

## MAC News

## 1st Quarter 2005

### Director's Note

The MAC News for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2004 had already been finalized before the devastating tsunami of 26 December occurred. Fortunately, the immediate crisis and its aftermath have been, and continue to be, responded to with support for disaster relief and rebuilding. Although the images of the tragedy are fading from media attention and public view, it is important to keep in mind the relationship of the marine aquarium trade and hobby with the reefs, fisheries, collectors and communities in these areas - and similar areas in other developing countries with coral reefs.

Coastal villagers in developing tropical countries, such as those affected by the tsunami, often survive in difficult, sometimes very marginal, living conditions. Ensuring that the marine aquarium fishery is responsible, safe and economically viable can be an important part of ensuring fishers and their families in these areas have sustainable livelihoods based on environmentally sound income generation. A marine aquarium trade based on sustainable use and conservation is also important in maintaining the health and functioning of coral reefs. Healthy coral reefs not only sustain a responsible marine ornamental fishery, and other well-managed subsistence or commercial use of renewable resources, but they are also critical in building beaches and buffering coastal areas from the impacts of the storm waves, hurricanes and tsunamis, as was seen in the events of December 2004.

A sustainable trade and responsible hobby can provide incentives for maintaining healthy reefs and value-added fisheries that are important to the viability of the kinds of tropical coastal communities that became so well known to the world at the beginning of 2005. MAC is working with the marine ornamentals industry and hobby to respond to the challenges and opportunities that this presents. MAC programs, such as the Marine Aquarium Market Transformation Initiative (MAMTI), described below, focus on building the capacity of communities and collectors in the Philippines and Indonesia that supply so many of the marine ornamentals in trade.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND EDUCATION

#### **MAC Ad and Article Series Continues in Tropical Fish Hobbyist**

The productive relationship between MAC and *Tropical Fish Hobbyist* (TFH) magazine has continued with the series of quarterly ads featuring statements and photos from renowned marine aquarium keeping experts, and the series of quarterly articles related to MAC.

The full-page ads, in space donated by TFH, are centered on the theme "Healthy Reefs, Healthy Fish, Healthy Hobby" and have featured photography and the following quotes by J. Charles Delbeek, Julian Sprung and Martin Moe:

- **J. Charles Delbeek:** "As marine aquarists, it is our responsibility to ensure that our hobby conserves the reef ecosystems that provide us with many of the animals for our aquariums. We can do this by supporting the Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) and the suppliers of MAC Certified organisms." (TFH, September, 2004)

- **Julian Sprung:** "People involved in the marine aquarium hobby, reef aquarium keepers in particular, are very conscious of the natural environment and concerned about how their hobby might affect it. Our hobby has the potential to protect areas of wild habitat when the economic incentive of a thriving fishing industry is matched with a conservation ethic that promotes the use of environmentally sustainable harvest practices. Your support of the Marine Aquarium Council promotes this positive relationship." (TFH, January, 2005)

- **Martin Moe:** "The hobby of keeping marine life in home aquariums teaches us many things. It gives us insight into the beauty and incredible biological diversity of the coral reef environment. It teaches us about the fragility and complexity of life in the sea, and above all, it inspires our respect and admiration and creates a desire to protect and preserve these wellsprings of aquatic life. But how can we be a part of the solution to the problems that beset our coral reefs and not contribute to the immense problems that face these fragile environments? The Marine Aquarium Council has taken on this daunting task and deserves our support and encouragement. The future of our hobby depends on it." (TFH, April, 2005)

### **Public Aquarium Resource Kit Available, with Video Featuring "Voice of Nemo"**

The MAC Public Aquarium Resource Kit CD with resource tools to use in raising public, hobbyist and industry awareness about issues in the marine ornamentals trade and the benefits of MAC Certified marine aquarium organisms is available. The kit includes seven exhibit panels in high resolution pdfs. Also on the CD are: the MAC hobbyist brochure in five languages, the MAC card on responsible aquarium keeping, photo image examples from the MAC photo library, the MAC Certified example label, a special web version of the MAC logo for cross-linking purposes, two camera-ready ads, lesson plans, the 8-page MAC booklet for industry in five languages, the MAC booklet for hobbyist and selected fact sheets and FAQs. The Resource Kit CD also contains mpeg4 versions of the MAC 5-minute and 60-second public service announcements that feature Alexander Gould, the voice of Nemo in *Finding Nemo*. The PSAs summarize the marine ornamentals collection and trade story ... *from Reef to Retail* and encourage a responsible hobby through MAC Certification. Please contact [info@aquariumcouncil.org](mailto:info@aquariumcouncil.org) to obtain a copy of the CD.

