

Japan  
Fisheries  
Association

ISARIBI  
漁火  
Fishing Fire

NO.76, JAN. 2013

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## Views and Opinions of Japan's Fisheries Industry



### Japan participates actively in issues on the ICFA agenda

*The International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) met on 10-11 October 2012 in Rome, Italy, to identify issues of common interest and develop advocacy strategies to address these opportunities. ICFA members also met informally with U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) representatives. Toshiro Shirasu, president of the Japan Fisheries Association, led the Japanese delegation. Below is a summary of the Japanese discussions on key agenda issues.*

#### 1. MPAs

As moves to expand Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are becoming active throughout the world, ICFA confirmed its basic position on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that should be based on scientific grounds and should not impair the sustainability of fisheries and discussed future actions it should take in this regard.

Shirasu expressed his views as follows.

(1) It is essential to utilize fisheries resources sustainably in order to enable mankind to continue seafood consumption in the years ahead. There are, however, a number of environmental movements that could obstruct the sustainable utilization of fisheries resources. One such movement is the call for the expansion of MPAs.

(2) We understand that the establishment of MPAs must be based on scientific grounds taking into account the characteristics of the marine ecosystem and target species.

(3) It is particularly inappropriate to interpret MPAs as identical to no-fishing zones. The expansion of MPAs which severely obstructs existing fishing activities only for the reason of environmental conservation should be opposed.

(4) The FAO has developed its guidelines on MPAs taking the sustainability of fisheries into consideration. The fisheries industry should support the FAO-led management of MPAs in view of the fact that some conservation groups are proposing criteria that give a greater priority to the protection of the ecosystem than to the fisheries.

#### 2. Actual situation in Japan on the restoration of the March 2011 tsunami and earthquake affected areas and the negative rootless rumors regarding the impact of the resulting nuclear power plant accident

Shirasu reported on the situation surrounding the



Shirasu (center, left side) explains Japan's position at ICFA meeting

above issues and requested the members for continued cooperation as follows.

(1) Actual situation on the restoration of affected areas

**a.** Although a budget was allocated for the restoration of areas affected by the disaster, the administrative systems of the local autonomies and fisheries organizations have been seriously disrupted. Actual restoration and rehabilitation have not been advancing as smoothly as expected because corporations and enterprises were already burdened with past loans and have been unable to bear additional costs.

**b.** The land where fishing ports were located subsided by nearly one meter as a result of the disaster. But fish landings were rendered possible after those locations were leveled up, although provisionally. The expectation for the rehabilitation of fishing vessels (mostly small-type vessels) has been realized for the most part. The rehabilitation of processing facilities is in delay. Landings at the fishing ports have been delayed due to slow progress in the rehabilitation of refrigerating and chilling facilities. To date, fish landings have recovered to about 70% of their level in 2010.

c. Further assistance is necessary in order to restore the affected industry.

(2) Negative rootless rumors regarding the impact of the nuclear power plant accident

a. Fishermen have been voluntarily refraining from fishing in the sea area 100 kilometers from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant.

b. Thoroughgoing measures have been taken through monitoring surveys to not market fish having radioactive cesium exceeding the allowable level of 100 Becquerels, which is the most conservative limit in the world.

c. In the area off Fukushima, fishing has been suspended on a voluntary basis, and only monitoring surveys have been conducted.

d. However, despite the absence of radioactive substances, fish from Fukushima are not selling. Fish prices have been falling drastically for the sole reason that they are from Fukushima.

e. Regarding exports of seafood from Japan, there have been instances where exports did not advance smoothly even for those products caught in the areas having nothing to do with the radioactive contamination.

f. As reported in ISARIBI No. 74, Shirasu requested European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Maria Damanaki, when she visited Japan in July, that the European Union take positive steps toward the resumption of seafood imports from Japan. Damanaki gave him assurance that the EU would take steps to alleviate its import regulations on Japanese seafood in the days ahead.

Shirasu reiterated his request to the ICFA members that no groundless restrictive measures against imports of Japanese seafood be taken in their countries.

In the exchange of views with FAO officials, Shirasu explained to Arni M. Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department,

the latest situation on the restoration from the disaster, expressing his gratitude for the cooperation of the FAO, and requesting continued cooperation.

### 3. Other issues

Some E.U. members of ICFA expressed their strong concern over the reinforcement of regulations on trawling in the E.U. in accordance with the new E.U. fisheries policy. Participants exchanged views on this issue from the standpoint of the fisheries industry. It was agreed that continued attention to this issue would be necessary so that sustainable fisheries may not be affected by such moves.

Discussion also took place centering on the proposals for the inclusion of certain marine species in the Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at its 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16). Regarding the prospect that proposals may be tabled to make the conditions for secret ballot voting more strict, Japan called on ICFA members to maintain the current voting system based on the recognition that the secret ballot is an indispensable means to enable developing countries to take part in voting based on their sovereign rights and without being intimidated and unfairly pressured by nongovernmental groups.

Concern regarding the over fishing capacity of large scale tuna purse-seine fishing vessels was shared by the members.

