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www.watoday.com.au/wa-news/abalone-investigation-snares-another-cat...

Abalone investigation snares another catch

Staff reporter

July 22, 2009

A Maylands man has been charged with receiving three tonnes of greenlip abalone.

The charges against the man, 40, follow a wide-ranging investigation into suspected poaching of the seafood delicacy.

Earlier this year Azumi Pilden, 52, of Marangaroo was charged with stealing more than six tonnes of frozen abalone, valued at \$800,000, from his employer.

The Department of Fisheries claims Pilden offloaded \$390,000 worth of abalone to the Maylands man, who knew it was stolen.

The man has also been charged with selling 80kg of abalone, trying to sell a further 250kg, and being in possession of 55 rock lobster tails.

He will appear in Perth Magistrates Court on Friday.

Pilden is due to reappear in the Joondalup Magistrates Court the same day.

<http://www.news.com.au/perthnow/story/0,27574,25819793-2761,00.html>

POLICE and fisheries investigators have smashed a WA black market syndicate suspected of stealing more than \$800,000 worth of abalone.

Police crack \$800,000 abalone theft racket, two charged

Article from: PerthNow

[Nicole Cox, police reporter](#)

July 22, 2009 02:00pm

POLICE and fisheries investigators have smashed a WA black market syndicate suspected of stealing more than \$800,000 worth of abalone.

Two men have been charged after a seven-month investigation, code-named Operation Acacia, uncovered the alleged theft of 6097kg of snap frozen abalone from a seafood processing company.

Police will allege that 52-year-old Marangaroo man Azumi Pilden, a truck driver, was employed by Wangara seafood company Leeuwin Star Pty Ltd between 2006 and 2008 when he stole the abalone.

It will be further alleged that Maylands man Kevin Huynh, 40, purchased about half of the stolen abalone from Mr Pilden and on-sold the lucrative molluscs to restaurants across the metropolitan area and regional hubs including Geraldton and Collie.

Mr Huynh has been charged with contravening the Abalone Management Plan by allegedly dealing with more than 80kg of abalone in June and July last year and attempting to deal in a further 250kg of abalone between July 9 and August 21, 2008.

He has also been charged with allegedly receiving approximately 3000kg of stolen greenlip abalone and being in possession of 55 rock lobster tails.

He will appear in Perth Magistrates Court on Friday.

If found guilty of the fisheries charges, Mr Huynh faces up to four years in jail and fines of up to \$105,000, plus mandatory penalties of up to \$341,730.

The charges come after police charged Mr Pilden in June this year over the alleged theft of the abalone.

He appeared in Joondalup Magistrates Court June 19 and was released on bail to next appear this Friday.

North West Metropolitan Superintendent Nigel White said police would continue to target people trying to peddle stolen abalone on the black market.

``Restaurant owners need to be fully aware that if they are receiving abalone at a discounted price then the chances are that it's going to be stolen," Supt White said.


``We will continue these joint operations so the chances are that if you are dealing in illegally obtained abalone, we will catch you."

Department of Fisheries compliance and regional support manager John Looby said the joint operation had netted significant charges.

``This is an excellent outcome for WA Police and Department of Fisheries compliance officers and it is an example of our ongoing strategic partnership helping to bring a joint operation aimed at combating allegedly organised illegal activity to a significant conclusion," he said.

www.merimbulanewsonline.com.au/news/local/news/general/abalone-bust...

A NSW DPI Fisheries officer attended the scene and located 519 freshly shucked abalone in the two backpacks.

 Abalone bust at Quaama - Local News - News - General - Merimbula News Friday, 24 July 2009 7:24 PM
Weekly

Abalone bust at Quaama

17/07/2009 7:55:00 AM

Hundreds of illegally fished abalone were discovered after police stopped a vehicle for a random breath test on June 18, NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Fisheries compliance manager Glenn Tritton has announced.

The vehicle was pulled over for a routine check at Quaama and upon searching the vehicle police located a quantity of diving gear, along with two backpacks found to contain a quantity of shucked abalone meat.

A NSW DPI Fisheries officer attended the scene and located 519 freshly shucked abalone in the two backpacks.

The officer seized the abalone meat and two complete sets of diving gear. It will be alleged the accused men illegally fished and shucked the abalone in waters near Eden.

Mr Tritton said abalone laws were put in place to protect the industry and if people were caught poaching they would be dealt with appropriately.

"The men are expected to face court charged with exceeding the daily bag limit for abalone, and shucking abalone adjacent to waters," he said.

"The daily bag limit for abalone in NSW is two per person in waters open to the taking of abalone.

"Time after time we are seeing people continually flout the rules when it comes to abalone fishing.

"Officers will continue to target high risk offenders engaged in the illegal taking of abalone, and put them before the courts every time."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/07/22/2633557.htm>

Police have charged two men in relation to a major black market abalone operation.

Abalone black market busted: police - ABC News (Australian Broadcasting Corporation)

Friday, 24 July 2009 7:23 PM

Abalone black market busted: police

Posted Wed Jul 22, 2009 6:04pm AEST

Updated Wed Jul 22, 2009 6:08pm AEST



Police charge two men over major black market abalone operation

- **Map:** [Perth 6000](#)

Police have charged two men in relation to a major black market abalone operation.

It is alleged that over a two year period, 52-year-old Azumi Pilden of Marangaroo, stole abalone with a street value of \$800,000 from a fish processing plant where he worked as a truck driver.

