

Japan
Fisheries
Association

ISARIBI
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Fishing Fire

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Views and Opinions of Japan's Fisheries Industry

CITES CoP16

Current secret ballot system should be maintained to ensure fairness of CITES decisions

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will hold its 16th meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP16) in Bangkok, Thailand, 3-14 March, 2013.

The basic position of the Japan Fisheries Association on some salient issues for the coming meeting is summarized as follows:

1. Secret Ballots

The JFA believes the current use of secret ballots with the support of 10 Contracting Parties should be maintained so that the fairness and soundness of CITES' decisions are ensured.

If restrictions on the secret ballot render its use virtually impossible, the decisions of CITES could be unfairly distorted.

It should be noted that the secret ballot is an effective means to ensure Contracting Parties to be free from any unfair economic and political pressure and retaliatory action in connection with their voting.

2. Proposals for the inclusion of commercial fish species in the CITES Appendices

From the viewpoint of the fisheries industry, the JFA basically opposes any proposal which lacks clear scientific grounds or has a doubtful basis for the inclusion of any species in the Appendices.

At the coming meeting, proposals have been tabled for the inclusion of oceanic whitetip shark, hammerhead shark, porbeagle and manta rays in Appendix II. Japan opposes these proposals mainly for the following reasons.

(1) Commercial fish species should be managed properly by regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) or coastal states, from the viewpoint of not disrupting sustainable utilization unreasonably;

(2) Regarding oceanic whitetip shark and hammerhead shark, new management measures have been introduced at regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) since Cop15. Also, as for

porbeagle, major fishing countries have adopted more stringent management measures; and

(3) Should these species be included in Appendix II, practical issues remain with regard to the effectiveness of such measures and their limitations on trading.

Recommendations by the Global Guardian Trust (GGT) regarding proposals for Appendix inclusion of four marine species

Prop. 42. Inclusion of oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) in Appendix II (Brazil, Colombia, USA)

A proposal to list the oceanic whitetip shark was first submitted at CoP15 by Palau and the USA and was rejected. The species occurs in tropical and subtropical waters worldwide. According to the supporting statement, the population of this pelagic species is over-exploited in the central and western Pacific Ocean but the population size is unknown in other areas. The sharks are caught as bycatch in high seas pelagic fisheries and the fins are retained for international trade. It is stipulated in the supporting statement that most Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) prohibit shark finning at sea, including the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). These RFMOs have already introduced strict measures. At a national level, several countries prohibited shark finning and trade in fins. Like other shark species, listing the oceanic whitetip shark in Appendix II will create unnecessary procedural burden on Management Authorities and Customs, thus depriving such CITES-related authorities of resources, which could otherwise be utilized for other species of more conservation priority. It is unlikely that an Appendix II listing of the oceanic whitetip shark will complement the measures taken by these RFMOs. The proposal should be rejected.

Prop. 43. Inclusion of scalloped hammerhead

shark (*Sphyma lewini*) and other two species in Appendix II (Brazil, Costa Rica, Honduras)

A proposal to list hammerhead sharks was previously submitted at CoP15 by Palau and the USA and was rejected. In 2012, Costa Rica listed the scalloped hammerhead shark *Sphyma lewini* in CITES Appendix III. The scalloped hammerhead shark is distributed worldwide and occurs in warm temperate and tropical coastal waters. It seems that some populations in the Pacific Ocean meet the criteria for an Appendix II listing but the species as a whole does not meet the criteria. The proponents suggest that *Sphyma lewini* be listed in accordance with Criterion A in Annex 2a of Resolution Conf. 9.24 and other four species with Criterion A in Annex 2b. Nevertheless, the supporting statement mentions that few population assessments are available globally for *S. lewini*. Although the proponents say that estimates of trends in abundance of *S. lewini* are available for this species (Annex 2), the table shown as Annex 2 is for *Sphyma* spp. complex. According to the supporting statement, many countries have banned finning and shark fishing. Most of the RFMOs have implemented finning bans. FAO and RFMOs should be the prime organization responsible for shark fisheries. Like other shark species, listing the oceanic whitetip shark in Appendix II will create unnecessary procedural burden on Management Authorities and Customs, thus depriving such CITES-related authorities of resources, which could otherwise be utilized for other species of more conservation priority. Under the circumstances, we recommend that the proposal be **rejected**.

