

Around the World

the shores of Spain and Morocco, some fishermen still use a maze-like system of fixed shallow water nets that have been employed since pre-Roman times. These fishermen, called "almadrabas" in Spanish, say that their catches have decreased dramatically. They used to take in around 2,500 tons a year; this year the catch was just 1,300 tons.

"For the last seven or eight years, we've seen a drought in the catch," says Diego Crespo, who fishes off the town of Barbate, south of Cadiz. "Hardly any fish over [420 lbs] showed up this year. ... It's not right that a resource that has sustained

thousands of families for 3,000 years should be finished off by a new technology in 10 years."

— Reuters, 10/2

Prison Greens

Norway's Bastoe Island houses some of the country's most notorious criminals: Rapists, murderers, and narcotics smugglers number among the prison's 115 inmates. But while members of Bastoe's population may face lengthy sentences, they do so without facing locked gates and bars.

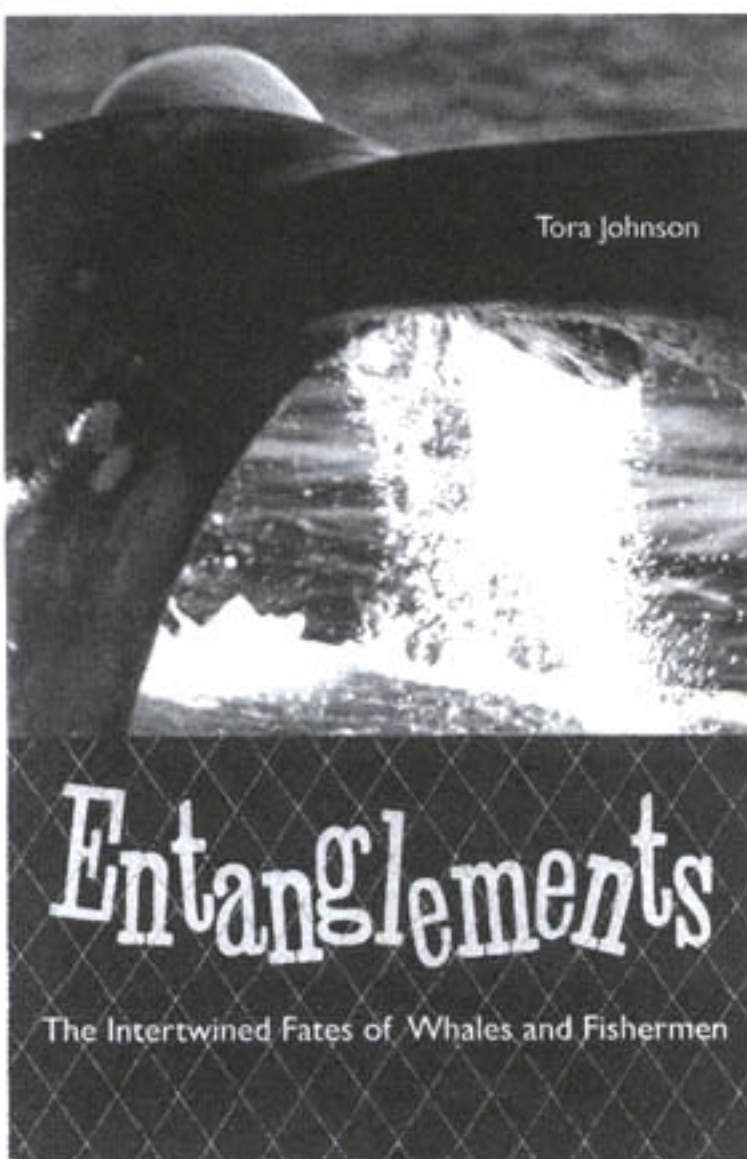
The low-security prison, which had already been the focus of international attention for its uniquely humane

way of treating inmates, is now making a name for itself as an environmentally friendly facility. Bastoe, which has offered prisoners the opportunity to engage in activities such as tennis, horseback riding, and swimming, now requires inmates to work on the prison's organic farm and help tend livestock. Inmates can also help install solar panels, work in the kitchen, and learn other skills that might eventually assist them upon their release. These efforts are beneficial not only to the prisoners, but also to the corrections department: The solar panels have saved the Bastoe facility approximate-

ly 70 percent on its energy bills, and excess food from the organic garden is sold to mainland prisons.

Corrections officials hope that the recent ecological innovations at the facility will complement their progressive reform policies and philosophy. Prison Director Oeyvind Alnaes says in a recent press release that, "Living in an environment that gives them individual responsibility, challenges and demands ... can motivate inmates to change their behavior."