Police allege half of the abalone went to 40-year-old Kevin Huynh of Maylands who sold it to restaurants.

The men are due to appear in court on Friday.

Superintendent Nigel White says restaurants need to be wary when buying abalone.

"If they're getting it at a cheap rate the chances are that that cheap rate means something and that may mean that it's been stolen," he said.

The Fisheries Department's John Looby says illegal trading in abalone is a serious threat to the sustainability of WA's fisheries.


"This is often unrecorded, not registered within our research parameters for managing the fishery and runs the potential of crashing the fishery," he said.

"Abalone fisheries do collapse with non compliance of the rules."

<http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/story/77442>

A ST ALANS man was last week sentenced to 13 months jail fo aalone tafficking. Phat Van Pham was

sentenced to prison and ordered to forfeit his o

 Jail for abalone offences - Star News Group

Friday, 24 July 2009 7:22 PM

Jail for abalone offences

21st July 2009 11:05:12 AM

A ST ALBANS man was last week sentenced to 13 months jail for abalone trafficking.

Phat Van Pham was sentenced to prison and ordered to forfeit his boat and fishing equipment after the hearing in the Geelong Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 14 July.

The court heard the 43-year-old had been subject to a court order relating to abalone offences in September 2004, banning him from possessing abalone or any commercial equipment within one kilometre of any marine or estuarine waters and from engaging in fishing activities relating to abalone.

Mr Pham pleaded not guilty to four charges of failing to comply with the court order on two nights in August and September 2008 at Avalon. Mr Pham, however, pleaded guilty in relation to a further four charges relating to the use of commercial abalone equipment, the taking of abalone and his failure to comply with the court order in place for another incident on 20 October 2008 in Mt Eliza. Fisheries officers had seen Mr Pham and another man abalone diving at night. He was found guilty of all charges and was ordered to pay costs of around \$3000.

Fisheries Victoria Field Services director Mick Hodder said abalone was a highly valued species that must be protected. He encouraged anyone who witnessed or suspected illegal fishing activity to call the 24-hour reporting line on 13 FISH (13 34 74).

- Cimara Pearce

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200907/s2631991.htm>

Coverage of rural industries and issues.

 Fishing earnings fall as aquaculture booms - 21/07/2009

Friday, 24 July 2009 7:21 PM

Fishing earnings fall as aquaculture booms

Tuesday, 21/07/2009

The value of Australia's fishing industry has fallen more than 20 per cent in the last decade.

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics says it's mainly due to a \$600 million drop in the value of rock lobster, prawn, abalone and tuna.

Over the same period, there's been a boom in aquaculture production, with salmon overtaking tuna as Australia's most valuable finfish species.

But the Mayor of the West Coast of Tasmania, Darryl Gerrity, says the aquaculture boom isn't all good.

"A lot of the aquaculture people come in, work for 10 days, or for five, much like in the mining industry, whereas in the traditional fishing industry, the families actually lived in Strahan," he says.

"And now there's probably only five or six families fishing out of Strahan, where there used to be 10 or 15 families."

<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,25811229-664,00.html>

MANAGED investment schemes, already reeling from giant industry failures, have been hit by a cash drought.

MIS hit by cash drought

Article from: [Herald Sun](#)

Geoff Easdown

July 21, 2009 12:00am

MANAGED investment schemes, already reeling from giant industry failures, have been hit by a cash drought.

Wealthy investors have kept their money in their pockets instead of putting it into trees and horticultural projects, sending industry sales plummeting more than \$800 million.

Analysts blame the economic downturn and the collapse of Great Southern and Timbercorp for the worst selling season.

Project sales plunged 77 per cent to just \$250 million in the March-June selling season, down from \$829 million last year and well below the \$400 million that analysts had expected.

The Australian Agribusiness Group disclosed yesterday that three MIS promoters had reported zero sales and were forced to pull their projects off the market.

Australian Bight Abalone, which in May was hoping to raise \$20-\$25 million by selling shares in its farmed abalone venture, has followed Great Southern and Timbercorp into voluntary administration.

ABA chairman Tipene O'Regan revealed that directors had called in company doctor McGrath Nicol after investment inflows were down 77.6 per cent from last year and fell 86.7 per cent short of expectations.

Perth-based Tropical Forest Services was the standout, raising \$96 million including \$46 million from retail investors.

TFS farms high-value sandalwood at Kununura, in the Ord River irrigation area in the state's far north.

Shane Kelly, head of MIS analyst Adviser Edge, said that another West Australian company, Rewards Group, had also performed well, proving that investors were keen to invest in exotic timbers.

Rewards Group raised \$24 million from investors who bought shares in sandalwood and teak projects.

Other groups that raised funds in a difficult market were Willmott Forests (\$65.8 million), Gunns (\$41.3 million), Integrated Tree Cropping (\$24 million), Forest Enterprises Australia (\$23 million) and Arafura Pearls (\$5.6 million).

http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/opinion/ci_12869748

Peter Halmay: Saving otters at the expense of abalone

Peter Halmay: Saving otters at the expense of abalone - Santa Cruz Sentinel Friday, 24 July 2009 5:39 PM

Peter Halmay: Saving otters at the expense of abalone

-

Posted: 07/19/2009 01:30:04 AM PDT

Peter Halmay

It was years ago when I began to notice firsthand that prime fishing and swimming areas off the coast of California were becoming more polluted -- much of it apparently coming from local wastewater ocean dumping facilities.