Prop. 44. Inclusion of porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*) in Appendix II (Denmark)

Similar proposals were rejected at CoP14 and CoP15. The porbeagle has already been listed in Appendix III since last year. To the contrary, the supporting statement mentions that in the absence of a CITES listing there is no reliable mechanism to track trends in catch and trade of *L. nasus*. The porbeagle is distributed in the North Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean and the Southern

Ocean. The population of the northern Atlantic has been depleted and accordingly, management measures have been introduced by many countries. The supporting statement indicates that quota management has been in place in Canada since 2002, in the US since 1999, in New Zealand since 2004 and in EU since 2008. In 2010, EU established a zero quota. In the EEZ of Canada, the population has stabilized. Thus, it is expected that porbeagle stock will recover. Regrettably, it was only 2010 when a zero quota was set by EU, which is 3 years after its first submission of the porbeagle proposal at CoP14 in 2007. With regard to marine fish species subject to large-scale commercial fisheries, there are many problems which have yet to be solved. For example, the proponent recognizes a difficulty in implementation, suggesting 18 months delay in the entry into effect. Furthermore, EU States consume this shark for its meat and a 'look-alike' problem need to be addressed. Even if EU keeps a zero fishing quota within EU waters, EU will continue importing porbeagles for internal consumption. The proposal should be **rejected**.

Prop. 46. Inclusion of manta rays in the genus *Manta* in Appendix II (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador)

Manta birostris used to be the only species belonging to the genus *Manta* but was split to two different species (*M. birostris* and *M. alfredi*) in 2009. There may be a third species. The manta rays are widely distributed in tropical, subtropical and temperate waters. Insufficient information is available on population size, population trends, trade, etc.. As a result, it is difficult to judge whether the species are qualified for Appendix II listings. Ecuador sent consultation letters to range states but received responses from a small number of countries. We do not know how other countries consider this proposal. Under the circumstances, it is recommended that the proposal be **rejected**.

(GGT is a non-governmental organization based in Tokyo that supports sound and sustainable use of wildlife resources.)

President's message

JFA's perspective for 2013

In the New Year issue of "Suisankai," the Japanese-language bulletin of the Japan Fisheries Association (JFA), President Toshiro Shirasu presented his message on the JFA's determination and commitment to deal with the impending issues before Japan's fisheries industry in 2013. Following is a gist of his message.

Nearly two years since the great East Japan earthquake and tsunami, considerable recovery has been observed regarding fishing ports, fishing vessels and fish landings, thanks to the efforts of people involved in fisheries and other citizens of the tsunami-affected areas. However, much remains to be done. Japan's fisheries industry is

committed to do its utmost for the reconstruction of fisheries in the disaster area as it believes the region is essential from the viewpoint of a stable supply of seafood to the Japanese people.

I consider the promotion and expansion of seafood consumption in Japan to be the cornerstone of development for the fisheries industry. It is



regrettable to see that fish consumption has been on a decline in Japan, despite the fact that many people in other parts of the world are willing to eat more fish in pursuit of a healthier life. A recent survey in Japan of 1,000 mothers shows that most of them believe fish is healthier than meat and want to have their children eat more fish. Thus, the survey clarified that fish consumption in Japan has been decreasing not because people dislike it. We in the fisheries industry should strive to fill in the gap between such perception of consumers (e.g. as one represented by mothers) and people's actual consumption behavior.

