

Japan  
Fisheries  
Association



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Views and Opinions of Japan's Fisheries Industry

Fuel price hike

**Japanese fishermen stage nationwide strike  
--Actions triggered by soaring fuel prices--**

Japanese fishermen at last resorted to decisive actions to protest the ever soaring fuel prices that are seriously affecting their livelihoods. For the first time in the history of Japan, about 200,000 out of 210,000 fishing vessels in Japan halted operation nationwide on July 15 to raise the public awareness of their stringent plight caused by soaring oil prices.

On the same day, the Japan Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations (JF Zengyoren), whose members include more than 1,100 coastal fishery cooperative associations, organized, jointly with the Japan Fisheries Association (JFA) and other fisheries organizations, a gathering of more than 3,000 fishermen in Tokyo to appeal the need to defend Japan's seafood supply and the livelihoods of her fishing communities now faced with unprecedented difficulties.

At the gathering, the participants unanimously adopted a resolution, which among other things, called on the government for emergency measures necessary to ensure the survival of Japan's fishing industry, stabilize the supply of seafood to the Japanese people and defend the livelihoods of fishing communities. It also called for the introduction of international regulations to control the disorderly infusion of speculative money into the world's oil market.

After the gathering, the participants staged a rally to urge the government for



*Fishermen's rally in Tokyo*

relief measures, chanting in chorus: "We cannot go fishing as we suffer greater losses when we go out to the sea," and "The government should fulfill its obligation to ensure stable supply of seafood to the people."

Commenting on the predicament now facing fishermen in Japan, Nobuhiro Nagaya, an executive of JF Zengyoren, said: "The proportion of fuel expenses in production costs in coastal fishing vessel operations, which stood at 19% in 2006, jumped to 30.2% in June of this year. This is an exorbitantly high level, when compared with the present rate of around 10% in other industry sectors such as bus and truck transportation. This shows the magnitude of the impact of soaring fuel prices on the fishing

industry.”

“On the other hand,” Nagaya added, “the proportion of proceeds for fishery producers in retail prices stands at 24%, a visibly low level as compared with 30-50% for agricultural producers, meaning that costs in the distribution stages are very high for seafoods. This situation keeps the net income for fishermen at a low level.”

“Seafood producers in Japan have made every possible effort to reduce costs both in terms of hardware and software, but they can no longer put up with the current pace of oil price hikes. If this situation persists, Japan’s fishing industry will not be able to survive.”

“For the moment, we will make our all-out efforts to cope with soaring fuel prices in the hope to bring relief to fishermen,” Nagaya said.

### Nearly 40% of fishing operators in Japan could go out of business

JF-Zengyoren has recently made public its analysis of the cost burden of soaring fuel prices on fishers in a bid to appeal their hardships under the present abnormal circumstances. The calculation is based on the end prices of heavy oil “A”, taking into consideration refining, product distribution and storage and other management costs.

According to the Federation’s calculation, the average price of heavy oil “A”, which was Y39,000 per kiloliter in 2003, rose to Y68,000 in 2007, further climbing to Y94,400 in May 2008. The estimated average price in June of this year was Y104,600, which represented an increase about as large as 2.7-fold, or Y65,600, from Y39,000 in 2003. As compared with 2007 alone, the range of price increase came to about 1.5 times, or Y35,700 per kiloliter.

The Federation also estimated the prospective situation where the price of heavy oil “A” reaches the order of Y130,000 per kiloliter in the days ahead. It said that, when the oil price hits that level, 23,000 to 45,000 (18-36%) of the 125,000 fishery operators, including enterprises and independent fishermen (figure as of 2005), would be forced out of business, and 50,000 to 85,000 (24-40%) of the 210,000 fishery workers (figure as of 2006) would have to leave the fisheries.

As a result, the Federation said, Japan’s fisheries production, which stood at 5.67 million tons in 2006, would decrease by 1.8-2.7 million tons to 3.87-2.97 million tons, a decline of 32-48%.

In a separate estimate, the Federation forecast net income for coastal squid jigging using boats of 10-20 tons. In 2006, the squid jiggers had an average annual net income of Y2 million — Y33 million fishing revenue minus Y31 million expenses, of which Y9 million, or 30%, was fuel cost. However, when the price of heavy oil “A” reaches Y130,000 per kiloliter, the expenditures would swell to Y41 million (of which fuel cost would account for Y19 million or 46%), resulting in a net loss of Y8 million, the Federation said.

#### Projections of impact of heavy oil "A" prices on fishing operation Coastal squid jigging (with fishing boat of 10-20 tons)

(unit: million yen)

	revenue	expenses	fuel costs	net income/loss
2006 results	33	32	9(30%)	2
in case of Y100,000/kl	33	36	14(39%)	-3
in case of Y130,000/kl	33	41	19(46%)	-8

#### Pole-and-line skipjack fishing (with fishing boat of 100-200 tons)

(unit: million yen)

	revenue	expenses	fuel costs	net income/loss
2006 results	277	231	72(31%)	46
in case of Y100,000/kl	277	270	110(41%)	8
in case of Y130,000/kl	277	303	143(47%)	-25

(Source: JF-Zengyoren)

## Tuna

## ICCAT enforces Bluefin Catch Document system to have effective control on bluefin tuna fisheries. — More transparency in tuna farming expected —

*The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) launched on June 4 the Bluefin Catch Document (BCD) system.*

*The system, based on ICCAT's recommendation, is designed to establish strict tracking of the product from the point of capture throughout the whole operation to its final market.*

The system was adopted at last year's annual meeting of ICCAT, and in the absence of any objection from member countries during the ensuing six months, went into effect on June 4 this year.