As the pollution increased, especially after heavy rains, marine life die-offs also swelled. In fact, the death rate of the southern sea otter -- a marine mammal listed under the Endangered Species Act

ESA as "threatened" that primarily resides along the Central Coast -- rose to almost 300 per year from 2004 to 2008, a staggering increase of 33 percent.

That's why fishermen have worked to ensure legislation introduced by Rep. Sam Farr D-Carmel -- H.R. 556, The Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act -- contains a healthy dose of recovery, and not just research into the status of sea otters.

The House is expected to vote on H.R. 556 any day now. But there's a problem -- the legislation doesn't go far enough.

While the bill provides for identifying the causes and effects of poor water quality on the otter, it must also provide for enforcement and control strategies that will have an immediate and tangible benefit.

It's no mystery that toxic runoff and wastewater dumping into our ocean directly contributes to disease and death of sea otters. A December 2007 study, published by a leading scientist with the California Department of Fish and Game, examined the trends of sea otter deaths and

the results of autopsies on recovered carcasses. Researchers found that during the 1990s, 40 percent of stranded sea otters died of infectious diseases originating from land-based sources.

From 1998-2001, that number increased to more than 50 percent and if all diseases infectious and non-infectious are considered, they accounted for nearly two-thirds of all sea otter deaths during that period.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Geological Survey reported that sea otters off California's coast are dying faster than at any other time in the past decade. The cause: poor water quality.

Yet, the Fish and Wildlife Service has placed sea otter range expansion near the top of its list of recovery strategies, supposedly to escape the pollution in Central California. However, this ill conceived recovery plan will allow the threatened sea otters to share the habitat of two other endangered species: the white and black abalone.

And that's a big problem because abalone is a favorite prey of sea otters. One wrong move will contribute to the two abalone species' demise as they struggle on the verge of extinction.

From a conservationist view, the federal government's plan makes little sense.

Why save one threatened species by destroying two endangered ones, especially when much of the real solution is improving water quality? The needs of all three ESA listed species must be considered together.

If the Service can't get it together -- and there's no indication that they will -- Congress must pass an amended H.R. 556.


The public deserves and expects a comprehensive and scientific plan that will ensure both tangible water quality benefits to sea otters, without jeopardizing the declining white and black abalone populations.

Congress must amend H.R. 556 to let the Fish and Wildlife Service know what's expected of them.

Peter Halmay is a commercial sea urchin diver with more than 17,000 dives all along California's coast. He is also a former member of the Fish and Wildlife Service's sea otter recovery implementation team.

www.portlincolntimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/abalone-market-...

THE abalone industry has found it harder to to sell product over the past year due to the world-wide economic recession and also the swine flu, but according to Western Abalone Processors manager Jim ...

 Abalone market bottomed out, now on the rise - Local News - News - General Friday, 24 July 2009 5:39 PM
- Port Lincoln Times

Abalone market bottomed out, now on the rise

SOPHIE WANDEL
15/07/2009 11:30:00 PM

THE abalone industry has found it harder to to sell product over the past year due to the world-wide economic recession and also the swine flu, but according to Western Abalone Processors manager Jim George the market has bottomed out and is slightly on the way up.

Mr George said the abalone market was heading slightly upward in demand but not in pricing due to economic uncertainties prevailing.

Last month he returned from Hong Kong with a clearer outlook for the abalone market based on the slow recovery of the Hong Kong economy predicted to happen later this year.

"Recent economic data points to a year of weak exports and domestic demand.

Mr George said it was expected gross domestic product growth would be negative in the first three quarters of this year before turning positive in the fourth quarter.

He said market sentiment towards luxury food items stayed persistently weak and the festive effect of the Chinese New Year did not contribute a substantial boost on abalone turnover.

"Total abalone sales declined by about 22 per cent against the same period of 2008."

Despite a promotional offer, greenlip abalone sales plunged by about 45 per cent during January to May this year against sales in 2008.

The outbreak of human swine flu also added pressure on the market with overseas tourism declining, creating an adverse impact on the food service and retail sectors.

He said sales of canned blacklip abalone had also suffered heavily from the global economic atmosphere and a sudden excess supply of Mexican abalone had also captured a sizeable market share this year.

Upon his return to Australia last month, Mr George said several clients had placed orders and festival promotion would continue to reinforce sales of greenlip and canned blacklip abalone.

"I am pleased to announce that there has been an order for 9.5 metric tons (MT) of greenlip ... this is in addition to 1.25 MT which was loaded out on July 6."

Mr George is confident all stock (quota) caught this year will be sold and exported before the new fishing season, on January 1.

Mr George will head to Thailand this week for the seventh International Abalone Symposium.

www.foodweek.com.au/main-features-page.aspx?...icleView&articleId=4479

 [AUS: Restaurateur fined \\$65,000 over blackmarket abalone > FOODweek](#) Friday, 24 July 2009 5:38 PM
[Online > Main Features Page](#)

AUS: Restaurateur fined \$65,000 over blackmarket abalone **By FoodWeek Online**



A series of raids has uncovered a blackmarket racket in illegal abalone and fish in Western Australia.

Leung Wang Kong, 59, of Carlisle in Perth, was fined more than \$65,000 yesterday (Monday) after pleading guilty to three charges of dealing in greenlip abalone.