The "Fast Fish" campaign, a program proposed recently at the Fisheries Agency of the Japanese government, is a concrete step to try to have the consumer eat tasty fish more with ease. Our association will step up its effort to expand seafood consumption through activities of our "Fish Consumption Promotion Center" in collaboration with the government and the

industry.

Furthermore, it is crucial to accelerate Japan's seafood exports in a bid to increase the share of seafood demand. Especially, we will strive to boost exports to the European Union this year, by promoting compliance with the requirements of HACCP--a keyword for safe and secure food.

I believe it is our important obligation to manage fisheries resources in the waters surrounding Japan--which has some of the best fishing grounds in the world--with the aim to ensure a stable supply of seafood to consumers. To this end, it is urgent to strengthen the domestic seafood supply structure. We will buttress the fostering of a new workforce in the industry and promote low-cost and highly efficient fishing vessel construction. At the same time, we will promote sustainable fisheries through expanded activities of the Marine Eco-label Japan (MEL), an eco-labeling scheme to support fisheries that take environmental conservation into consideration.

New fisheries

A Proposal from disaster area: Project to turn Sanriku into a major world aquaculture base

Hajime Irokawa

President, Ishinomaki Regional Industry Promotion Co.

One year and nine months have passed since the Great Earthquake and Tsunami in eastern Japan. Many of the residents in Ishinomaki wish that a new and strong wind of restoration will blow to the disaster area. In June last year, we managed to reopen Ishinomaki Citizens' Market in the center of the city. But the people who had been enthusiastic before the disaster are now totally dispirited. In face of this plight, I am questioning myself every day what we should do to reinvigorate the mind and body of the people and how we should use effectively the remains of our lives.

As one who spent more than half a century with the fisheries industry, I came to think of making proposals that can be achieved only in the disaster area. I believe, based on my experience with fisheries, that a project that can provide working opportunities to many people and return the favor of help and goodwill delivered from all over the world should start from the culture of aquatic fauna and flora and the propagation of the resources in our sea through farming and fostering.

Following is my proposal.

The new fisheries project I have in mind is one that establishes an aquaculture development institute of fishery and marine resources to turn the bountiful sea into "a large aquaculture ground" that "produces food for mankind."

This means the creation of a large-scale food industry in which producers of both fishery and farm products cooperate with the aim to provide tasty and nutritious food to consumers.

The new fisheries should start by establishing a research institute where people from all over the world who share the same ideals come together for joint

research. The institute would have various facilities, a safe and hygienic environment, and efficient experiment sites. Researchers would be invited from various countries to develop projects with the aim to produce, raise and foster marine resources, including fish and seaweed.

The area off Sanriku, the northern region of Japan's main Honshu Island, where I now live, is one of the richest fishing grounds in the world. Sanriku is known to fishermen as a rich spawning and fostering ground of fish and seaweed. However, after the disaster, there are no fishermen to protect and foster juvenile fish that have been spawned nor are there adequate regulations for stock management.

I am well aware of the difficulty of protecting and fostering marine resources because it is connected to the issue of the traditional fishing rights. It is indeed difficult to persuade fishermen and put the program into action. Further, it does not seem certain whether the government will allocate a subsidy for new projects.

I am also aware that it is difficult to gain the cooperation of not only fishermen but also seafood processors and distributors for promotion of the new fisheries project.

I believe that the project will go forward only with the strong determination of the national government. Municipal governments and other local offices may need to set up their own systems to increase resources, with the powerful support of the national government.

What is important for the implementation of the new project can be summarized as follows.

1. Adequate consideration should be given so that the livelihoods of fishermen (who may consider themselves

barred from free operation), seafood processors and distributors may not be constrained. Remunerations to them should be ensured by allowing them to cooperate and participate in the new project by making available the raw materials from overseas or other areas of Japan. It is absolutely necessary to make a decent life possible for all the people involved in the project--giving them dreams and hopes alone is not enough. I believe the use of the restoration budget for such a purpose should be permitted.

