

## Fifth Technical Symposium on Mekong River Fisheries

Paul Bulcock, NACA

Being hosted for the first time in Thailand the recent Mekong River Commission's (MRC) "Fifth Technical Symposium on Mekong Fisheries" presented a wide range of focussed and relevant research. Held at the Sofitel Raja Orchid Hotel in Khon Kaen, from 11-13 December 2002 valuable new knowledge was outlined and discussed through a variety of mediums including poster and oral presentations and a mini workshop.

The scope of the event was also broadened in recognition of the need for proactive and integrated approaches between other development sectors and those of aquatic resource management and fisheries.

Poster presentations reflected this scope, displaying research on fishery composition and activities throughout study sites in Laos PDR, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia, nutritional, reproductive and biological aspects of key species and status of aqua cultural activities. Further to this aspects of gender roles, co-management, the use of Environmental Impact assessments (EIA) and technical innovations such as design of improved fish passages were presented.

In the second component a mini workshop was conducted "Fisheries in Development." By presenting an overview of natural resources, development and human activities the holistic nature of the development process and the subsequent interactions and communication tools used between both the fisheries and other development sectors were revealed. Participants were thus provided with a greater understanding concerning issues of relevance to those involved in the field of aquatic resource management and development.

Based upon the three themes of Fisheries Ecology and Impact Assessment; Enhancing Livelihood; and Aquaculture and Fisheries Management, oral presentations continued to impress

# WHAT'S NEW ON THE WEB

## Gender Issues in Aquaculture

Women play a crucial role in aquaculture production. For example in Cambodia, higher yields are obtained from fish ponds managed mainly by women. In Thailand and China, they often bear the sole responsibility of farm and aquaculture production because of male migration to cities. However, women's contribution to aquaculture is often unrecognized and the real benefits from their involvement in the activity are not objectively assessed. This is surprising given that small-scale aquaculture development is increasingly considered as a means by which the livelihoods of the poor, including women, could be improved.

That's the introduction to a new website offered by the University of Stirling, which addresses gender issues

the immense benefit to all those involved in the field of aquatic resources management – and resources management in general of MRC research. Throughout these presentations the potential practical applications of this research became apparent through the monitoring of resources, enhanced broodstock and reproductive techniques and improved methods of fisheries management including crucially, the full involvement of stakeholders in this process.

Abstracts of all research were supplied and will be available from the STREAM website. Please send enquiries to [paul.bulcock@enaca.org](mailto:paul.bulcock@enaca.org).

in aquaculture.

The site covers the outputs of several gender-related projects including the Women in Aquaculture Project funded by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) and the Gender-Responsive Aquaculture Policy Workshop held in Bangkok funded by DFID.

The site also provides links to the project reports and also to several recent publications addressing gender issues in aquaculture and in more general policy making terms. Included among these is a very useful reference, the Gender Manual: A Practical Guide for Development Policy Makers and Practitioners.

Information on this topic has never really been that easy to find but the site contains worthwhile linkages to information resources. If you have an interest in gender issues in aquaculture, you will undoubtedly find this a worthwhile and useful site.

The site is available from <http://www.dfid.stir.ac.uk/dfid/gender/gender.htm> or for more information you can contact Cecile Brugere at C.D. [Brugere@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Brugere@ncl.ac.uk).