

## Online course on Fish Genetics

The Aquaculture Program of Kentucky State University has announced its plan to hold a specialized online course on fish genetics. The course will provide an overview of fish genetics and will emphasize practical applications for aquaculture and fisheries management. The modules will cover the following topics: (i) material basis of heredity and cytogenetics of fish reproduction; (ii) inheritance of qualitative morphological traits in fish; (iii) inheritance of quantitative traits in fisheries; (iv) biochemical and molecular genetic markers; (v) selective breeding and hybridization; (vi) chromosome

set manipulation and sex control in aquaculture; and (vii) gene engineering and production of transgenic fish. The online course, which will be conducted from 3 August to 13 December 2003, is targeted for those working in aquaculture and fisheries and need knowledge on fish genetics for professional development and university students who are interested in taking a course on Fish Genetics.

For further information, contact: Dr. Boris Gomelsky, Assistant Professor, Kentucky State University, Frankfort, Kentucky, 40601 USA; E-mail: [bgomelsky@dcr.net](mailto:bgomelsky@dcr.net)

## Conference on invasive aquatic species

The introduction of non-indigenous aquatic species is an on-going problem that is increasing in frequency and has been causing significant damage to freshwater and coastal ecosystems, and to the economies that depend upon them. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources sponsored the "12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Invasive Aquatic Species" during 9-12 June 2003 in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. The conference reviewed the current knowledge on the control of non-indigenous aquatic species. The participants discussed a policy to prevent new introductions and approaches for effective public education and outreach initiatives.

For further information, contact: Elizabeth Muckle-Jeffs, Conference Administrator, 1027 Pembroke Street East, Pembroke, Ontario K8A 3M4, Canada; Tel: 1-800-868-8776; 613-732-7068; Fax: 613-732-3386; E-mail: [profedge@rench.igs.net](mailto:profedge@rench.igs.net); website: <http://www.aquatic-invasive-species-conference.org>

## E-mail conference on regulation of GMOs

The FAO Electronic Forum on Biotechnology in Food and Agriculture focused this year's first e-mail conference on the theme "Regulating genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in developing and transition countries." The e-mail conference, which also covered fisheries issues, was from 28 April to 25 May 2003. The objective was to provide an open forum that allowed a wide range of parties, including governmental and non-

governmental organizations, policy-makers and the general public to exchange views and experiences about specific issues concerning the regulation of genetically modified organisms in developing countries.

For further information on the electronic conference, visit the FAO website: <http://www.fao.org/biotech/C9doc.htm>

## NTAFP news

### Conference on Aquaculture

The World Aquaculture Society has announced a major international conference on aquaculture called "Aquaculture 2004". The conference, hosted by the Hawaii Aquaculture Association, will be held during 1-5 March 2004 in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. Global aquaculture scientists are expected to review the progress and latest developments in aquaculture worldwide. Organizers of this event encourage the submission of abstracts via the internet at the conference website: <http://www.was.org/submitabstract.asp>. The deadline for submitting abstracts is 1 August 2003.

### Announcement on new journal

CABI Publishing will launch a new review journal entitled "Aquatic Resources, Culture and Development" in 2004. The journal, edited by James Muir, Institute of Aquaculture, University of Stirling, UK, will focus on the management of aquatic resources in the developing and developed worlds. The publication will also present the sector in the wider context of social, ecological, economic, technical, management and political issues and will emphasize a multidisciplinary approach. The Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Panel welcome original papers and other contributions.

For further information, contact Mr. Charles Watson; E-mail: [c.Watson@cabi.org](mailto:c.Watson@cabi.org); Tel: 44(0) 1491 829247; Fax: 44(0) 1491 829198

### Aquaculture meeting in Asia-Pacific

The Department of Fisheries, Thailand, and the Asia-Pacific Chapter of the World Aquaculture Society will hold the conference called, "Asia-Pacific Aquaculture 2003" during 22 to 25 September 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand. Aquaculture leaders in research and industry will present the latest innovations in all phases of aquaculture in the Asia-Pacific region. The three-day meeting will cover sessions and discussions aimed at both theoretical and practical applications. Special sessions will focus on shrimp culture, fish culture, mollusk culture and quality in aquaculture. Concurrently, a three-day trade show will introduce the latest applications for aquaculture production.