Prisoners must serve at least part of their sentence in another facility before applying for a transfer to ►



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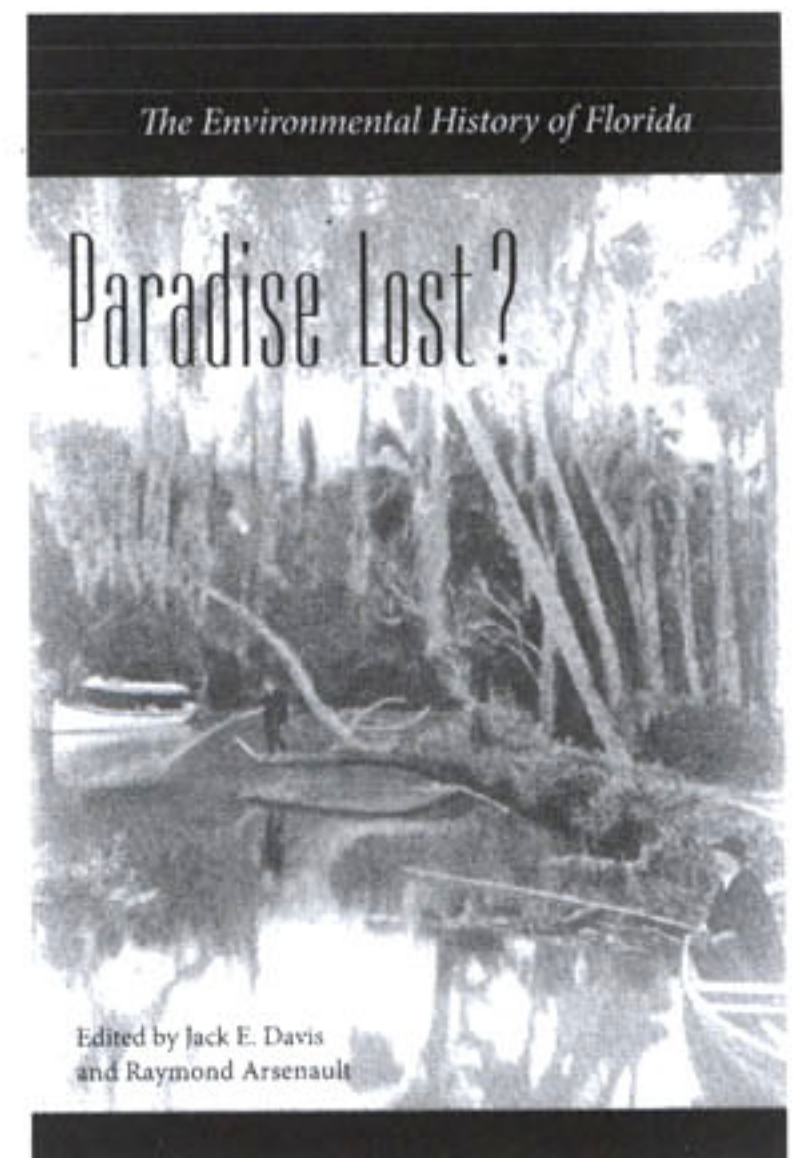
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Around the World

Bastoe. Once there, few ever try to escape to the mainland, a mere mile and a half away; those who do are immediately sent to a traditional facility — deterrent enough for most to finish their sentences on Bastoe.

— *Reuters*, 8/28; *AP*, 8/29

Green Parties

US environmentalists would no doubt love to be in the place of British greens, who are in the enviable position of being aggressively courted by the major political parties.

In recent months, leaders of the three largest political parties — Labor, Conservative, and Liberal Democrats — have offered detailed

environmental proposals as they compete for the attention of an electorate increasingly concerned about climate change and other ecological crises.

While still the Chancellor of the Exchequer, now-Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the Labor Party said “the environment must be the center of policy worldwide.” But since taking over from Tony Blair, Brown has been criticized by environmental organizations and the media that his environmental policies don’t go far enough. That has given the opposition an opening to try to out-green the governing party.

In September, the Con-

servatives released a report calling for higher taxes on domestic flights and a moratorium on airport expansion as part of a plan to combat global warming. The report, written by former Environment Minister John Gummer and *Ecologist* Publisher Zac Goldsmith, also suggested a “showroom tax” for gas-guzzling automobiles and tax relief for purchasers of more fuel-efficient vehicles.

“The green revolution could do for Britain at this time what the Industrial Revolution did a couple of hundred years ago,” Gummer says.

The Tory report, which Conservative Leader David Cameron promises will be included in the party’s official platform, says that runway expansions at Gatwick and Stansted airports should be halted, and that a controversial new runway at Heathrow should be “rethought.” New taxes on airline flights would be used to help pay for a massive upgrade of the country’s rail networks.

“There are 30 or more flights a day from London to Manchester and other cities like that,” Gummer says. “That’s a terribly bad [way] of pouring emissions into the atmosphere. What we need is a better train service.”

A week after the release of the Tory recommendations, the Liberal Democrats — who form the third largest party with about 15

percent of voters’ support — approved plans to make the UK carbon neutral by 2050. Delegates to the party’s annual conference in Brighton adopted as official policy a detailed set of proposals to raise billion of pounds in green taxes on air transport and polluting vehicles. The Liberal Democrats’ platform also calls for “green mortgages” to cover the costs of environmental retrofits on buildings, and a high-speed rail link connecting the north and the south.

“We can no longer believe that a 60 percent cut in carbon emissions is enough, as the government claims,” says Liberal Democrat Environment Spokesman Chris Huhne. “No one believes it, not even the ministers. The science says it needs to be more than 80 percent.”

The Tories also say that the governing Labor Party is out of touch when it comes to environmental policy.

“People are increasingly concerned that the government knows about climate change and is doing nothing about it,” Gummer says.

— *Agence France-Presse*, 9/13; *Reuters*, 9/18

NORTH AMERICA

It’s a Girl!

Put away the baby-blue bunting and buy some more pink crepe paper — the gender ratio of the human species appears to be shifting.

Women in some Arctic

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