Two other men and a company have also received big fines for their involvement in illegal abalone and fish sales, after black market activity was uncovered by Department of Fisheries covert surveillance last year.

The court heard today this week that Leung had purchased more than 60 kilograms of abalone in three separate clandestine transactions. The abalone were not taken by the holder of a commercial fishing licence.

Magistrate Malone said the heavy mandatory penalties reflected what Parliament had intended, that is to have a deterrent effect.

Last August, Fisheries and Marine Officers and members of the WA Police worked together on Operation Acacia, to conduct a series of searches and interviews at business premises and homes in Perth and regional towns. That followed seven months of surveillance operations and compliance activity, leading up to a co-ordinated swoop.

The Collie Golden Eagle Chinese Restaurant Pty Ltd operated by Mr Leung was also charged yesterday with purchasing 35 black bream and 31 herring and failing to make a record of the purchase, which is a requirement under the Fisheries Department Regulations when persons operating a commercial business purchase any seafood.

In June, Ng Wing Ye of Winthrop was fined more than \$10,000 after pleading guilty to excess possession of green lip abalone, after purchasing more than 10 kilograms of the seafood.

Other previous court outcomes related to Operation Acacia saw the Shun Fung Chinese Restaurant in Perth being ordered in court (on 22 April) to pay a fine, penalty and court costs totalling \$10,871 for offences related to buying black market abalone

A number of other matters, arising from Operation Acacia, are still to come before the courts.

<http://www.weekendpost.co.za/article.aspx?id=444448>

The Weekend Post Online

Friday, 24 July 2009 5:37 PM

Two perlemoen poachers arrested underwater at Sardinia Bay

2009/07/14

Guy Rogers ENVIRONMENT & TOURISM EDITOR rogersg@avusa.co.za

TWO suspected perlemoen poachers were caught in the act and arrested underwater in the first bust of its kind, Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) said today (July 13).

MCM chief inspector Don van Niekerk said the incident occurred in the Sardinia Bay area on Friday after a tip-off was received that poachers were diving there.

"We dispatched an un-marked vessel with two divers who lay flat on the deck to avoid detection. We found the boat lying about 500m off-shore in about 10m of water. The skipper obviously thought we were fishermen, so he did not react until we were within 15m of him."

"The skipper got such a fright he gunned his engines and raced for the open sea – leaving his divers in the water. The MCM crew chased him for a couple of hundred metres but, realising he was too fast, they doubled round and returned to the dive spot.

"As we got there one poacher was surfacing. He saw us and disappeared underwater but our divers went in after him. He was heading for the shore but they

caught up with him and brought him onboard. He was still in possession of the perlemoen he had just harvested.”

While the MCM inspector in charge was reading the suspect his rights, and cuffing him, the divers went over the side again – and once again hit the jackpot.

“They found a second poacher sitting on the seabed shucking (de-shelling) a bag of perlemoen. They forced him up to the surface and he was also put onboard and cuffed.”

The poachers used chisel-like tools to take the perlemoen from the rocks and then stuff it into bags tied to their waists.

It would not have been easy to cut this bag loose, which is probably why the fleeing suspect did not just simply dump the evidence, Van Niekerk said.

Several other divers got away, but this was the first bust of its kind and the deployment of more MCM divers and a second boat could improve on this performance still further, he said.

“It is the first time anywhere along the SA coast that enforcement officials have arrested perlemoen poacher suspects in possession and still under water.

“It’s certainly a strategy we will be deploying in future when the opportunity arises.”

The two suspects, both 37, from Algoa Park and Swartkops, have been in Walmer police station cells since they were arrested and are due to appear in court today on charges of illegal possession of perlemoen.

Fifty-seven kilograms of perlemoen were seized, plus diving gear

<http://www.thewest.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=77&ContentID=155193>

☰ Man fined over illegal abalone purchase : thewest.com.au

Friday, 24 July 2009 5:36 PM

Man fined over illegal abalone purchase

14th July 2009, 11:30 WST

A Carlisle man was fined more than \$65,000 in the Perth Magistrate’s Court yesterday after admitting he illegally purchased greenlip abalone.

Leung Wang Kong pleaded guilty to buying more than 60kg of abalone in three separate transactions.

The abalone was not taken by a commercial fishing licence holder.

Mr Leung’s restaurant, the Collie Golden Eagle Chinese Restaurant, was also charged with purchasing 35 black bream and 31 herring and failing to make a record of the purchase, a requirement under Fisheries Department regulations.

Under the Fish Resources Management Act, the mandatory penalty for purchasing greenlip abalone is based on 10 times the prescribed value of the fish, by weight or per fish.

Strategic compliance manager Tina Thorne said WA’s commercial abalone fishery benefited from a high

demand and price on international markets, but required careful management and enforcement of laws to ensure breeding stocks were not endangered.

PERTH
LISA CALAUTTI

www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/news/kaikoura/2595454/New-polic...

The Marlborough Express: Get the latest Kaikoura news from Marlborough's daily newspaper

☰ New policy for local paua resource | Stuff.co.nz

Friday, 24 July 2009 5:35 PM

New policy for local paua resource

The Marlborough Express

Last updated 10:31 15/07/2009

Concern about the world recession is affecting the local paua industry and the Paua Mac3 group has put a strategy in place to actively manage the fishery and encourage sustainability.