For more information, visit the WAS website: <http://www.was.org>

## AFS Supports East Asian Seas Congress 2003

Slated from 8 to 12 December 2003 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the Congress aims to promote regional collaboration to achieve sustainable coastal and ocean development in the East Asian Seas region. The Asian Fisheries Society (AFS) shares with the Congress theme its concern for sustainable development. With its members representing a wide segment of fisheries and aquaculture experts and practitioners, the AFS endeavors to promote and support the vision of the Congress.

### Agreement of Affiliation between the Asian Fisheries Society (AFS) and the Sri Lanka Association for Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (SLAFAR) forged on 27 June 2003

The AFS and SLAFAR agreed to form an administrative arrangement to enable cooperative exchange of publications, to enhance the benefits available to membership of each society, and to broaden the international exchange of information among fisheries scientists.

### AFS welcomes its 48 new members from all over the world for the first half of the year 2003

The Asian Fisheries Society (AFS) would like to reiterate its invitation to members to activate and/or upgrade their membership status. Those, for instance, who have been previously accepted as student or associate members, may upgrade their status to Full Members upon submission of documents certifying additional or higher educational merits/degrees obtained (in the case of student members) or list of scientific publications (in the case of associate members).

To activate membership, the AFS calls on all

its members to update payment of their annual dues. This invitation also aims to reach out to inactive members, whose correspondence addresses on file are no longer current. Please contact the AFS and be counted. Current members who wish to submit their updated information may fill in the standard membership form on the web and send this via e-mail to (afs@compass.com.ph).

The AFS looks forward to providing better service and support to its members.

## NAGA news

### Fish health expert honored by Selangor ruler



Well-known international fish disease authority, Professor Dr Mohamed Shariff Mohamed Din of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), was honored with an award by the Sultan of the state of Selangor, Malaysia in an awards ceremony held in conjunction with the ruler's coronation recently. Professor

Shariff was bestowed the title of Dato' Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah (DSIS) which carries the honorific "Dato'".

Professor Shariff has written more than 100 scientific publications and edited several proceedings of seminars and conferences. He has also authored a book on fish disease identification, control and treatment. In 1999, Prof Shariff developed a Fast Target™ White Spot Virus Disease Identification Kit for shrimp which has won several awards at the international level and is widely acclaimed by the countries using the kit. The kit is currently awaiting patent approval.

Professor Shariff was President of the Asian Fisheries Society in 1996-98 and Founder President of the Malaysian Fisheries Society in 1987. From 1988 to 1995, he served as the coordinator of the IDRC-sponsored Asian Fish Health Network. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of ICLARM - The World Fish Center from

1994 to 2000. He also served on several committees at national level including the Tunku Abdul Rahman Aquarium Committee (chairman), and the Animal Health Committee of the National Zoo, Malaysia (chairman).

Currently Professor Shariff is a member of the Steering Committee of the Support Unit for International Fisheries and Aquatic Research (SIFAR), Rome, scientific advisor to the International Foundation for Science since 1994 and to the Director General of the WorldFish Center since 2000. In addition to this, he is a member of or heads several committees at the national level.

Prof Shariff was awarded a UPM Vice Chancellor's Fellowship in 2002 for achieving excellence in his field of research. In recognition of his contributions in the field of fish and shrimp health, a new species of parasite - *Gyrodactylus shariffi* - was named after him.

## 2003 Meeting of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) attracts biggest attendance yet

From 24 to 28 February 2003, the biennial meeting of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was held in Rome. This was the biggest meeting yet of the COFI, being attended by delegates from 121 member countries of the Committee, four observers from FAO member nations, six representatives of the UN and specialized agencies, as well as observers from 30 intergovernmental organizations and 22 non-governmental organizations. International interest in fisheries continues to expand and the key themes of the 2003 meeting give an idea of why this is so.

