

Japan  
Fisheries  
Association



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Views and Opinions of Japan's Fisheries Industry

Japan International Seafood Expo

## 9<sup>th</sup> Japan International Seafood Expo attracts record number of 450 exhibitors

### JFA invites active participation in Osaka Seafood Expo next January

The Japan Fisheries Association (JFA) organized the 9th Japan International Seafood & Technology Expo at the Tokyo Big Sight on July 18-20. A record number of approximately 450 companies related to seafood processing and other technologies participated from Japan and overseas.

Also the number of countries taking part in the show hit a record level of 14 including one territory, with Thailand, Brunei, Myanmar and Mauritius making their first participation.

Active booths at the Expo totaled 560, with the number of visitors reaching 26,240 during the three-day session, exceeding last year's figure by 3,500.

During the show, the first "Sushi Expo" was held, reflecting the rising popularity of sushi both in Japan and abroad. Also, a biennial international exposition on fishery aquaculture technology was organized and 35 seafood-related seminars were held.

At the opening ceremony on July 18, Isao Nakasu, president of the JFA, stated: "We have seen ever increasing exhibitors since the first show in 1999, now witnessing that this Expo has become the biggest seafood show in Asia."

Highlighting some of the new attempts at the present Expo, Nakasu noted: "As demand for seafood is increasing worldwide, sushi, one of Japan's representative food cultures, is enjoying a widespread boom in various parts of the world, and providing business opportunities.

"A variety of expertise on sushi, including sushi materials, rice cooking techniques, sushi robots and conveyors for revolving sushi restaurant chains, are



Opening of the Tokyo Seafood Expo

displayed. I hope that participants will use this occasion for developing sushi into a good business chance."

Nakasu further pointed out that another special feature of the Expo was the international exposition on aquaculture technology. He observed: "Now there is concern over decreasing fish resources and catches are approaching their limit worldwide. Under these circumstances, aquaculture is drawing special attention as a means to ensure a stable supply of seafood."

"At the Expo, a wide range of technology and facilities supporting both shore-based and marine aquaculture are presented," he said.

Nakasu concluded his remark by saying that "it is truly a pleasure for the organizer to see that the show is contributing to the promotion of business, and providing a motive for boosting demand for seafood in Japan, which is said to be on a declining trend in recent years."

Meanwhile, the JFA is inviting active participation in the 5th Japan International Seafood & Technology Expo, Osaka, to be held on January 24 and 25, 2008.

Like the show in Tokyo, it will feature exhibition and displays from a large variety of areas such as

seafood, processing, seasonings and food additives, freezing and refrigeration, packaging, distribution machinery, HACCP-supporting equipment and services and food sanitation management machinery.

## MEL Japan

### Japan's first seafood eco-labeling system to be launched this year

Japan's first seafood eco-labeling system, "Marine Eco-label Japan" (MEL Japan) will be introduced before the end of this year.

MEL Japan is designed to ensure that any seafood was harvested with attention to the conservation of the marine ecosystem and sustainability of the resources.

The system is designed to give opportunities to consumers to participate actively in the promotion of sustainable utilization of fishery resources and the conservation of the ecosystem.

Under the system, seafood products are expected to have certification labels showing that they have been harvested sustainably and in a manner complying with the conservation of the ecosystem based on the best scientific evidence available, also taking into account traditional knowledge of the resources, ensuring objective verification.

The certification is to be further confirmed by an independent, impartial and transparent scheme.

With the support from all sectors of the fisheries in Japan, including the producing and distribution industries and companies and academia, a preparatory

committee for an eco-labeling system was established. The committee has developed a blueprint of its own ecolabeling system in line with the FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabeling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries that was agreed on in 2005 as well as the guidance of the Fisheries Agency of the Japanese government. Additional asset of the scheme is to give due regards to the characteristics of fishery production and stock management in Japan, particularly co-management.

The idea of co-management is for fishermen to share the role of fisheries management and resource enhancement. Taking into account the diversity of scales and types of fisheries in Japan, the new labeling system will aim to hold to a minimum level the financial burden on fishers, processors and other users in obtaining the eco-label certification with a view to facilitate the distribution of eco-labeled seafood in Japan and promote exports. The preparatory process has entered into the final stage. MEL Japan aims to establish credibility within Japan and also gain international recognition for its unique and reasonable characteristics.

## 2007 CITES Meeting

### Attending the 14th meeting of CITES Does CITES choose the path of "Horror Hospital"?

Reporter, Masashi Nishimura  
Japan Fisheries Association

*The 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was held in the Hague June 3-15, 2007. In what follows, I would like to discuss the appropriate role of CITES, centering on some major agenda items taken up at the meeting.*

#### CITES shies away from scientific review

Japan proposed a periodic review of all listed cetaceans to ensure that the Convention's Appendices

correctly reflect the conservation and management needs of species. The inclusion of cetacean species in Appendix I had taken place before detailed scientific

criteria was adopted and scientific veracity of these listings has not been tested against the criteria.

