

Japan
Fisheries
Association



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Views and Opinions of Japan's Fisheries Industry

Responsible Trade & Consumption

All Stakeholders Are Called Upon to Ensure Responsible Trade and Consumption of Fishery Products

“All stakeholders--producers, traders, distributors, and consumers--are now being called upon to consider ways to ensure responsible trade and consumption of fishery products,” said Akinori Enoki, associate professor of Kinki University.

Speaking under the title: “In pursuit of a desirable state of fishery product trade” at an April symposium in Tokyo, Enoki stressed that “engaging in fisheries that is responsible for the resources and the environment has become a significant goal for us to pursue.”

The symposium was intended to discuss the direction Japan should take at this time when Japan's imports are showing a slight decrease from the previous levels due partly to increasing demand for fishery products worldwide.

Enoki noted that “consumption of fishery products in China saw a rapid growth from 14.53 million tons (per-capita amount: 12.4 kg) in 1991-1993 to 31.81 million tons (25.4 kg) in 1999-2001.”

“Japan remains the world's largest importer of fish now. But we should note that China is increasing its dependence on imported fish backed by strong consumption at home. The country will certainly become a super-large importer if fish diet expands from coastal areas to inland,” he added.

“From the perspective of the present status of fishery resources in the world, it is not possible to further boost the supply of fish worldwide. How traders and processors get involved in the world's fishery resources will become an important issue of social responsibility of fisheries enterprises.”

Enoki further said that “the responsibility of consumers will also be tested. Consumers should not

World's Fishery Product Imports (top 30 countries)
(Unit: quantities in tons; value in US\$1,000)

Country	2004			
	Quantities	Order	Value	Order
World total	29,715,705	-	76,319,667	-
Japan	3,478,778	1	14,830,080	1
China	2,977,077	2	3,167,656	6
U.S.	2,300,321	3	12,078,689	2
Spain	1,559,651	4	5,238,660	3
Denmark	1,424,817	5	2,368,838	9
Korea	1,285,006	6	2,258,711	10
Thailand	1,240,181	7	1,254,617	17
France	1,104,643	8	4,216,736	4
Germany	1,031,808	9	2,830,918	8
Italy	931,770	10	3,919,082	5
Russia	907,718	11	770,068	18
U.K.	882,549	12	2,843,021	7
Netherlands	728,795	13	1,850,165	12
Norway	621,736	14	681,941	20
Nigeria	570,441	15	397,436	27
Canada	482,946	16	1,567,651	13
Taiwan	385,364	17	517,812	24
Hong Kong	365,654	18	1,928,618	11
Portugal	346,957	19	1,264,862	16
Sweden	334,677	20	1,303,654	15
Malaysia	325,163	21	538,112	23
Poland	311,918	22	584,961	22
Belgium	309,553	23	1,530,953	14
Ukraine	307,665	24	139,940	39
Australia	283,188	25	730,745	19
Egypt	241,947	26	134,382	41
Ivory Coast	218,966	27	166,145	33
Iceland	217,799	28	117,367	44
Singapore	196,788	29	635,927	21
Brazil	174,060	30	282,931	30

seek to buy low-priced imported products to the extent of destroying the environment of exporting countries.”

“The time will come when consumers should buy, at their own responsibility, the products that meet the requirements of the resources and the environment,” Enoki concluded.

Professor Haruko Yamashita of Meikai University, who spoke from the floor at the symposium, pointed out: “It is important that we become aware of the importance of responsible consumption. Although Japan is faced with an issue of improving its self-sufficiency in fisheries production, there is a concern that, if we take small-stock fish in larger quantities, the resources may be depleted in several years.”

“The species such as bigeye tuna or bluefin tuna are consumed mostly in Japan, and Japan will certainly be responsible if their resources are depleted. We should take these issues into account when we consider trade and consumption in fishery products,” she said.

Fishery Product Trade Posts Record Level in Volume and Value

According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), imports of fishery products on a worldwide basis surged to yet another high level of 29.72 million tons in 2004, up 4% or 1.14

million tons from 2003.

Import value also rose to a record level of \$76.3 billion, up 12% from the previous year.