This meeting of COFI dealt with the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, reports of the Sub-Committees on Fish Trade and on Aquaculture, reports on the implementation of several International Plans of Action such as that on the status and trends of capture fisheries, and discussions on small-scale fisheries and the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, as well as the program and budget discussions for fisheries work of the FAO. The Committee also discussed how countries would address the Plan of Implementation agreed at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (please access Fish for All website: [www.fishforall.org](http://www.fishforall.org) and see "Call for Action to the Fish World"). In addition to the main formal meeting, many side events were organized to take advantage of such a gathering of experts. Environmental and conservation issues seemed to dominate them this year, including presentations on fishery by-catch research.

### What is the Committee on Fisheries and its functions?

The FAO Committee on Fisheries or COFI is formally represented by member country delegates. It meets once every two years to provide technical guidance to the FAO Programme Committee and, through this to the FAO Governing Council. Similar technical committees advise the FAO on agriculture and forestry. The Council of the FAO oversees the work of the normative and operational work programs of the FAO as an organization. Although COFI is a members' meeting, the FAO welcomes observers and the number and diversity of the formal observers seem to grow with each meeting. This year, observers included those from other UN agencies, intergovernmental agencies, non-governmental agencies and the FAO Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research.

Since much of fisheries work by the FAO is normative and ends up in global plans and conventions (e.g., see the WSSD Plan of Implementation), the COFI attracts strong political interest. The COFI itself provides a forum for identifying fisheries trends and for taking the "pulse" of fisheries issues around the world.

### Key Themes for the COFI 2003

Some of the discussion on key themes can be summarized as follows:

- Most member countries and regional fisheries organizations are making substantial progress in adopting the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries at national and regional levels, as reported to the FAO. Many countries would welcome moves to make provisions of the Code more legally binding.
- Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including fishing vessels operating under flags of convenience, is a cause of great concern to many nations and one which fisheries departments are often powerless to act upon. For example, several developing countries rely financially on income derived from vessel registration fees. The registered vessels often then operate well beyond the control of the fisheries authorities of the licensing countries and those of the owners. Regional fisheries organizations are making some progress on this problem through "black" and "white" listings of vessels in bad and good standing.
- The COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade is grappling with the criteria and processes being used by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) for listing and delisting commercial fisheries species. This is a very contentious issue. In the case of commercial fisheries species, most major fishing nations would prefer that the FAO and not the CITES were responsible for the listing processes.
- At the 2001 COFI meeting, a special Sub-Committee on Aquaculture was established and it met for the first time in Beijing in 2002. Many COFI members stressed the priority they are giving to aquaculture in their own fisheries development and urged the FAO to do more on aquaculture. The members, however, were reluctant to contribute more to the FAO for aquaculture work and felt that several non-fisheries divisions of the FAO could be called on to contribute their expertise to the FAO aquaculture development work.
- The priorities identified by the FAO Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR) during its first meeting in 1996 have received attention of the FAO and its member countries. The importance of these priorities has been vindicated by other international developments in fisheries since then, as revealed at the COFI 2003. These priorities include:
  - o Improving information on the Status and Trends in Capture Fisheries (now an International Plan of Action and receiving wide acceptance of the need for better baseline data, given the WSSD and other fisheries targets);
  - o Analyzing globalization of the fish trade and the distribution of its benefits (currently being examined through the work of the

Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and ongoing work by the FAO expert groups studying who benefits from the fish trade);

- o New research methods and better utilization of traditional knowledge (addressed through various expert consultations and poverty studies).

The ACFR priorities for the next four years are to focus on:

- o Collaborative efforts on building human capacity in fisheries in light of a plethora of sectoral developments and approaches that are not covered in standard education and training courses e.g., co-management, community-based management, participatory and livelihood approaches, protected areas management and ecosystem-based approaches;
- o Small-scale fisheries studies, especially since many of the solutions to current fisheries problems are fashioned on methods used in industrialized countries' fisheries, e.g., individual transferable quotas as a rights-based system, overcapacity as it applies to industrialized fleets, and wholesale removal of subsidies for industry support. The COFI members were strong in their support for giving more emphasis to the situation of small-scale fisheries.