To date, the Statistical Document has been used for the purpose of countering unreported catches of tunas, particularly by non-contracting parties.

The new BCD requires detailed information concerning catch, transfer, transshipment, farming, harvest from farms and trade, namely information in all stages throughout the whole operation to its final market. For example, farming information shall include cage description and fish description such as the number of fish, total weight, average weight and estimated size composition.

Trade information shall include product description, exporter/seller information and

importer/buyer information. It also must be validated by an authorized official of the flag State.

The validation is required for catch landed, transferred to cages, harvested or transshipped on each occasion that the vessel fishing master or trap operator or the operator of farms lands, transfers, harvests or transships bluefin tuna.

The validated BCD(s) and related documents of each consignment of bluefin tuna will be examined by the competent authorities. It is thus aimed at satisfying the need to improve and strictly control all the components involved in the bluefin tuna fisheries, particularly bluefin tuna farming.

Each consignment of bluefin tuna domestically traded, imported into or re-exported shall be accompanied by a validated BCD.

By the implementation of the BCD system, import of bluefin tuna to Japan shall be prohibited in case no BCD document accompanied.

## MEL Japan

## Several fisheries immediately applied for MEL Japan certification

Marine Eco-label Japan (MEL Japan) was launched in December 2007 as a system to support fisheries that are friendly both to marine resources and the oceans.

This system is designed to certify fisheries that are conducted in a sustainable and responsible manner. Specifically, it is intended to encourage and promote such fisheries by providing eco-labels for their products.

MEL Japan certification is classified into two stages: (1) certification in the production stage (fishery certification) and

(2) certification in the distribution and processing stages (chain of custody certification). The former is aimed at certifying that a fishery is sustainably managed for the resources and the ecosystem, while the latter is designed to ensure that the seafoods certified in the production stage are distributed and processed without being mixed with uncertified seafoods.



To date, applications for MEL Japan fishery certification have been submitted and their examination is being carried out as follows:

-The Sea of Japan Crab Pot Fishery Association in Sakaiminato City, Tottori Prefecture, Western Japan. This fishery targets red snow crab in the offshore area of the Sea of Japan.

-Tottori Prefecture Offshore Trawl Fishery Association located in Tottori City, Tottori Prefecture. This fishery targets snow crab and flathead flounder in the Sea of Japan by single-vessel Danish seining.

-Yui Fishermen's Association and Oigawa Town Fisheries Cooperative Association located in Shizuoka Prefecture, west of Tokyo. The fishery targets stardust shrimp off Suruga Bay.

The Japan Fisheries Resource Conservation Association is serving as the certification body for these applications.

Furthermore, the Sea of Japan Crab Pot Fishery Association also applied for chain of custody certification, which will enable labeling the final products when certified. Also, the Sakaiminato Fisheries Promotion Association applied for chain of custody certification for some more processors and distributors of the red snow crab.

### Seafood sustainability

#### **Greenpeace's misguided campaign is irresponsible action, hampering genuine efforts for sustainability**

**G**reenpeace made public a 67-page report summarizing its findings on seafood sold at major supermarket stores and other mass retailers, including Wal-Mart, in the United States and Canada based on surveys it conducted May 21-25. The campaign included a ranking of stores according to Greenpeace's sustainability standards.

The report claims that many stores are selling endangered marine species and are not prepared to convey to the consumers the need for fulfilling the sustainability standards of fishery resources.

Greenpeace's report lists 15 species, including Atlantic cod, toothfish, swordfish, yellowfin and bigeye tunas, and farmed

Atlantic salmon.

Blaming the report as "flawed" and "irresponsible," John Connelly, president of the National Fisheries Institute (NFI) of the United States, said in strong words that "[c]onsumers should know that the retailer rankings presented in this report have no credibility. The non-science based standards by which Greenpeace came to its conclusions highlight the weaknesses in this document and undermine its own efforts".

"Greenpeace is painting retailers and the entire seafood industry with a very broad and misleading brush as part of this ill conceived strategy to pressure stores," said Connelly. "This campaign is based on ideology and hysteria not facts."

Fishing industry sources in Japan said that consumer awareness on the sustainability and use of fishery resources has been steadily improving around the globe, as seen, among other moves, in the development of global criteria on cultured seafood at the initiative of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. Greenpeace's move to publish its report on the sustainability of marine resources is understood to reflect its intention not to lag in the global trend, but its effort this time was definitely doomed to end in utter failure, the sources said.

#### **Answers to groundless criticism of Japan's research whaling by anti-whaling groups (1)**

##### **1. Whales are exposed to the risk of extinction.**

**A.** There are 83 species of cetaceans in the world, with each having a different stock status. The stock size of some species such as blue and right whales has fallen to a very low level that requires complete protection. On the other hand, the stocks of other species like minke, sei and fin whales, which Japan is catching for scientific purposes, are increasing annually. The Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) recognizes that these species have very healthy stock conditions.

(to be continued in next issue)