Paua Mac3 is the organisation for commercial paua stakeholders in quota management area 3, which runs from the Clarence River in the north to the Waitaki River in the south. The group hopes to work closely with Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura to ensure they reach a common goal of a healthy and sustainable fishery.

They have been involved in a reseedling project for over eight years now. The project aims to manage the resource in a sustainable and effective manner, ensuring stocks are maintained for all users.

Due to the nature of paua and the fragmentary nature of the commercial fishery, paua stock are very susceptible to localised depletion and ultimately collapse, which is why Paua Mac3 has decided to put a strategy in place.

In 2000 commercial divers started to observe a decline in catch rates in certain areas, particularly in areas which were accessible to recreational divers and poachers. It was expected also that recreational fishing would continue to increase, and it was for this reason that a stock rebuild strategy was set out, to protect the long-term value of the fishery.

The area has now been split into four sections, making the management easier and helping to avoid stock depletion. Catch limits are also revised annually.

In order to increase the size of the spawning mass and to keep juveniles in the fishery, Paua Mac3 increased the minimum harvest limit for commercial harvesting from 125mm to 127mm, thus reducing the number of paua taken and leaving more legal size paua in the water for other users.

A code of practice has been introduced which states that all divers must use only approved tools for harvesting, as well as measuring all paua before removal. All undersize paua which has been mistakenly harvested must be returned to the reef by diving and placing them back.

A reseeding project has been underway since 2001, when the group released about 15 million larvae eggs. To date Paua Mac3 has released more than 400,000 paua reseed and over the past 18 months has been working in conjunction with local iwi to set up a paua spawning facility.

The group hopes this will be up and running before October. Also on the radar is the designation of areas which can potentially be used in the future as reseed facilities.

www.edenmagnet.com.au/news/local/news/general/men-charged-over-eden...

Two men stopped by police at Quaama, near Cobargo, have allegedly been found in possession of hundreds of illegally fished abalone taken from waters around Eden. NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Fisheries Compliance Manager, Glenn Tritton, said police pulled over the car for a routine check on June 18.

 Men charged over Eden abalone theft - Local News - News - General - Magnet Friday, 24 July 2009 5:35 PM

Men charged over Eden abalone theft

9/07/2009 9:29:00 AM

Two men stopped by police at Quaama, near Cobargo, have allegedly been found in possession of hundreds of illegally fished abalone taken from waters around Eden.

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Fisheries Compliance Manager, Glenn Tritton, said police pulled over the car for a routine check on June 18.

"Upon searching the vehicle, police allegedly located a quantity of diving gear, along with two backpacks found to contain a quantity of shucked abalone meat.

"A fisheries officer attended the scene, locating 519 freshly shucked abalone in the two backpacks."

NSW Police will prepare Court Attendance Notices for the men, a 33-year-old from Batemans Bay, and a 28-year-old from Queanbeyan, with a DPI fisheries officer providing expert advice by way of a witness statement.

It will be alleged the accused men illegally fished and shucked the abalone in waters near Eden.

"The men are expected to face court charged with exceeding the daily bag limit for abalone, and shucking abalone adjacent to waters," Mr Tritton said.

Information on illegal diving or fishing should be reported immediately to the Abalone Compliance Group on 02 6499 8000, your local DPI Fisheries office or the Fisher's Watch Phone Line on 1800 043 536.

www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,25726873-5003680,00.html

A GROWER-funded solution is among a range of possible options for Australian Bight Abalone following the appointment of voluntary administrators on Wednesday.

 AdelaideNow... Growers key to saving abalone firm Friday, 24 July 2009 5:34 PM

Growers key to saving abalone firm

Article from: **The Advertiser**

NIGEL AUSTIN, RURAL EDITOR

July 03, 2009 09:30am

A GROWER-funded solution is among a range of possible options for Australian Bight Abalone following the appointment of voluntary administrators on Wednesday.

Options include an injection of new equity, possibly from Asia. But if the prognosis is not good, the company will be wound up.

The company employs about 50 people, of which 45 are on Eyre Peninsula at its farms located near Elliston. McGrathNicol administrator Sam Davies said he had already received some interest in the projects from prospective investors. Mr Davies said a lot of information would be brought to the fore very quickly so the options could be properly assessed.

"The balance sheet indicates to me that the amount owing to creditors is about \$6 million including trade creditors, the tax office, the secured creditor and financial planners for trailing commissions," Mr Davies said.

"I have not yet formed an opinion about the accuracy of that information. We are getting some people under the water to assess the size and condition of the abalone so I can put that information into an assessment of the financial position."

Mr Davies said the \$8 million in fees owed by growers to the company would form part of the assessment. "We understand there may have been some teething problems with the 2005 project with a higher than usual mortality rate," he said.

"I suspect we will find that is part of the reason for placing the company in administration in addition to a low take-up of the project this year."

Australian Bight Abalone chief executive Andrew Ferguson said directors were courageous for returning 2009 funds to investors and placing the company into voluntary administration.

"We could have drawn down on funds and sought other means of funding," he said. "The directors did the most ethical thing they could have done."

Mr Ferguson said if growers could be convinced to pay the \$8 million in fees, ABA would come out of administration.

Mr Ferguson said husbandry issues that had arisen previously had been addressed by working closely with the South Australian Research and Development Institute in the past six months.

"I will do anything I can to ensure Elliston and the wider Eyre Peninsula has a pretty good abalone operation in future," he said.