- The report of the technical work carried out by expert consultations convened by the FAO on the ecosystem approach to fisheries management was surprisingly controversial. A large part of the controversy was over whether a balance of harvesting of ecosystem elements was implied, especially the implications of the harvesting of the top marine predators such as many marine mammals. Many industrialized countries also argued that the human dimensions should be excluded and biophysical factors should only be considered in sustainability debates. Leaders of fisheries departments also fear that ecosystem approaches imply huge data requirements when they are struggling to meet the needs for knowledge under present management approaches.
- The Philippines and Indonesian delegates stressed the need for the FAO to do more on coral reef fisheries.

In conclusion, the 2003 COFI meeting was a landmark meeting for national fisheries leaders concerned with taking an active part in how they and the FAO can move the fisheries agenda forward. The attendance of many intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies, including the WorldFish Center, at the meeting is testimony to the importance of this forum in setting the global fisheries agenda. The inclusion of so many relevant fisheries articles in the WSSD Plan of Implementation bears witness to the role of concerted action by the countries through the FAO during the first World Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and subsequent years.

Dr. Meryl Williams prepared this report with the assistance of Choo Poh Sze. Dr. Williams attended the 2003 COFI meeting as an observer from the WorldFish Center and as the new Chair of the FAO Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Asian Fisheries Forum: Find out more at [www.usm.my/7aff2004](http://www.usm.my/7aff2004)

Preparations for the 7<sup>th</sup> Asian Fisheries Forum, to be held from 30<sup>th</sup> November to 4<sup>th</sup> December 2004 at the Hotel Equatorial, Penang, Malaysia, are well underway. The first announcement is being distributed. With its theme "New Dimensions and Challenges in Asian Fisheries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", the organizers hope to bring the status of Asian fisheries to a new level by engaging in a discourse which provides new ideas and solutions to the challenges in Asian fisheries.

While addressing aspects of fisheries not only pertaining to Asia but also within a global platform, the select panel of keynote speakers will focus on the following topics:

- Making a Difference: Research for Impact on Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Recent Advances in Biotechnology
- Globalization and its Impact on Asian Fisheries: Implications for Fisheries Management
- Restoration and Management of Small-Scale Fisheries: Meeting the Challenge

Six Special Symposia will be held during the forum. Participants have an opportunity to attend and benefit from symposia topics such as:

- Gender in Fisheries
- Advances in Shrimp Biotechnology
- Restocking and Stock Enhancement of Coastal Fisheries: Potential Problems and Progress
- Technology Needs and Prospects for Asian Aquaculture: Participation of the Poor
- Biotechnology for Growth and Reproduction in Fish
- Aquatic Ecosystem Health

Organizers of the symposia are encouraged to publish proceedings to document the papers and discussions generated from these sessions.

Participants of the four-day forum will have an opportunity to present their research findings and views in the many technical sessions that have been scheduled under the broad headings of:

- Increasing Aquaculture Productivity

- Promoting Environment-Friendly Aquaculture
- Restoring and Sustaining Capture Fisheries
- Value-Added Products
- Enhancing the Ornamental Fish Industry
- Socio-Economic Perspectives
- Understanding Aquatic Resources

The forum will also be augmented by a trade exhibition that will feature fisheries-related industries and their products and services. For example, it will feature fisheries products, equipment related to environmental-friendly fisheries, processing equipment and products, aquaculture equipment, environmental monitoring equipment, etc. To increase its impact, the exhibition will be open to the public and is expected to generate interest among the many stakeholders in the fisheries sector.

At the end of the forum, four post-conference field visits are in the pipeline. All of them are within the Penang area. The participants will have a choice to visit one of the following:

- Aquaculture farms around Penang Island: This program includes a boat ride to Aman Island, a tranquil fishing village to observe two aquaculture sites, and to Balik Pulau for a look at a tiger prawn aquaculture site and a fish production farm.
- Payar Island Marine Park that comprises a group of four islands situated at the northern end of the Straits of Malacca. Activities include enjoying the clear blue sea with coral reef fish, feeding juvenile black-tipped sharks that swim close to the shore and participating in many other activities.
- Institutional tour of the new WorldFish Center Headquarters, Fisheries Research Institute, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Minden Campus, and the USM Muka Head Marine Research Station.
- Fish Processing Plant situated on the mainland portion of Penang.