While imports of fishery products have broken record levels in recent years, fishery production has reached a ceiling against a background of the fullest possible use of the world fishery resources.

Analysts attribute the continuing growth in imports to such factors as an increasing global demand for fish reflecting the pursuit of healthy food, expanding aquaculture production for exports, and expanding trade through consigned processing in China and other countries.

Changes in World Fishery Product Imports (Source: FAO; unit in tons; value in US\$1.000)

	Quantities	Value
1995	22,323,393	57,069,691
1996	22,691,942	58,094,603
1997	23,594,120	57,573,408
1998	22,557,088	56,108,158
1999	24,226,213	58,574,571
2000	26,543,001	60,981,196
2001	27,903,920	60,568,315
2002	28,080,322	62,493,509
2003	28,578,306	68,348,324
2004	29,715,705	76,319,667

International Whaling Commission

IWC NOTES WHALING MORATORIUM NO LONGER NECESSARY - IWC COMMISSIONERS DECLARE COMMITMENT TO NORMALISING IWC-

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) declared its commitment to normalizing the functions of the IWC in the ST. KITTS AND NEVIS DECLARATION adopted at its 58th session held in St. Kitts and Nevis, June 16-20. Japan also announced its intention to host a meeting for normalization of the IWC, and it was agreed that the meeting will be held in Tokyo early 2007. It is expected that the meeting will make a breakthrough in the deadlock of the 14-year-long discussion in the IWC toward termination of the moratorium which is no longer necessary as noted in the Declaration.

The resumption of commercial whaling has a much broader implication than just the promotion of the sustainable use of resources. This is a question of how the international community acknowledges the issue of cultural liberty when a certain cultural practice is

banned for more than 14 years for no scientific justification. The concept of cultural liberty is thoroughly discussed in the Human Development Report 2004 issued by the United Nations Development Programme, and the issue is condensed in the following excerpt. “People’s cultural identities must be recognized and accommodated by the state, and people must be free to express these identities without being discriminated against in other aspects of their lives. In short: cultural liberty is a human right and an important aspect of human development—and thus worthy of state action and attention.”

The creation of peaceful society cannot be realized without the recognition of cultural pluralism. With the hope of advancement of the whaling discussion as one cultural issue, Isaribi introduces the ST. KITTS AND NEVIS DECLARATION as follows.

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS DECLARATION

EMPHASISING that the use of cetaceans in many parts of the world including the Caribbean, contributes to sustainable coastal communities, sustainable livelihoods, food security and poverty reduction and that placing the use of whales outside the context of the globally accepted norm of science-based management and rule-making for emotional reasons would set a bad precedent that risks our use of fisheries and other renewable resources;

FURTHER EMPHASISING that the use of marine resources as an integral part of development options is critically important at this time for a number of countries experiencing the need to diversify their agriculture;

UNDERSTANDING that the purpose of the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) is to 'provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry' (quoted from the Preamble to the Convention) and that the International Whaling Commission (IWC) is therefore about managing whaling to ensure whale stocks are not over-harvested rather than protecting all whales irrespective of their abundance;

NOTING that in 1982, the IWC adopted a moratorium on commercial whaling (paragraph 10e of the Schedule to the ICRW) without advice from the Commission's Scientific Committee that such measure was required for conservation purposes;

FURTHER NOTING that the moratorium which was clearly intended as a temporary measure is no longer necessary, that the Commission adopted a robust and risk-averse procedure (RMP) for calculating quotas for abundant stocks of baleen whales in 1994 and that the IWC's own Scientific Committee has agreed that many species and stocks of whales are abundant and sustainable whaling is possible;

CONCERNED that after 14 years of discussion and negotiation, the IWC has failed to complete and implement a management regime to regulate commercial whaling.

ACCEPTING that scientific research has shown that whales consume huge quantities of fish making the issue a matter of food security for coastal nations and requiring that the issue of management of whale stocks



Photo by courtesy of the Japan Whaling Association

must be considered in a broader context of ecosystem management since eco-system management has now become an international standard.