#### \*What is ICFA?

ICFA is an international nongovernmental organization committed to the sustainable use of the world's ocean resources, adhering to the UN FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. ICFA members represent the fishing and seafood sectors and include the national associations from major fishing nations of the world.

## ☞ Marine Forests ☜

# Marine Forests for the Ocean as a New Frontier Let's recover the health of the sea

Yoshiaki Matsuda, Professor Emeritus of Kagoshima University

The ocean was regarded as a new frontier in the past, such as after the third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea in the 1970s and the 1980s. However, the ocean's full utilization was not met. This is because management has been based on a first come, first served principle which is effective when participants are small in number as compared with the resources, although individual quotas (IQs) and individual transferable quotas (ITQs) have been practiced in part. In agriculture, productivity has tremendously increased in supplying foods to expanded populations by changing major production methods from hunting to cultured agriculture. This type of change is also desired in fisheries. With limited

land based resources and over 7 billion people, this is not a time to fight each other. Rather, we must wisely utilize the oceans.

#### Marine Forest Promotion: What should we learn from China?

For the oceans as a new frontier, attention must be paid to Chinese seaweed culture. China increased its fisheries production since the late 1970s and produced more than 20 million metric tons (mt hereafter) per year by the year 2000. Most came from the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea. Regardless of governmental policy to limit production to prevent over fishing after 2000, production remains very high and China has continued to export a

large amount of fish to Japan. Fisheries production in the same area used to be less than 3 million mt per year before the 1960s when Japan dominated fisheries in the area.

In China, kelp imported from Japan from the 1930 has been cultured from Dalian to Fuzhou stretching 1,300 km from north to south. Production of seaweeds, kelp and *Undaria* sp. has also increased from less than 2 million mt to 12 million mt from the 1970s to the year 2000. We found Chinese fisheries production is closely correlated with this seaweed culture production (Figure 1). Based on this finding, we have tried to test the effect of seaweed culture on coastal fisheries production in Japan. This was the beginning of the marine forest promotion movement in the 1990s.

**The Marine Forest Promotion Society**

In 2002, the Marine Forest Promotion Society (the "Society" hereafter) was established as a non-profit organization (NPO) to increase kelp culture along Japan's coast by going between consumers and seed producers and to test FeSO4 fertilizers to revitalize seaweed beds. These activities are to promote communications with fishermen and local people followed by discussions about fisheries management, collaboration with others for mutual benefits, contributions to the local communities and local development. The Society also sponsors events such as symposiums, kelp summits, seaweed herbarium classes, coastal seaweed observations, tideland observations, tours for advanced society members and exhibitions, emphasizing communications between fishing communities and urban areas. In 2011, the society supplied 18,000 m of kelp seaweed strains to 40 places in 16 prefectures and 7 tons of FeSO4 fertilizers to Akita and Nagasaki prefectures. Models of the activities are Iki, Uwajima and Oga.

**Model cases: Iki, Uwajima and Oga**

In Iki-Tobu Fisheries Cooperative, Nagasaki Prefecture, all seaweeds in the bay were destroyed by water pollution after the break of a soil pollution fence at the river mouth in 1997. However, these seaweeds were recovered by 2007 through the work of 60 Ama people (women divers). They were revived by kelp culture started in 2002. In Uwajima, Ehime Prefecture, the Uwajima branch of the Society was established, consisting of fishermen, citizens, schools and the Uwajima municipal office in 2003, and received the AI-TV Environmental Prize in 2006 and a subsidy for the Ehime Prefecture Marine Forest Promotion Project 2007-2008.

In Oga, Akita Prefecture, the Marine Forest Promotion Society in Oga was established in 2011 with Oga City's support and received a subsidy



Picture 1: Kelp in Oga, Akita



Picture 2: New processing plant under construction in October 2012

from the Akita Prefecture Model Project for New Public Spending 2011-2012 of US\$125,000. The Society FeSO4 fertilizer tests in 2011, using 5 tons of the fertilizers in more than 5 coastal areas. The Akita Prefecture Fisheries Promotion Center investigated the results of the tests and held discussion for the future. Regarding kelp culture, the facilities were lost by the sudden occurrence of low pressure on April 4, 2012, though seeds were cultured last November and grown well before the accident (Picture 1). As a result, they had to repeat the kelp culture again in 2012 and ordered 4 times the amount of seeds as the last order. Since the objective of this project is to establish an enterprise that will sustain seaweed culture and develop the local economy, it supported one fisherman to develop a processing plant to utilize cultured seaweeds and others for the purpose of developing the local economy with a governmental program for industrialization of the primary industry, including processing and marketing (Picture 2). The program is also looking for other potentials.