Discussions are currently being carried out for an extended post-conference

excursion to southern Thailand and details and confirmation will be in the final announcement due out in early 2004. See the forum's official website for updates.

The forum is expected to attract personnel involved in the vast field of fisheries such as researchers in fisheries-related industries, R&D planners and managers, scientists, academics, government staff in fisheries-related fields, extension officers, the private sector, exporters/importers, fish-farming and fisheries organizations and non-governmental organizations.

The organizers are now accepting registration and abstract submissions and the deadline for abstract submission is 30 June 2004; further details can be obtained from the official website. Since the response for this forum is anticipated to be large, all participants are advised to submit their abstracts early to enable the organizers to select and schedule the presentations well in advance. Arrangements are currently being made to enable the participants to register online.

The forum venue was selected for its ability to accommodate the large number of participants anticipated for the forum as well as for the trade exhibition. The Hotel Equatorial is located close to the Penang International Airport, Universiti Sains Malaysia, the WorldFish Center and the Fisheries Research Institute.

For further information regarding registration and abstract submission, kindly contact:

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## Helping the people in the Mekong

The WorldFish Center is helping to build a new research institute created solely to assist the development of fisheries in Cambodia. The WorldFish Center has long recognized that the development of the Mekong region must take into account the needs of all the people who live there. Research leading to a better understanding of the value of aquatic resources to the livelihoods of the poor help policy-makers design and choose appropriate fisheries management options.

The Government of Cambodia established the Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute (IFReDI) in December 2002. The key role of IFReDI is to compile and analyze information, including crucial data, for the management of Cambodia's inland fishery resources. In addition, IFReDI intends to provide socio-economic and institutional support for the sustainable development of the living aquatic resources.

The IFReDI has developed a strong partnership with the WorldFish Center whose personnel are assisting it to become an efficient and relevant research and

development institute. On 10 June 2003 the WorldFish Center's new office was officially opened in Phnom Penh. This is a unique situation for the WorldFish Center.

During the inaugural ceremony to launch the capacity building project with funds (approx. US\$1.5 million) for 2003, Dr. Meryl Williams, Director General of the WorldFish Center, commented, "IFReDI was born in both exciting and challenging times." She reiterated, "The WorldFish Center is honored to be involved with partners in Cambodia and the Asian Development Bank in helping make the Cambodian vision for a fisheries institute a reality." She added that the WorldFish Center welcomed the opportunity to work with long-term partners in Denmark, funded by Danida, which constructed the brand new facilities last year, and others.

For further information contact the WorldFish Center's new office in Phnom Penh: WorldFish – Cambodia, c/o Department of Fisheries, 186, Norodom Blvd., Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Tel/Fax: (00-855-23-993-598); e-mail: worldfish-cambodia@cgiar.org

## 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the Environmental Management of Enclosed Coastal Seas

EMECS 2003: 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the Environmental Management of Enclosed Coastal Seas is the upcoming conference organized by the Environmental Research Institute, Thailand. Themed as comprehensive and responsible coastal zone management for sustainable and friendly coexistence between nature and people, the conference will be held from 18 to 21 November 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand. For further information on the event, submission of papers and registration, click on the website: <http://www.emecs2003.com>

## New publication



### Planning in Muddy Waters - Orientation for Strategic Planning in CGIAR Centers by the WorldFish Center

This report written and compiled by Peter Gardiner, Jürgen Hagmann and Gunther Hahne is grounded on the outcomes of a Research Priority Setting Workshop held in Penang, Malaysia, during May 2002. More than a dozen research planners from the CGIAR Centers participated. There was a conscious effort to allow research managers of the CGIAR system discuss issues relating to the science program, and not just the administrative and logistical

functions of the Centers. The outcomes of the workshop provided important building blocks to guide the process of strategic priority setting at the Centers in the future. The report includes a "check list" approach to assist Centers and others implement strategic planning processes. Four major elements or "cornerstones" for managing a successful strategic planning process are elaborated (i.e., process design and management; understanding the external environment; stakeholder involvement; and updating and adapting to changes). The findings of the workshop are germane not only to the Centers themselves, but also to the many component elements of the CGIAR.