### INDONESIA AND PHILIPPINES UPDATE

#### **Marine Aquarium Market Transformation Initiative (MAMTI) Program Begins**

In early 2005, following nearly three years of efforts, MAC and key partners have achieved support for MAC Certification and supply development work in the Philippines and Indonesia from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), an inter-governmental program of the World Bank, UN Development Fund (UNDP) and UN Environment Program (UNEP) for addressing global issues, including biodiversity conservation. The MAC project is entitled the "Marine Aquarium Market Transformation Initiative (MAMTI)" and will be implemented through a partnership of MAC, Reef Check and the Conservation and Community Investment Forum (CCIF), under the guidance of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank. The MAMTI project provides GEF support of USD 6.6 million over 5 years in Indonesia and the Philippines.

MAMTI expands on MAC's existing efforts in these countries. The program will provide capacity building for marine ornamentals collectors to become certified and to improve their business skills and the development and operation of their small enterprises and cooperatives. Capacity building and training is also undertaken with community stakeholders, assisting them to work with collectors and other stakeholders to develop and implement certified ecosystem management plans. As part of the latter, scientific assessment and monitoring of the collection areas will be conducted, contributing to management planning to ensure the health of harvest areas through marine protected areas and reef rehabilitation.

#### **Indonesian Collectors and Exporters Prepare for Assessment**

In Indonesia, a group of collectors and exporters have been preparing for the first-ever "pre-assessment" leading up to plans for a formal Certifier visit. As such, everyone is feeling a little nervous and wondering: How strict will the assessors be? What will they ask? Some outsiders express the opinion that Indonesia may be too backward or corrupt for certification to work. Others say that if collectors and exporters in the Philippines - a country not too dissimilar from Indonesia in many ways - can become certified, then achieving certified status is certainly possible in Indonesia as well. There are also concerns due to the language barriers,

high costs of importing even basic equipment, and the huge distances between collection areas within the country.

There are already reports from some exporters that the quality of ornamental fish from collectors and suppliers involved in MAC's training program has improved significantly. These small but important changes are showing that the situation can and will improve with targeted efforts. Indications are that the certification of the first few exporters and the people who supply them is likely to have a significant positive impact on the trade in Indonesia. Once MAC Certified marine organisms start entering the market from Indonesia, it will be clear that the issues of destructive collection practices, high mortality rates, dive-related injuries and poorly trained and equipped collectors can be dealt with.

### **Indonesian Collectors Actively Manage and Protect Their Reefs**

Capacity building for collectors to help them understand coral reef issues, reef management and how to form collectors cooperatives has helped collectors to take a more active role in managing their reefs. Representatives of the collectors attended the first Collection Area Management Plan (CAMP) meeting at Pejarakan village of North Bali in January. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure that the collectors group reviewed and revised the CAMP document, which they subsequently brought into the village meeting in February. During this meeting, the collectors discussed the management plan with village representatives, and identified proposed no-take areas within the CAMP.

Capacity building for collectors in reef management has also helped them to take a more active role in protecting their reefs in very practical ways. The coral reefs of the Pejarakan collection areas were hit by an outbreak of the coral eating Crown-of-thorns starfish (COT), *Acanthaster planci*, that can decimate live coral cover. The collectors group, consisting of more than 30 fishermen, conducted a clean-up action to try to prevent further outbreaks of COT. The fishermen gathered over 3000 COTs off the reef, took them ashore and buried them as part of the management effort to protect the health of the reef areas harvested by the collectors.

## PACIFIC UPDATE

### **Improvements in Live Rock Assessment and Management Under Development**

The MAC Pacific team is working with the industry, communities and other stakeholders in Fiji to develop and test improved methods for assessing live rock resources, creating management plans for collection areas and managing live rock extraction practices, following on from Fiji workshops on the coral and live rock trade in 2004. They conducted the initial research by familiarizing themselves with the techniques of live rock collection, observing village collectors and conducting interviewing collectors on their expertise in identifying the collectable live rock. In the second step, the live rock was examined, weighed and categorized after it had been delivered to a facility for screening and curing before export.

