



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Albatross, Lobster Farms, and Aquaculture

Author(s)

[Héctor José Huyke](#)

Year

2000

Description

This case describes a lobster farm in Puerto Rico that was closed by environmental agents. It is meant to stimulate discussion on the interaction between business owners and federal environmental authority.

Body

A lobster aquaculture project located in Ponce, Puerto Rico was closed by federal environmental agents from New York. Two reasons for the closure were given:

1. The administrators of the project did not have the necessary permits for dumping the water contaminated by the lobsters into the sea
2. Neighbors had reported to various agencies on multiple occasions that the owners were killing the albatrosses which circled the tanks and ate the lobsters without regard to the fact that the albatross found on Ponce's beaches is an endangered species.

The aquaculture owners denied knowledge of violation of any environmental laws, further indicating that they had not been previously notified about the offenses and explained that they killed the albatrosses only in defense of their property.

Questions:

1. Why were the federal agents wrong in closing the business? What conditions should the federal authorities comply with before legitimately closing this aquaculture business? Why?

2. Why were the federal agents correct in closing the business? What actions should the project's owner have taken before the federal authorities were obligated to close the business? Why?
3. Is there any solution that avoids the necessity of killing the albatrosses and leads to the reopening of the business? Discuss this possibility and write a proposal.

Notes

This case is reprinted with permission from the cases found at the Center for Ethics in the Professions at the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez.

Rights

[Use of Materials on the OEC](#)

[Case Study / Scenario](#)

[Hypothetical / Fictional Case](#)

[Discussion Cases from the Center for Ethics in the Professions at the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez](#)

[Engineering](#)

Publisher

[Center for Ethics in the Professions at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez](#)

Authoring Institution

[Center for Ethics in the Professions at the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez \(CE-PRO\)](#)