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UBC Reports | Vol. 53 | No. 6 | [Jun 7, 2007](#)**IN THE NEWS****Highlights of UBC Media Coverage in May 2007****Compiled by Basil Waugh****Satellites photos show environmental destruction by trawlers**

The New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle and International Herald Tribune reported on a new study that used satellite images to show the impact of ocean-bottom trawlers on the environment.

Daniel Pauly of UBC's Fisheries Centre said the "mudtails" seen behind trawlers do immense harm to ocean ecosystems. Mud can clog fish gills, set off algae blooms and, ultimately, lead to "dead zones," he said.

"Bottom trawling and dredging has been likened to clear-cutting a forest merely to hunt game," Pauly said in an interview with the Globe and Mail.

Pauly hopes the images will focus wider attention on trawling damage and on the possible uses of satellites to monitor fishing.

Galapagos DNA search gives hope to 'Lonesome George'

Michael Russello, a UBC Okanagan biology and ecology researcher, led an international team that has found evidence that the world's last remaining Pinta Island tortoise -- Lonesome George -- may have family living on another island in the Galapagos Islands.

BBC News, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Agence France Presse, Globe and Mail and CBC Radio reported that the group found a "hybrid" Pinta Island/Isabela Island tortoise on Isabela Island, suggesting that a Pinta tortoise must be or was once on Isabela somewhere among the 3000 tortoises there.

Russello's team is now trying to raise money to search for the father, or other purebred tortoises of George's kind who may have drifted to Isabela Island with the ocean currents. Their research was published in the May 1 edition of Current Biology.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Teens in B.C. Still Face Health Disparities

Lesbian, gay and bisexual teens in B.C. experience greater levels of violence and more health challenges than heterosexual teens, according to a report released by Vancouver-based McCreary Centre Society and UBC researcher Elizabeth Saewyc.

The study, covered by the Globe and Mail, CBC Newsworld and the Halifax Chronicle Herald, also found that sexually active gay, lesbian and bisexual teenagers in B.C. are up to three times more likely to be involved in a pregnancy than their

heterosexual counterparts.

Saewyc, a professor in UBC's School of Nursing, said one possible reason young gays and lesbians may become involved in pregnancy is negative messages they receive about their sexuality from society.

"Young people may try to avoid that stigma by reaching for an identity they can be proud of," Saewyc said. "In Canada, we have very positive things to say about motherhood and fatherhood."

Babies Discern Languages Through Visual Cues

New York Times, Washington Post, Voice of America, Forbes, BBC, Globe and Mail and CTV reported on a UBC study found that, at four months, babies can tell whether a speaker has switched to a different language from visual cues alone.

Using muted videos of bilingual speakers, UBC neuroscience doctoral student Whitney Weikum and Psychology Prof. Janet Werker found that infants can discern when a different language is spoken by watching the shapes and rhythm of the speaker's mouth and face movements.

"We already know that babies can tell languages apart using auditory cues," said Weikum. "But this is the first study to show that young babies are prepared to tell languages apart using only visual information."

The journal Science published the team's findings in its May 25 issue.

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UBC Public Affairs
310 - 6251 Cecil Green Park Road, Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z1
tel 604.822.3131 | fax 604.822.2684 | e-mail public.affairs@ubc.ca

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