MAC participated in several multi-stakeholder workshops that were conducted to develop improvements to methods for assessing and managing live rock. A first comprehensive live rock assessment using the revised methods was carried out at a collection site along the Viti Levu coast near Suva, Fiji in partnership with the company operating in that area, Water Life Exporters Fiji Ltd (WEF) and with active involvement of the company and enthusiastic assistance from the collectors in the community. The assessment was designed to provide baseline information as a requirement for the development of a Collection Area Management Plan (CAMP), initiate MAQTRAC monitoring with recommendations for an on-going Monitoring Assessment and improve the site-based resource management of live rock collection.

### **Canadian Supported Pacific Marine Ornamental Certification Project comes to a close**

The Marine Ornamentals Certification project, funded by the Canadian-South Pacific Ocean Development program, administered by the South Pacific Forum Secretariat and implemented by MAC, came towards the end of its project cycle in late 2004. Through the generous support of the Canadian government significant progress has been made in beginning to harness market forces to transform the marine ornamentals industry in the four targeted Forum Island countries of Fiji, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands and Vanuatu into one based on quality and sustainable use of coral reefs. The project achieved greatest success in Fiji where all five marine ornamentals companies have signed the MAC Statement of Commitment. One of the companies had been MAC Certified and another is very close to achieving MAC Certification. Three other companies in Fiji are committed to becoming certified and have made, to varying degrees, substantial efforts towards this. In Vanuatu, Cook Islands, and Solomon Islands, all operating companies in each country also signed the MAC Statement of Commitment and/or made similar levels of progress towards certification. MAC continues to work with these Pacific countries, and others, to the extent that resources are available and there is interest on the part of the companies.

#### NORTH AMERICA and EUROPE UPDATE

##### **Sea Dwelling Creatures becomes MAC Certified Importer**

In March 2005, Sea Dwelling Creatures, Inc. (SDC) achieved MAC Certified status following assessment by the MAC Accredited certifier Shizen Megumi Pacific Certification Services Ltd. The certification of Los Angeles-based SDC raises the number of wholesale facilities in the North America that meet the MAC Standards to five importers.

As always, please check the "Stay Updated" section on the MAC homepage at [www.aquariumcouncil.org](http://www.aquariumcouncil.org) for the only official and up-to-date listing of MAC Certified suppliers.

##### **MAC at Global Pet Expo in Orlando**

John Brandt, MAC Board member, represented MAC at the new Global Pet Expo (March 13-15, Orlando, Florida) and staffed the MAC booth. In a show of support for MAC, booth space was provided by the show's organizers American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA) and the Pet Industry Distributors Association (PIDA).

##### **Pet Industry Stresses the Need for Voluntary Performance Standards**

In the discussion on 'Trends and issues that may affect the industry in 2005' (Pet Product News, January, 2005), Bob Vetere, Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director of the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA) highlighted that "The industry must be smart enough to have standards of performance that are voluntarily adhered to. Self regulation within the industry is critical and never more so than right now." In the same article, Marshall Meyers, Executive Vice President, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) also noted that: "With continued growth, increased regulation is likely with respect to the live animal sector."

##### **MAC Presentation at Meerwasser Symposium, Germany**

Christiane Schmidt delivered a presentation on MAC Certification at the premier gathering of marine aquarists in Germany, the Meerwasser Symposium (Lunen, 11-13 March). Schmidt, formerly employed in the marine aquarium wholesale trade, is currently based in Germany and is working to increase MAC's efforts with importers and retailers in Europe.

##### **MAC Information Presented in Russia**

Aquarium fish expert Gerald Bassleer presented lectures at the International Aquarist Conference and the 5th Marine Aquaristic Professionals Seminar (5-6 February) that included information on MAC Certification, especially as it relates to acclimation and fish health. Bassleer has also

included information on MAC in the latest edition of "Diseases in Marine Aquarium Fish: Causes, symptoms, treatment" (See MAC IN THE NEWS, below).

## OTHER NEWS

### **World Aquaculture Society (WAS) and MAC**

MAC and the World Aquaculture Society (WAS) are increasingly interacting on a number of levels. Many WAS members are reviewing and commenting on the draft MAC Standard for Mariculture and Aquaculture (MAM) that are nearing completion. MAC will be presenting the MAM Standard at the World Aquaculture 2005 Conference (May 9-13, Bali, Indonesia), where MAC's Certification Systems Director, Peter Scott, will also be presenting the results of efforts undertaken from 2002-2004 to develop standards for the Live Reef Food Fish Trade. At the World Aquaculture 2004 Conference, which was held in conjunction with Marine Ornamentals 04 in Honolulu, Hawaii (March, 2004), the WAS generously donated the WAS '04 excess conference bags that remained after the event. We are very grateful for this donation to MAC who is distributing the bags to participants in the MAC "Training of Trainers" program (described in previous issues of the MAC News) and to the collectors who are participating in training in the Philippines.