2. Many fishermen are fully aware that the fishing industry must not only protect their fishing ground, but that they cannot pass the resources over to future generations by engaging in overfishing and illegal fishing--which often occurs easily in the affluent sea. It is the national government, not local authorities, that can effectively enforce regulations over fishing.

3. On the occasion of the giant earthquake and tsunami, fishermen were given hopes and encouragement through the help from the national government and many foreign countries. I believe we can reciprocate to such favors through the implementation of the new fisheries--by fostering fish eggs and seedling, buying and raising juveniles to produce multifold tons of fish, making public the technology we have developed to the world, and increasing marine resources in the world's oceans.

4. I understand the new project is an attempt to find ways to provide our products through collaboration among fishermen, fish processors, distributors and retailers. I hope that it will develop into a growth industry to be handed over to our offspring. The basics of such an industry are in the fauna and flora that grow in abundance in this sea.

Back around 1975, I was assigned by my company to cope with the task of converting the company's main production into new projects, in the wake of the introduction of exclusive economic zones by many coastal states and the global move to ban commercial whaling. Amid these circumstances, I engaged in various fish aquaculture and farming promotion projects both in Japan and around the world, including the commercialization of bluefin tuna farming in Morocco, the culture of black tiger shrimp in Indonesia, and the extension of fisheries technical guidance in Latin America, Asia, Africa and other areas.

As I now recall, our projects were favorably received overseas because we taught many people the joy of building a pleasant work environment and comfortable living conditions by increasing the native fishery resources and providing opportunities to local people to join in the new projects.

This time, I believe we in the disaster area can return the favor of the support received from other countries through the realization of new fisheries and the propagation of marine resources in the calamity-hit area where there exist a bountiful ocean and land resources. We can resuscitate local industries, including seafood processing, retailing and tourism, and provide food to the people of the world with increased resources and newly acquired aquaculture technology--which is the common property of mankind.

Topic

Russian delegation visits JFA to consult on bilateral fisheries cooperation

On October 1, 2012, the Japan-Russia consultation was held at the Japan Fisheries Association (JFA) on concrete ways to implement the projects to provide fisheries-related equipment to Russia in fiscal 2012 (April 2012-March 2013). This consultation is part of the agreement between Japan and Russia to regulate the operations by fishermen of both countries in the waters of each other's jurisdiction.

The Japanese delegation was represented by JFA Senior Executive Managing Director Yoshiyuki Shige. The Russian delegation was led by S.V. Maksimov, head of the Department of Aquaculture of the Fisheries Agency, and consisted of three others, including E.Y. Solovieva, chief of the Department of Finance.

The consultation is held twice every year to discuss two types of projects: one to provide hatcheries in Russia's Far Eastern region with machinery and equipment for the propagation of Russian salmon, and the other to provide research and educational organizations in the same region with scientific equipment and instruments with a view to develop the coastal fisheries of the region.

After the meeting, the Russian team flew to Hakodate and Sapporo in Hokkaido on October 2 to visit machinery manufacturing firms and hatcheries and exchange views and deepen friendships with relevant officials.

The basic bilateral agreement was signed on October 5, and the Russian delegation left Japan on October 6.

MEL Japan News



New fishery certified under MEL Japan

In January 2013, the following fishery was certified under the Marine Eco-label Japan (MEL Japan), bringing the total number of certified fisheries to 19.

Medium-type silver-stripe round herring purse-seine fishery at Sukumo Bay

Certification holder: Sukumo Bay Fisheries Cooperative Association

Species: silver-stripe round herring

Fishing method: medium-type purse-seine fishery

Fishing ground: Sukumo Bay, Kochi Prefecture

Date of certification: January 11, 2013

The stock of silver-stripe round herring has been in stable condition for a long time. There is virtually no by-catch in the fishery. Fishermen are taking voluntary steps for the conservation of the stock by using larger-mesh nets. Fishing is closed within the spawning grounds during the spawning period, and no-fishing days are established for 1-3 days a month during the rest of the year.