

PREFACE

The 6th International Symposium on Abalone Biology, Fisheries and Culture was held in Puerto Varas, Chile, from February 19–24, 2006. The symposium was organized under the auspices of the International Abalone Society and hosted by the Universidad de Los Lagos. The conference attracted almost 300 delegates, from about 15 different countries, including representatives from the Americas, Africa, Asia, Oceania and Europe. This Special Issue of the *Journal of Shellfish Research* contains many of the contributions presented at the conference.

The tradition of holding international abalone symposia started in La Paz, Mexico in 1989. Symposia were then held at fairly regular intervals, in Tasmania (1994), California (1997), South Africa (2000) and China (2003). All of these symposia were extremely successful, and the number of people attending has gradually increased. The large number of delegates who attended the 2006 symposium suggests that interest in abalone biology, fisheries and aquaculture is still increasing.

The choice of Puerto Varas as the venue for the 6th International Abalone Symposium was appropriate because of the rapidly expanding aquaculture industry in Chile. During the symposium excursions, delegates took the opportunity of visiting several of the newly-established abalone farms, as well as viewing several other types of aquaculture facilities. Delegates also enjoyed the natural beauty and cultural wealth of the

Lakes region of Chile, and the symposium venue itself was in sight of the beautiful Llanquihue Lake and Osorno Volcano. After the symposium, many delegates took the opportunity of experiencing the overwhelming beauty of the Chilean natural wilderness.

The Puerto Varas symposium provided a platform for the presentation of about 80 oral presentations and almost 50 posters. Topics covered included reviews of production statistics from various countries, current developments in abalone aquaculture, genetics; physiology and molecular biology; nutrition; diseases, fisheries and ecology. This volume contains a selection of papers from each section, and all papers have been through the usual rigorous refereeing and review procedures of the journal. I wish to thank all authors who submitted manuscripts for publication and, in addition, I wish to thank the numerous referees who volunteered their time to review the papers. In particular, it is a pleasure to see the many papers that were submitted by authors from Chile, again reflecting the obvious expansion of the abalone industry in that country.

The next international abalone symposium will be held in Thailand in 2009.

Peter Cook
Guest Editor