**New development**

The Fisheries Agency of Japan has proposed a counter-

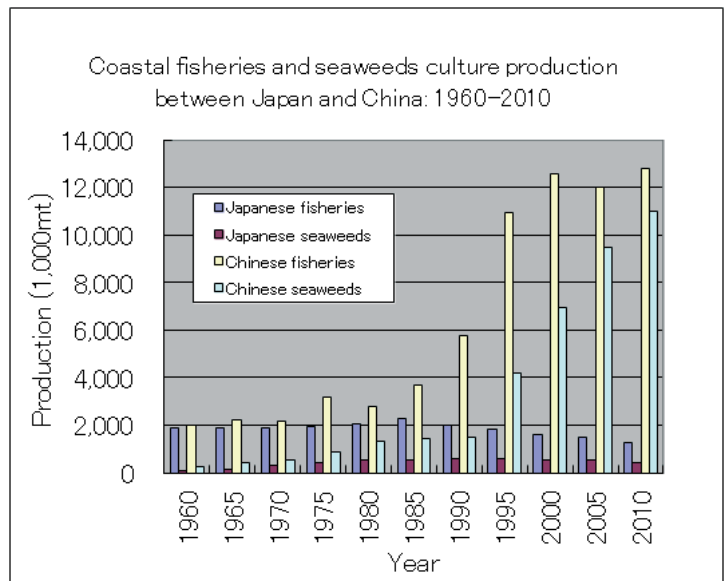


Figure 1. Sources: FAO statistics online and Japan's Fisheries White Papers

measure for materializing fisheries multi-functions of 3 billion yen in the national budget for the year of 2013. This is the first time the government indicated that seaweed beds conservation as a public works project includes man-made kelp forest production for fisheries resource enhancement.

The Society's slogans are 1) Let's recover the health of seas, forests and mountains; 2) Let's extend the marine forest promotion movement nationwide and worldwide, and 3) Seaweeds are medical doctors to cure the earth and people. Why don't you join us.

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## Topics

### Fiji envoy asks for JFA cooperation in developing fisheries

Mr. Ratu Isikeli Mataitaga, ambassador to Japan for the Republic of Fiji, visited the Japan Fisheries Association office on Sept. 25, 2012, to request Japan's cooperation in the tuna business.

In a meeting with JFA President Toshiro Shirasu, the ambassador stated that Fiji, an island nation with a vast exclusive economic zone (EEZ), sees a high potential in fisheries because of its rich marine resources. Fiji is transporting fresh ice-packed tuna to Japan, but the scale of business is still small compared with its productive power. For this reason, the country is now looking for Japanese partners with the aim to build tuna processing facilities and increase exports, Mr. Mataitaga said.

Shirasu responded that Japan has a close relationship with South Pacific island countries, noting some Japanese fisheries companies are investing in the region. It is the hope of the Japanese fisheries industry to maintain a friendly tie with South Pacific countries.

Having said that, Shirasu advised the Fijian envoy to have consultations with the overseas fisheries cooperation division of the Fisheries Agency of the Japanese government, the Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation (OFCF) and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) with regard to the promotion of its fisheries.

He also suggested that Fijian fishing companies participate in the Tokyo International Seafood and Technology Expo, in which a number of foreign companies display their products.

### Qatar-funded fisheries processing facility launched in tsunami-hit town

A new multi-functional fisheries processing facility was completed in Onagawa Town in Miyagi Prefecture, which was hit hard by the giant earthquake and tsunami on the northern coast of Japan on March 11, 2011.

The Qatar Friend Fund, chaired by Qatari Ambassador to Japan Yusef Mohamed Bilal, contributed about 2 billion Yen for the facility under a project to assist

restoration of the area damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

The processing plant, named MASKAR after a traditional fishing method in the Middle East country, went on line on October 15, 2012.

The three-storied 23-meter facility with a floor space of about 6,815 square meters is equipped with a state-of-the-art protective system against tsunamis.

The first floor is built based on the piling technique, with the external panel designed to be automatically removed when the building is hit by strong waves. On the second floor is the refrigeration room with the storage capacity of about 6,000 tons, and the third floor has a shelter in the event of disaster.

About 670 people will be employed at the facility, providing a ripple effect of about Y13 billion to the town.

Takanobu Takahashi, chief of the wholesalers' cooperative at the Onagawa Fish Market, expressed profound gratitude to Qatar's assistance, saying the people in the fisheries industry will commit themselves to their work wholeheartedly in the days ahead.

## MEL Japan News



### New fishery certified under MEL Japan

#### Spiny Dogfish Longline Fishery receives MEL certification

In October 2012, the following fishery was certified under MEL Japan, bringing the total number of certified fisheries to 18.

Spiny dogfish Longline Fishery in Minmaya  
 Certification holder: Minmaya Fisheries Cooperative Association (located in Aomori prefecture)  
 Species: Spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*)  
 Fishing ground: Off Tsugaru Channel  
 Date of certification: October 22, 2012

In the Minmaya Fisheries Cooperative Association which received this certification, fishermen are engaged in small-scale longline fishing targeting a modest amount of spiny dogfish, a kind of shark. They are actively involved in voluntary efforts to return the small fish to the sea, and tag and release fish in order to elucidate the migratory routes and to establish closed seasons.

What is noteworthy about this fishery is that the traditional and local food culture is making possible the full utilization of sharks. In other words, the conservation of such a fishery, backed by the food culture, contributes to the promotion of a sustainable fishery as a whole. When there is no culture, the litany of 'full utilization' makes no sense, and it would just end up as idealism. The MEL Japan Secretariat promotes sustainability of this fishery, and strongly hopes for preservation of the traditional culture of utilization of the certified products.