REJECTING as unacceptable that a number of international NGOs with self-interest campaigns should use threats in an attempt to direct government policy on matters of sovereign rights related to the use of resources for food security and national development;

NOTING that the position of some members that are opposed to the resumption of commercial whaling on a sustainable basis irrespective of the status of whale stocks is contrary to the object and purpose of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling;

UNDERSTANDING that the IWC can be saved from collapse only by implementing conservation and management measures which will allow controlled and sustainable whaling which would not mean a return to historic over-harvesting and that continuing failure to do so serves neither the interests of whale conservation nor management;

NOW THEREFORE:

COMMISSIONERS express their concern that the IWC has failed to meet its obligations under the terms of the ICRW and,

DECLARE our commitment to normalising the functions of the IWC based on the terms of the ICRW and other relevant international law, respect for cultural diversity and traditions of coastal peoples and the fundamental principles of sustainable use of resources, and the need for science-based policy and rulemaking that are accepted as the world standard for the management of marine resources.

VIOLENT ACTIVITIES OF NGOS CONDEMNED UNANIMOUSLY

Violent NGOs, such as Greenpeace, have been engaged in activities which may be a risk to human life in their protest of research whaling. As the latest example, the Greenpeace activist vessel the Arctic Sunrise deliberately rammed the Nisshinmaru, a Japanese vessel conducting research whaling, on Sunday, 8 January 2006 as reported by Isaribi 48.

Both pro-whaling and anti-whaling countries were seriously concerned that dangerous confrontations risk human life, property, and the order of maritime navigation, and may lead to grave accidents. They cosponsored and adopted by consensus THE RESOLUTION ON THE SAFETY OF VESSELS ENGAGED IN WHALING AND WHALE RESEARCH-RELATED ACTIVITIES. The Resolution has made clear that they do not condone any actions that are a risk to human life and property in relation to these activities of vessels at sea. The following is the full text of the resolution

RESOLUTION ON THE SAFETY OF VESSELS ENGAGED IN WHALING AND WHALE RESEARCH-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Submitted by

Australia, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, United States of America

Whereas the safety of vessels and crew and the order of maritime navigation are, and have long been, the common interest of nations worldwide,

Whereas the Commission and Contracting Governments support the right to legitimate and peaceful forms of protest and demonstration,

Mindful of the fact that issues relating to confrontation between vessels at sea and in port have been discussed by this Commission as well as other international for a including the International Maritime Organization,

Recognizing the fact that domestic and international concerns have been expressed concerning confrontation at sea and port relating to whaling and whale research activities,

Seriously concerned that dangerous confrontations risk human life, property, and the order of maritime navigation, and may lead to grave accidents,

Recalling the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea which set uniform principles and rules for avoiding collisions at sea,

Recalling further the guidelines of the International Maritime Organization relating to consultation and cooperation in marine casualty investigations,

Now therefore this Commission,

Agrees and Declares that the Commission and its contracting Governments do not condone any actions that are a risk to human life and property in relation to these activities of vessels at sea, and urges persons and entities to refrain from such acts;

Encourages Contracting Governments to take appropriate measures, consistent with IMO guidelines, in order to ensure that the substance and spirit of this Resolution are observed -- both domestically and internationally.

DECEPTION OF "INTERIM" PROHIBITION

As has been witnessed with the adoption of the ST. KITTS AND NEVIS DECLARATION, the 58th session of the IWC has taken a small step toward normalization of the Commission that has been dysfunctional for 14 years. Despite its historic advancement, however, there is a long way to go to win the three-quarters majority required to overturn the ban on commercial whaling.

This gives us an invaluable lesson regarding the implication of "interim" prohibition relevant to any fishing activities. Turning our eyes to international fora related to the conservation and use of marine life, other than the IWC, such as the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS), civil society and scientists have been promoting the "interim" prohibition of fishing activities as if this is a win-win solution to enhance productivity of the oceans which will lead to bigger catches.

We should remember, though, that once such an "interim" prohibition is introduced, driven by NGOs with self-interest campaigns, and not as a part of a stock enhancement program with the cooperation of scientists and fishermen, "interim" in reality means "decades" or even "a century." This is because its objective is to ban the use of marine life irrespective of the stock status as the 14 year history of discussion in the IWC demonstrates. The need to normalize the term "INTERIM" should also be discussed in the IWC.