Mr Ferguson said ABA had the capacity to produce 1500 tonnes of abalone annually at Elliston by 2016

www.watoday.com.au/breaking-news-business/bight-abalone-placed-in-a...

The Australian Bight Abalone Group has been placed into voluntary administration.

 Bight Abalone placed in administration | watoday.com.au

Friday, 24 July 2009 5:33 PM

Bight Abalone placed in administration

- July 1, 2009

The Australian Bight Abalone Group has been placed into voluntary administration.

Company directors decided to appoint McGrath Nicols Partners to handle the administration.

The failure of two of the largest companies in the industry, deteriorating business conditions, the withdrawal of financiers from the grower loan funding market and a reduction in investment were the decisive factors in making the decision, the directors of ABA said in a statement.

Chief Executive Andrew Ferguson said he understood and respected the board's decision not to open

the 2009 project.

"Along with the senior staff I will be working with our stakeholders and the administrators with the aim of allowing the group to continue trading while a sale of the business is investigated," he said in a statement.

ABA group's independent Chairman Tipene O'Regan said the issues surrounding Great Southern and Timbercorp had affected the entire industry.

"The board does not have faith in the tax effective MIS model of fundraising going forward," he said.


"Our investment inflows for this year were down 77.6 per cent from last year and 86.7 per cent on our expectations.

"Whilst we could have drawn down on funds raised this year to continue operations we did not think that to do so would be in the best interest of those 2009 applicants, accordingly we have arranged to reimburse all of the 2009 application monies."

He said the management and the board were committed to working with McGrath Nicol to ensure the best outcome for growers, staff and the township of Elliston where ABA is the largest employer.

AdelaideNow in May reported ABA was Australia's largest offshore abalone farmer with at least 1,400 growers who had invested more than \$42 million in its four projects in the past four years

<http://www.thewest.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=77&ContentID=152291>

 Winthrop man fined over abalone sales : thewest.com.au

Friday, 24 July 2009 5:32 PM

Winthrop man fined over abalone sales

1st July 2009, 18:30 WST

A Winthrop man has been fined more than \$10,000 for his involvement in illegal abalone sales.

Wing Ye Ng, 51, pleaded guilty to possessing excess greenlip abalone when he appeared in Perth Magistrate's Court yesterday.

The court was told that during May 2008 police, fisheries and marine officers were undertaking surveillance duties on a person who visited the Yummy BBQ Restaurant in Myaree, operated by Ye Ng, and sold him 10kg of illegally obtained greenlip abalone.

The black market activity was uncovered during seven months of surveillance as part of Operation Acacia.

Chief Magistrate Stephen Heath fined Ng \$2500, plus court costs of \$581.70 and a mandatory penalty of \$7794 for the amount of abalone involved in the offence.

PERTH
LISA CALAUTTI

www.capetimes.co.za/?...onId=308&fArticleId=vn20090630115817722C148122

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 Cape Times

Friday, 24 July 2009 5:31 PM

Poaching costs country billions

30 June 2009, 14:37

Related Articles

The first comprehensive review of poaching of South Africa's marine resources has found that the illegal abalone (perlemoen) trade conservatively cost the country about R2-billion in 2007 - and the position has become significantly worse since then.

This was revealed at a seminar to discuss the 2007 report into so-called IUU (illegal, un-regulated and unreported) fishing, organised by the Institute for Security Studies, which also commissioned the report.

Its author, Shaheen Moola, of consulting company Feike and one-time head of compliance in the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's Marine & Coastal Management (MCM) branch, told the seminar last week that, by 2007, South Africa had "dropped the ball completely" in trying to deal with abalone poaching.

"We really just walked away from it and said 'We'll leave it to the poachers'. Poaching has increased

dramatically since then, and has now gone up even more, while we've abandoned some of the most effective tools we had," said Moola.

These tools had included the Marines anti-poaching force on the Overstrand coastline which had been disbanded, and the specialist environmental or "green" courts where poachers were prosecuted, which had been closed.

He was particularly critical of the government's failure to manage the use of the Cites permit system effectively for abalone.

Cites is the Convention for the International Trade in Endangered Species, and permits from both exporting and importing countries certifying origins and destinations of products were required for commercial species listed by the convention.

As part of the strategy to curb poaching, abalone was listed on Cites, but because of a lack of capacity, the Department of Environmental Affairs had never endorsed these permits, and had asked importing countries to accept abalone with unendorsed permits.

These unendorsed permits were re-used by poaching syndicates.

In 2007, 3 000 tons of South African abalone was imported by Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and China, but the local commercial abalone aquaculture industry produced only 1 000 tons.

Much of this exported abalone was shipped from Namibia and Mozambique - where this species does not occur - and from landlocked Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

"This debacle has given the green light to poaching on a massive scale. Cites permits are the greatest laundering tool you can hand an abalone poacher."


Moola explained the difficulties in trying to calculate the overall losses to the economy from IUU fishing, but said the overall R6bn figure he had arrived at had been gleaned from existing information.

This amount did not include ecosystem costs.

- This article was originally published on page 6 of [The Daily News](#) on June 30, 2009

www.standard.net.au/news/local/news/general/control-efforts-hampere...

POACHERS are hampering the control of a deadly abalone virus that has wiped millions of dollars out of the south-west economy.

