doctoral fellowship at the UBC Fisheries Centre, where he will be studying the marine ecosystem of Raja Ampat, Indonesia.

Yajie Liu was the recipient of the inaugural Pacific Fishery Biologists travel scholarship, thanks to a generous donation from the organization of Pacific Fishery Biologists. Yajie will use the award to attend the International Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade (IIFET), July 11-14, 2006 in Portsmouth, UK. The theme of the conference is "Rebuilding Fisheries in an Uncertain Environment". Yajie will make an oral presentation titled "Estimating Costs of Sea Lice from Salmon Aquaculture on Wild Salmon Fisheries", and a poster presentation titled "Economic Values for Pinto Abalone *Haliotis kamtschatkana* Selective Breeding Index".

Last chance to enter the Aboriginal Fisheries logo and essay contests!

In the last issue of *FishBytes* (Issue 12-1, p.4), we announced the UBC Aboriginal Fisheries logo and essay contests. Please note that the deadline has been extended to August 31, 2006.

Please see www.fisheries.ubc.ca/aborig_new/logo_essay.htm or contact Mimi Lam (m.lam@fisheries.ubc.ca) for more details.

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