

FISHBYTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FISHERIES CENTRE – UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
VOLUME 12 ISSUE 3 MAY/JUNE 2006

Tony Blair's bargain-priced flight and easing pressure on fish stocks

by *Ussif Rashid Sumaila*

From the end of classes in April to the time of writing this

article, I have been perpetually in planes, with two trips to Africa, three to Asia, three to Europe and two to the USA. I made presentations at workshops and conferences, attended meetings and ran capacity building and training sessions, all with the goal of contributing, in whatever small way, to finding solutions to the world's fish and fisheries problems. I was inspired to write this article whilst reading a newspaper during my flight to Rome from London.

Most people agree that many fisheries around the

world are in crisis, indeed, many would agree that something needs to be done. The problem is that doing something entails initial cost, both economically and socially. This is because, in most cases, fishing will have to be reduced significantly, in the short term, to get depleted fisheries on the path to recovery. Many will ask, what do we do

with our fishers while we wait for the fish to rebuild? Recent research at the Fisheries Centre has demonstrated that, to deal broadly with the environmental and natural resource problems of the world, we need to find solutions to the tendency of economic agents to front-load the benefits derived from them (Sumaila 2004; Sumaila and Walters 2005; Sumaila 2005; Ainsworth and Sumaila 2005; Berman and Sumaila 2006).

One way to reduce the current social and economic pressures that lead to overfishing is to find the resources needed to help affected fishers readjust to the reality of fishing effort reduction. The big question is, where will these resources come from? In this question lies the connection between a bargain flight and easing the pressure on declining fish stocks.

The Daily Telegraph of Monday, June 5, 2006 reported a story about the return of Tony Blair to London from Rome on a bargain-price ticket on Ryanair Flight FR3009, with tickets costing £49 (about US\$92) per head for his entourage of eight. According to the newspaper, previous family holiday flights to Italy by the Prime Minister cost U.K. taxpayers £16,000 a time aboard a BAe 146, of the 'Queen's Flight'. The newspaper further reported that, following a Freedom of Information Act request, the Ministry of Defence revealed that the PM had spent more than £130,000 of taxpayers' money using the Queen's Flight for his previous holidays. It should be noted that it was also reported that Downing Street "insisted that the PM had been willing to go on a commercial flight but had been overruled by security advisers." So, why couldn't the security advisers overrule the PM this time around? I think one reason is the media outcry about the use of the Queen's Flight for holidays by Blair and the high cost of this to the British taxpayer. The media outcry was so loud that not even security advisers could overrule the PM.

Bargain-price Blairs fly in but are spared the no-frills scrummage

In this issue...

Tony Blair and fisheries

Morrow Scholarship news: travels in India

Thinking Big - Pauly Symposium

Larkin Lecture Announcement

And, as always, lots of News and Notes!

Continued on page 2 - Blair

Seeing Indian fisheries in a new light

by **Brajgeet Bhathal**

Winner of the 2004 Cecil and Kathleen Morrow Scholarship

An emerging power in terms of economics, India is home to over a billion people. Of these, approximately 14 million are fishers (in 2003) and, of these, over 20% rely solely on marine resources. Following Independence in 1947, the marine fisheries sector in India was viewed as a promising component of food self-sufficiency. This view is still extant, but most of the attention has shifted to revenue generation.

With generous support from the Cecil and Kathleen Morrow Scholarship (www.fisheries.ubc.ca/grad/morrow.php), I had the opportunity to visit India in November, 2005, for two months to study the fisheries of different parts of India. The three main objectives of this trip were to: 1) initiate an exchange of information; 2) learn about the perspectives of local experts, especially fisheries biologists; and 3) collect locally published material related to India's marine ecosystems not easily accessible from Canada. My overall goal is to utilize the collected information to gain a better understanding of trends in Indian marine fisheries and later to construct models of marine ecosystems in India that will help me explore different policy scenarios.

India is bordered by the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. These two bodies of water are very different from each other in terms of their primary productivity, and hence fish catches. The west coast, with pronounced upwellings, contributes 72% of India's total catch. Over a span of 50 years (1950 to 2000), Indian marine catches have increased gradually from 0.6 to 3.3 million tonnes annually (Bhathal 2005). However, the "fishing down marine foodwebs" effect (i.e., initial depletion of large predatory species, followed by a shift towards smaller species of lower trophic level (Pauly *et al.* 1998) is

occurring in Indian waters and catches have increased mainly due to geographic expansion of fisheries. My MSc work indicated that the Indian marine fisheries have undergone sequential depletions and may be unsustainable at the ecosystem level.

As stated earlier, millions of people depend on Indian marine fisheries. Changes in the composition of multispecies stocks upon which the fisheries depend is a serious challenge, which demands thorough evaluation in ecological, social and economic terms. As a first step, with the kind donation of the Cecil and Kathleen Morrow scholarship, I was able to draw attention to this challenge in discussion with local scientists and through lectures in public libraries. In conclusion, despite the many challenges involved with this kind of work, new collaborative arrangements have emerged and I have brought home what I am sure will be the first of many suitcases of useful information!

