

# SHOWCASE

## World Wildlife Fund connects with shellfish sector at Victoria meeting

**T**he World Wildlife Fund, headquartered in Washington, DC, held an important meeting regarding the shellfish sector of the industry in Victoria, BC last month.

The meeting was aimed in part at establishing a panel of regional advisors to provide input to the Mollusc Aquaculture Dialogue, one of a series of multi-stakeholder roundtables convened by WWF to create global standards for various aquaculture species.

To date ten finfish and shellfish species have been named, with clams, oysters, mussels and scallops to come under the Mollusc Dialogue and abalone to be handled separately.

"The standards," said a spokesperson for the Wildlife Fund, "will help minimize the key environmental and social impacts related to aquaculture."

"Once finalized, the standards can be the basis for an aquaculture certification program. They can also be used to benchmark other standards; incorporated into existing certification programs; adopted for government programs; and, potentially, be the foundation for buyer and investment screens."

Coordinated by WWF Aquaculture Program Officer Colin Brennan, the

meeting was called in part to receive some initial input and discussion on proposed principles, criteria and indicators for the mollusc-aquaculture standards.

It was also aimed at receiving expressions of interest from individuals and representatives of organizations who might act as regional advisors to the global steering committee that will manage the Mollusc Dialogue process. And close to a dozen individuals and organizations put the names of representatives' forward to be regional representatives for North America.

The global panel is to begin its discussions on principles, criteria, indicators and standards for molluscs in Brussels next spring, with three representatives from each region.

The North American preparatory meeting saw broad representation from government, academia, the federal and provincial governments in BC, plus one or two NGOs, and industry companies or associations. Several industry and government representatives travelled from Ottawa and the Canadian East Coast to take part in the discussions. Others came from Washington state and BC.

— *Quentin Dodd*



The recipients of the 2008 NSERC Synergy Award (left to right): Jean-Paul Deveau, Shawn Robinson, Glenn Cooke, Thierry Chopin and Michael Szemerda.

## IMTA wins recognition on East Coast

**A** team of East Coast researchers and their industry partners received an NSERC Synergy Award for their efforts in the area of integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA).

Working through the University of New Brunswick (UNB), Thierry Chopin (professor of marine biology at UNB Saint John), Shawn Robinson (research scientist with Fisheries and Oceans Canada) and their industry partners, Cooke Aquaculture Inc. and Acadian Seaplants Limited, received a 2008 Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada Synergy Award for IMTA research in the Bay of Fundy.

The research team received a \$200,000 research grant and each industry partner received a Synergy sculpture and an opportunity to hire an industrial research and development fellow (IRDF) for two years.

"Thierry is an excellent researcher and scholar and has been fortunate to work with an excellent inter-disciplinary research team," said Dr. Gregory Kealey, Vice-President (research) at UNB. "The work of the research team is well known, both nationally and internationally, and they have demonstrated that IMTA is a promising aquaculture practice for the future and are most deserving of this award."

For the past seven years, the research team has been adding mussels and seaweeds to traditional salmon-

only farming operations in the Bay of Fundy. Nutrients released from the salmon pens are captured and used as food and energy for the mussels and seaweeds, while regular sampling shows that these additional crops are free from any contaminants and are of extremely high quality.

"What we're doing with IMTA is nothing less than recreating a simplified food chain within a balanced ecosystem," said Dr. Chopin. "This very exciting research with industry is helping the entire aquaculture sector to evolve to the next level of efficiency and sustainability" added Dr. Robinson. "Not only is it helping the fish farmer, it is also helping to develop more effective and advanced management policies."

"One of the great accomplishments of the project has been getting an amendment to existing regulations to make IMTA and innovative aquaculture practices a reality in Canada, while the rest of the world is taking note of our progress," said Dr. Chopin.

"We are extremely honoured to receive this award on behalf of the entire team," said Drs. Chopin and Robinson. "But more importantly, we are thrilled that aquaculture research is being celebrated. This is a tremendous recognition that IMTA systems are a promising evolution in the way we will secure our seafood demand in the future."

## Aquaculture companies win tech awards in BC competition

winners of the 2008 Science, Technology and Innovation Awards from BC's Mid-Island Science and Technology Innovation Council were recently announced at a special ceremony in Nanaimo on Vancouver Island.

Several aquaculture-related organizations and companies were among the 36 finalists chosen out of the 105 nominees for the various awards.

In the finfish aquaculture section, the winner was Target Marine Hatcheries Ltd. of Sechelt, a company of 22 employees which is developing land-based sturgeon aquaculture on the Sunshine Coast.

The MISTIC awards announcement says Target, which started developing white sturgeon in 1999, has been researching, developing, and commercializing this new aquaculture species for Canada. It recently developed water-recirculating culture systems to biologically and mechanically filter the water, conserving 98% of the water and significantly reducing heating-energy requirements.

In the shellfish aquaculture section the winner was Pentlatch Seafoods Ltd., a corporation owned by the K'omoks First Nation of the Comox Valley, which grows manila clams and Pacific oysters.

The award announcement states that the corporation provides year-round employment for up to 20 people.

In the aquaculture finfish award, Kyuquot Sound Sablefish and West Coast Fishculture Ltd. were also named as finalists for the award, which is sponsored by the Campbell River Economic Development Corp.

In the aquaculture shellfish section, sponsored by Creative Salmon, other finalists included Aqua Pacific Wire Mesh and Supply Ltd. and IEC International.

The Aboriginal Aquaculture Association of BC, headquartered in Campbell River under president Richard Harry, was nominated and became a finalist for the ASTTBC Leadership Award in Technology, sponsored by the Association of Applied Science, Technologists and Technicians of BC.

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