 Control efforts hampered: Poachers could spread abalone virus - Local News - Friday, 24 July 2009 5:29 PM
News - General - The Warrnambool Standard

Control efforts hampered: Poachers could spread abalone virus

BY PETER COLLINS

28/06/2009 9:03:00 PM

POACHERS are hampering the control of a deadly abalone virus that has wiped millions of dollars out of the south-west economy.

The industry's representative body has reported an increase in poaching activity between Warrnambool and Apollo Bay, and is considering a public campaign to help catch the culprits.

Renewed concern about poaching coincides with last week's State Government announcement of a new fishing exclusion zone near Cape Otway.

The 13-kilometre section between Lion Headland and the mouth of the Aire River is off limits for three months to reduce the risk of the virus spreading. Signs will explain the closure which prohibits all but line fishing.

There is already a voluntary exclusion for all professional abalone divers between Port Fairy and

Cape Otway.

So far the virus has not travelled further east than Cape Otway or further west than Cape Bridgewater.

The disease, known as AVG virus, was officially discovered in December 2005 in a Yambuk abalone farm.

It then spread along a 200-kilometre stretch of coast from Discovery Bay to near Port Campbell, killing much of the area's ocean abalone stocks.

Divers between Warrnambool and Portland lost their income and have had to seek other employment.

A recent survey at Rotten Point in the new exclusion zone showed a fresh deposit of 57 abalone shells.

``We are confident the shells were not as a result of the AVG virus," Victorian Abalone Divers Association (VADA) executive officer Vin Gannon said.

``There is concern, coupled with reports from landholders from Warrnambool to Apollo Bay, that there is an increase in poaching activity since the presence of the AVG virus.

``VADA is considering an additional campaign to get people to contact police and CrimeStoppers if they see illegal activity in the area."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/06/29/2611478.htm?site=eyre>

ABC West Coast SA - Exclusion zone could thwart abalone virus: VADA Friday, 24 July 2009 5:28 PM



Related Media

Exclusion zone could thwart abalone virus: VADA

Posted June 29, 2009 13:35:00
Updated June 29, 2009 13:34:00

- **Map:** [Mount Gambier 5290](#)

The Victorian Abalone Divers Association (VADA) says a new exclusion zone along the state's south west coast will help stop the spread of a costly abalone virus.

Ganglioneuritis has devastated abalone stocks in the region since it was first found three years ago, with strong fears that it could also pose a threat to the South Australian fishery.

On Friday, the Victorian Government imposed a ban on collecting abalone along a 13-kilometre stretch of coast near Cape Otway.

VADA's Vincent Gannon says that will help stop humans from further spreading the virus.

"It's going to be a great help and we're fully supportive of the Minister putting this exclusion zone in," he said.

"We find it's important to ensure there's no human activity that can make the virus jump or allow the virus to jump forward."

www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/06/29/2611537.htm?site=ballarat

ABC Ballarat - Poachers may spread abalone virus: VADA Friday, 24 July 2009 5:28 PM

Poachers may spread abalone virus: VADA

Posted June 29, 2009 15:37:00
Updated June 29, 2009 15:36:00

- **Map:** [Ballarat 3350](#)

The Victorian Abalone Divers Association (VADA) wants the State Government to prevent poachers from spreading an abalone virus along the south west coast.

The Association's Vincent Gannon says poachers have been close to areas where ganglioneuritis has been found.

The State Government has banned the collection of abalone along a 13-kilometre stretch of coast near Cape Otway to help stop the virus spreading further east.

Mr Gannon says more fisheries officers are needed to catch any poachers who flout the ban.

"I think that will occur, I'm hopeful that there will be additional patrols in the areas to ensure there's no people removing sub straight or abalone shells and at the same time that will allow them to monitor the activities of poachers in the area," he said.

www.batemansbaypost.com.au/news/local/news/general/abalone-poacher-...

A Batemans Bay man caught with 68 abalone and two undersized lobsters narrowly missed a jail sentence on Monday after appearing in Batemans Bay Local Court.

📄 Abalone poacher avoids jail - Local News - News - General - Bay Post/Moruya Examiner Friday, 24 July 2009 5:27 PM

Abalone poacher avoids jail

26/06/2009 9:04:00 AM

A Batemans Bay man caught with 68 abalone and two undersized lobsters narrowly missed a jail sentence on Monday after appearing in Batemans Bay Local Court.

For more local news and photos grab a copy of the Bay Post or Moruya Examiner.

Alan Bruce Potts, 33, was caught by police at 4pm on Australia Day after he and three other men were seen fishing at Guerilla Bay.

The court was told the other three men fled from the scene, throwing away bags of abalone as they ran.

Police found 60 undersized abalone, taken from the marine park sanctuary zone.

Mr Potts pleaded guilty to the charges of having the undersized shellfish, which included the two lobsters, which exceeded the legal limit of two abalone per person. He was also charged for being found next to a waterway with the 68 abalone and harming animals in a sanctuary zone.

Magistrate Chris Bone said had sent people to jail for the offence, but believed this particular case did not justify imprisonment.

The magistrate said Mr Potts was responsible for a quarter of the shellfish collected. It was Mr Potts' third conviction following fishing offences committed in May and November 2008.

The seriousness of the crime was stressed by Mr Bone, who said there was a limited number of abalone in the area. He added that there was a black market for poaching operations of this kind.