Acknowledgments

Daniel Pauly, Suzanne Mondoux and Ahmed Khan gave valuable feedback on this article. I also enormously appreciate Mr Harjeet Bhathal for the help he extended throughout the field trip.

References

- Bhathal, B. 2005. Historical reconstruction of Indian marine fisheries catches, 1950-2000, as a basis for testing the 'Marine Trophic Index'. *Fisheries Centre Research Reports* 13(4). Fisheries Centre, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. 122 pp. [Based on 2004 MSc thesis of the same title]
- Pauly, D., V. Christensen, J. Dalsgaard, R. Froese, J.F. Torres. 1998. Fishing down marine food webs. *Science* 279, 860-863.



Dip nets operating on Kerala coast
Photo by B. Bhathal

Blair - Continued from page 1

This story would appear, to most readers, to have nothing to do with fisheries, but I see a connection. The story shows how a dynamic and free press can help countries save taxpayers' money that can then be used for other pressing national, or even global, investments such as those that would ensure the flow of fish protein to both present and future generations of people.

References

- Berman, M. and U.R. Sumaila. 2006. Discounting, amenity values and marine ecosystem restoration. *Marine Resource Economics*. 21, 211-219
- Sumaila, U.R. 2004. Intergenerational cost benefit analysis and marine ecosystem restoration. *Fish and Fisheries*, 5, 329-343.
- Sumaila, U.R. 2005. Differences in economic perspectives and the implementation of ecosystem-based management of marine resources. *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, 279-282.
- Sumaila, U.R. and C. Walters. 2005. Intergenerational discounting: A new intuitive approach. *Ecological Economics*, 52, 135-142.
- Ainsworth, C.H. and U.R. Sumaila. 2005. Intergenerational valuation of fisheries resources can justify long-term conservation: a case study in Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*). *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*, 62, 1104-1110.



Thinking big calls for thanking big

by Villy Christensen and Amanda Vincent

It is an inherent aspect of getting something built that the effort involved scales exponentially with size. The pyramids were not built by the pharaohs. We had the pleasure of conducting a giant orchestra producing beautiful music on May 2, when we celebrated Daniel Pauly's 60th Birthday and the 13th International Cosmos Prize, through an honorary symposium, and, in the process, we came to understand what it means to have support.

From the very first thinking about the day, UBC was supportive. Vice President John Hepburn and Dean Frieda Granot offered the support we needed from the university to mark the occasion and from this interaction the idea of a symposium surfaced quickly. Next step seemed simple - who would we like to come to pay tribute by giving a lecture? The answer was "as many as possible." We drew together a list of people whose work has been influenced by Daniel and who have influenced him through his career. The list was too long for a symposium - it was more like a telephone directory, and a day

doesn't allow for many talks. But we selected a list representing milestone interactions through his career, sent out the invitations, and kept our fingers crossed.

All said yes except for one regret and we were on track for a great event. We had by then signed up Kerrie O'Donnell as the symposium organizer, and over the next many months she carried the flag and the drum needed to round up support. Kerrie did an outstanding job, as all the invited speakers and the participants will testify. She also organized a remarkable group of volunteer helpers from the Fisheries Centre, who together made the event a unique and smooth event. Organizing a one-day symposium is actually much more of a challenge than a longer one. You only get one chance - it's gotta be perfect. Who arrives at 5 am to make sure the caterer can park and get in? Who takes care of fishy table decorations for the banquet? Who leaves at 4.05 to set up the instruments for the

band? Who makes a glossy program? Kerrie and the volunteers pulled it off, and we owe them a very big thank you.

Also, we thank the speakers for feeding our minds (see *Sea Around Us* newsletter, Issue 33, p.6). The breadth and significance of the talks were outstanding. We also thank them for enthusiastically volunteering their time for the Student Forum on May 3 (see box).

In closing, this was a remarkable event, we enjoyed the days of feasting, and are especially happy because of the wide contribution of effort from throughout the Fisheries Centre. Thank you.



From left: David Fluharty, Villy Christensen, Nancy Baron, John Munro, Carl Safina, Michael Hirshfield, Ratana Chuenpagdee, Roger Pullin, Daniel Pauly, Philippe Cury, Kerrie O'Donnell, Jeremy Jackson, Kostas Stergiou, Cornelia Nauen, Andrew Bakun, Annadel Cabanban, Rainer Froese, Amanda Vincent, Gotthilf Hempel, Jay Maclean and Kenneth Ruddle. Photo by S. Lai

Thinking Big - student symposium

by Divya Alice Varkey

The 'Thinking Big' symposium brought to the Fisheries Centre researchers who have approached fisheries conservation questions from various angles. The student symposium, organized by graduate students Jennifer Jacquet and Line Bang Christensen, provided students with a structured yet informal platform to interact with this unique think-tank.