## MAC IN THE NEWS

"From Cyanide to a Safe and Sustainable Trade in Indonesia". Sylvia Spalding, Ron Lilley and Paul Holthus. Tropical Fish Hobbyist. March 2005: 74-76.

"Healthy Reefs, Healthy Fish, Healthy Hobby". Martin Moe (MAC ad). Tropical Fish Hobbyist. April 2005: 133.

"Q and A". Dick Stratton. Tropical Fish Hobbyist. April 2005: 36.

"Improving Marine Ornamental Collection in Asia and the Pacific: Sustainable Fishing for a Sustainable Hobby" Paul Holthus. Proceedings of 7<sup>th</sup> Internationales Meerwasser Symposium (11-13 Mar, 2005, Lunen, Germany), pages 101-104.

"Gesunde Fisch + gesunde Riffe = Gesundes Hobby + gesunder Handel". (MAC ad). Proceedings of 7<sup>th</sup> Internationales Meerwasser Symposium (11-13 Mar, 2005, Lunen, Germany), page 100. [in German]

"The better aquarium: lights, coral - no cyanide". Mark Clayton. Christian Science Monitor. Jan 13, 2005.

"L'aquariophilie et le commerce des poissons d'ornement." Michel Hignette, Aquarium du Musee National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie. Journal de la Societe Zoologique de France (in press). [in French]

Success Like Never Before: The New Marine Aquaria in the Classroom". Sylvia Spalding. Marine Scene (Quarterly Publication of MASNA), Winter 2004.

"Diseases in Marine Aquarium Fish: Causes, symptoms, treatment". Gerald Bassleer. 96 pages. [MAC Certification on page 23]

The Most Beautiful Aquariums of the World. Nilsen, A.J. and S.A. Fossa. 2004. Tectum Publishers, Antwerp, Belgium, 176 pp. ISBN: 90-76886-09-1  
[www.svein.no/author/author\\_interiorbook.htm](http://www.svein.no/author/author_interiorbook.htm).

[MAC Certification mentioned in introduction (pages 6-8); and on page 111] [in English, French and Dutch]

“Six Reasons to Invest in MAC Certification: A Retailer’s Perspective”. Sylvia Spalding. PETS International Magazine. December 2004: 69, 71.

“Een gecertificeerde handel in tropische mariene aquariumsoorten”. Paul Holthus. Ecologie and Ontwikkeling. NC-IUCN 2004 no. 65: 44-47. [in Dutch]

“Fang en Økologisk Nemo”. Uffe Wilken. Samvirke. November 2004: 38-42. [in Danish]

“The Fisheries of the Central Visayas, Philippines: Status and Trends.” S.Green, J. Flores, J. Dizon-Corales, R. Martinez, D. Nunal, N. Armada and A. White. 2004. 159 page. ISBN: 971-92753-7-5. [MAC Certification described in Chapter 8]

“The Future of the Marine Aquarium Industry,” by Paul Holthus. Pet Product News. November 2004: 4, 68.

“Training for Quality in the Collection of Marine Aquarium Animals”. Sylvia Spalding. PETS International Magazine. October 2004: 84-85.

“Coral Reef Mining, Harvesting and Trade. Ways to Prevent Unsustainable Coral Mining, Harvesting and Trade”. Fact Sheet from Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL).

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

April 1-3: 17th Annual Backer Pet Industry Spring Trade Show and Educational Conference (Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA)

April 2-3: Underwater Life Festival (Paris, France)

May 7-8: 4th International Days of Saltwater Aquaristic (Strasbourg, France)

May 9-13: World Aquaculture Conference (Bali, Indonesia)

June 24-26. International Marine Aquarium Conference (Chicago, Illinois, USA)

July 11-16: National Marine Educators Association Conference (Maui, Hawaii, USA)

September 16-18: Marine Aquarium Conference of North America (Washington, DC, USA)

October 7-9: Backer Christmas Pet Trade Show (Chicago, Illinois, USA)