Mr Potts was sentenced to 100 hours of community service for having the illegal abalone and fined \$200 for each of the other four offences.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/06/26/2609271.htm>

Questions have been raised in the Launceston Coroner's Court about the timing of a police search for two missing fishermen.

📄 Police probed over search for missing fishermen - ABC News (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) Friday, 24 July 2009 5:08 PM

Police probed over search for missing fishermen

Posted Fri Jun 26, 2009 10:29am AEST

Updated Fri Jun 26, 2009 10:28am AEST

- **Map:** [Smithton 7330](#)

Questions have been raised in the Launceston Coroner's Court about the timing of a police search for two missing fishermen.


Abalone diver Tony Burton survived a night in the water off Tasmania's far north-west, but his deckhand died after their boat sank in October 2007.

David Colson's body was recovered the day after the five metre fishing boat sank near Perkins Island.

The coroner's court has heard the police were first notified the abalone fishermen were missing at 18:40pm.


Although a search team was launched at first light, Tony Burton's, lawyer has questioned whether police could have gone out during the night.

Constable Drew Oakden told the court he was involved in coordinating the search and he thought it would have been very difficult to see anything in the dark, in the prevailing weather conditions.

 [Police probed over search for missing fishermen - ABC News \(Australian Broadcasting Corporation\) 24/07/09 5:08:19 PM](#)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/06/26/2609825.htm>

An inquest in Launceston has heard emotional evidence about an abalone diver's attempt to hold-on to his deckhand in freezing waters off Tasmania's north-west coast.

 [Diver tried to hold onto deckhand: Inquest - ABC News \(Australian Broadcasting Corporation\)](#)

Friday, 24 July 2009 5:07 PM

Diver tried to hold onto deckhand: Inquest

Posted Fri Jun 26, 2009 4:00pm AEST

Updated Fri Jun 26, 2009 4:34pm AEST



Mr Burton told the court the pair swam for five hours. (ABC: Michael Brooks)

- [Map: Smithton 7330](#)

An inquest in Launceston has heard emotional evidence about an abalone diver's attempt to hold-on to his deckhand in freezing waters off Tasmania's north-west coast.

Tony Burton believed his friend and colleague, David Colson, had died after their boat sank.

The inquest into the 24 year old's has heard the two fishermen had to take to the icy water near Perkins Island in October 2007.

They decided to swim about 500 metres from their dinghy to shore but, five hours later, Mr Colson got tired and went limp.

Mr Burton said it took another three hours to drag his friend to shore.


He said a rescue helicopter twice flew nearby but he spent another eight hours on the beach before being spotted.

Mr Burton told the inquest he regarded his colleague as a friend and a good deckhand.

Weather conditions on the morning of the dive trip, he said, were almost perfect.


He discussed the weather with Mr Colson throughout the day and both men were happy to continue fishing.

But Mr Burton said that when he had finished diving the five-metre boat was carrying more water than he expected and the wind had picked up.

 [Diver tried to hold onto deckhand: Inquest - ABC News \(Australian Broadcasting Corporation\)](#)
24/07/09 5:07:28 PM

www.themercury.com.au/article/2009/06/26/81181_tasmania-news.html

Diver's advice regret AN experienced abalone diver has told an inquest he wished the skipper of an ill-fated abalone boat had taken his advice.

 Diver's advice regret Tasmania News - The Mercury - The Voice of Tasmania Friday, 24 July 2009 5:04 PM

Diver's advice regret

NICK CLARK

June 26, 2009 08:24am



Veteran abalone diver Roger King, left, with Bob Colson, the father of dead diver David Colson.
INSET: Convicted skipper Tony Burton.

AN experienced abalone diver has told an inquest he wished the skipper of an ill-fated abalone boat had taken his advice.

Roger King, of Taroona, was giving evidence yesterday at the inquest into the death of 24-year-old David Colson on October 8, 2007.

Mr Colson's skipper, Tony Burton, survived eight hours in the water near Perkins Island, off Smithton, after the vessel Too Easy went down.

Mr King said splash wells at the back of the boat would have stopped the water coming in.

"I wish Tony had taken my advice because splash wells are designed to keep the water out.

"Abalone did not sink the Too Easy. Water sank the Too Easy," he said.

Mr King said Mr Colson had been a protegee who "enjoyed going to sea and enjoyed the risk".

He said the fitting of splash wells effectively raised the freeboard to the same height as the gunwale.

The inquest heard on Wednesday that the abalone boat was carrying nearly three times the recommended load when it sank.

The men were due back at 4.30pm but police had not arrived at the boat ramp until 6.40pm.

Mr Burton was rescued by helicopter after being located on Perkins Island the next day.

Abalone diver Robert Steane, of Lindisfarne, said greed caused some divers to dive until they were late.

He estimated that there were half a dozen near misses, flounderings or sinkings each year.


"I'm sure there are cases where, because of greed on the day, people push the boundaries," he said.

Divers generally received \$6 a kilogram and could harvest 600-800kg a day.

Licences cost about \$180,000, he said.

In November last year Tony Donald Burton was fined \$2500 after pleading guilty in the Hobart Magistrates Court to one charge of operating a commercial vessel in an overloaded condition and one count of failing to ensure a commercial vessel was suitably equipped.

The inquest before Coroner Steve Carey continues today in Launceston.

 [Diver's advice regret Tasmania News - The Mercury - The Voice of Tasmania](#) 24/07/09 5:04:40 PM

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Thursday, 16 July 2009 12:00 AM



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