The first session, "Catalyzing Change", was about identifying means of defining success. There are no rules: while Gotthilf Hempel was delighted in having mentored 60 PhD students, Jeremy Jackson preferred to devote his energy to his science and advocacy. Daniel Pauly and Cornelia Nauen said they valued respect and trust from people they respected, Kenneth Ruddle took pride in cross-cultural experiences, while Carl Safina focused on his books that worked as instruments of change. Invitations to talks, number of books, papers etc. were certainly indicators but you could call yourself successful if, at the end of each day, you were happy with time well spent. It was important to be unafraid of challenges, to toil relentlessly, to be open to change and not to get trapped in prejudices of race, culture or gender. Action point for students: "you need a 'neat little thing' constructed from good data and good science to launch yourself".

In the next session, 'the North-South Divide in Fisheries Management', questions were raised about the comparison of resources in terms of the dependent population; the application of methodologies developed in the North (i.e., developed world) for fisheries management in the South (the developing world); and the relevance of training researchers from the South at centres in the North. An interesting comment was that there are no data-poor fisheries - data in the South exist in the heads of the master fishermen and intelligent methods need to be devised to bring them to paper. The session concluded that there was no divide on the major issues, but plans of attack need to be adaptive. The success of this session was in the many questions it raised, over which students have met several times since the symposium.

News and Notes

Announcing the 8th Larkin Lecture: Dr Ray Hilborn

March 2007, AERL Rm 120

We are pleased to announce that the 8th Larkin Lecture will be given by Dr Ray Hilborn of the University of Washington, on the topic "Learning from Fisheries Successes." The Thursday evening lecture will be followed by a question and answer session at 11am the next day. Both lecture and Q & A session are free of charge and open to the public so please watch this space and the Fisheries Centre website for the exact date and further details (www.fisheries.ubc.ca/events/lectures/).

Up and down with the Rev. Thomas Bayes

Residents of the AERL building will have noticed that Richmond Elevator Inc. has taken Steve Martell's courses on Bayesian estimation very seriously. If you take a trip up or down, after a period of serious number crunching, during which the indicator flickers and beeps like one of those mock computer panels in a 1970s episode of "Dr Who", the elevator estimates floor 3 as 7; floor 4 is estimated as 7 too. Neither of these estimates is at all bad by the standards of fisheries work: both way higher than the real value and about 100% out. We are hoping that Murdoch MacAllister, when he joins the FC faculty in July, can supply our elevator with some improved priors. ...TJP

Welcome

Sarah Bartnik is Project Seahorse's new research assistant. Sarah received her MSc from University of Windsor on recruitment of walleye in western Lake Erie. She has worked at the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources as a creel coordinator and at Fisheries and Oceans Canada as a zooplankton archivist.

Fish and Fisheries comes out on top

Blackwell Publications Ltd journal *Fish and Fisheries* (eds Tony Pitcher and Paul Hart) has topped the list of 41 fisheries journals with an impressive ISI Web of Knowledge Impact Factor of 4.974 (calculated as the number of citations of recent articles divided by the number of recent articles). For more information and rankings see <http://portal.isiknowledge.com/?DestApp=JCR&Func=Frame>.

Congratulations

PhD student **Brett van Poorten** has been awarded the **2005 Mercer Patriarche North American Journal of Fisheries Management Best Paper Award**, for his paper "Seasonal Fishery Dynamics of a Previously Unexploited Rainbow Trout Population with Contrasts to Established Fisheries" (van Poorten, B. and J. Post. 2005. *N. Am. J. Fish. Manage.* 25:329–345). The award will be presented at the 136th American Fisheries Society Annual meeting in Lake Placid, N.Y. in September, 2006.

PhD candidate **Sarah Foster** has been awarded the inaugural **Les Lavkulich Scholarship Award**. The scholarship, worth \$5,000 was endowed by colleagues and UBC alumni in honour of Professor Les Lavkulich, who created the Resource Management and Environmental Studies program in 1979. **Line Bang Christensen** and **Dale Marsden** were each recipients of **Lavkulich Excellence Awards**.

PhD candidates **Mike Melnychuk** (FC, Zoology) and **Valeria Vergara** (Zoology) are very proud to announce the birth of **Martina Viola**, who was born at 5.51 am on June 8, 2006, weighing 7 lb 11 oz. Please join us in sending our warmest wishes to all three.



FishBytes is the newsletter of the Fisheries Centre at the University of British Columbia, and is published six times per year. Subscriptions are free of charge.

Our mailing address is: UBC Fisheries Centre, Aquatic Ecosystems Research Laboratory, 2202 Main Mall, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, V6T 1Z4. Our fax number is +1 (604) 822-8934. All queries, reprint requests, subscription requests and address-changes should be sent to Robyn Forrest, *FishBytes* Editor, at the above address, or by email to FishBytes@fisheries.ubc.ca. Opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Fisheries Centre or its members. For back-issues, visit the Fisheries Centre's website, www.fisheries.ubc.ca, and follow the Publications link to *FishBytes*.

If you would prefer to receive *FishBytes* electronically, please email us a request. Please inform us whether you prefer to receive a pdf file or just notification of the URL of the latest newsletter. If you currently receive print copies, please also state whether you would like to continue to do so.