This proposal was rejected at Committee I, held before the Plenary Session. Conversely, a proposal stating that “No periodic review of any great whale, including the fin whale, should occur while the IWC moratorium is in place,” tabled by Australia, was adopted. (As is commonly known, the commercial whaling moratorium has been maintained by political motives, not by scientific judgment.)

This proposal of Australia was presented rather abruptly after the discussion on the Japanese proposal. On this ground, Palau requested for reopening of discussion at the Plenary since the Australian proposal did not follow the procedures required by CITES regulations that any new proposal be submitted in writing prior to the meeting. Further, Palau requested that secret ballot should be used if the decision on whether the reopening of the discussion on proposal is put to vote. However, Palau’s proposal was put to vote without taking the procedure of secret ballot because of the mismanagement of Chair and the Secretariat. The proposal was defeated with 35 votes in favor, 71 against—one vote short of the one third vote required for the reopening of discussion.

St. Christopher and Nevis, Norway and Iceland objected to the proceeding of the meeting, and the meeting became entangled for some time. The issue was finally brought to the CITES Bureau at which the decision not to reopen the discussion was made.

Palau, while saying it did not intend to prolong the matter any further, stated as follows: “We were greatly disappointed with the management of the Secretariat. The Secretariat should advise us properly on the procedure of the meeting. The Australian proposal pertains not only to the issue of whaling but also the credibility and integrity of the Convention. The role of the Animals Committee is to review that the species are correctly listed according to the criteria. The decision will seriously undermine independent scientific reviews, which are the fundamental part of work of the convention.”

St. Vincent and the Grenadines concurred with this intervention and expressed its deep concern over the implication of the decision. It contended that the adoption of the decision will be the precedent to undermine the rules of procedure of the convention and will be a hallmark to all the international conventions. This is a question of integrity of the convention.



14th CITES COP

Not only in the case of this issue, the Plenary Session fell into disorder during some other discussions, finally cutting into the closing of the conference. I felt a bit sorry for the Agriculture Minister from the Netherlands, who chaired the meeting, but I thought it was the role of the CITES Secretariat to support and guide the Chair who is not well versed with the procedure of CITES meetings.

Furthermore, although the Australian proposal caused such a turmoil, the same mistake in procedure for secret ballot was about to be repeated for inclusion of red corals in the Appendix. However, this confusion was avoided by the intervention of Japan.

As the reopening of the discussion of the Australian proposal regarding cetaceans was rejected only with the margin of one vote, there should have been an ample possibility for the discussion to be reopened if secret ballot had been conducted and countries which evaded pressures from big countries or environmental groups had voted in support of it.

The CITES Director-General circumvented his responsibility by saying that “any country that came to know the absence of appropriate proceedings for secret ballot at the time of voting should have so pointed out before the voting.” But this was evidently a mistake by Chairman and the Secretariat, and, as far as it was their mistake, the only step that should be taken must have been to carry out the voting again.

In addition to the issue of procedures, the case of the Australian proposal implied that CITES chose the path of “horror hospital”—meaning that the hospital tries to find reasons to reject health check in order to continue to keep the patient in the hospital even after he or she fully recovers.

The IWMC World Conservation Trust, an

environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) supporting sustainable use of natural resources, stated at the meeting as follows: “The countries opposing to the review of Appendix listing fear that the fact the species in question is not decreasing may come to the light.”

### In the shadow of G8 summit

The atmosphere that this year’s meeting carried over from past meetings was the flashy opening ceremony and the above-stated verbal exchanges. There were no radical demonstrations during the meeting, but only fake elephant objects and ivory, made by animal welfare groups, were placed sporadically at the entrance of the conference.

In previous meetings we could see numbers of shops, giving the impression that CITES conference was a festival of environmental NGOs. But this time only animal welfare groups were distributing eco-goods, such as bags, badges, pens and stuffed animals, contributing to “consumer culture.”

There were almost no reports by major TV companies such as CNN or BBC, spectators seemed to have been completely taken away by NGO protests at the summit meeting of eight industrial countries (G8), held around the same time in Heiligendamm, Germany.

### CITES steps in the kitchen

The species burdened with the leading actor of this relatively quiet CITES conference were Porbeagle Shark and Spiny Dog Fish. The proposed inclusion of these two species in Appendix II was rejected. It was a rare sight at CITES to see several environmentalist countries oppose to inclusion of such species in Appendices. In the background of this move, I observed that fish species placed on plates came into discussion at CITES after Appendix inclusion of large and what conservationist consider lovable animals almost ran its course. The tendency has been observed for more than 10 years, while it was the first time for so many countries, including environmentalist ones, to consider CITES Appendix inclusion as their own issues of food security rather than means to promote environmentalist agenda.

It should be pointed out, on the other hand, that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has the expertise in management of these species on a comprehensive basis.

At this meeting, the presence of FAO drew a special attention. FAO clearly expressed its concern that

there exist differences in views on a number of proposals between the FAO and CITES. We were encouraged to see that this remark reflected the year-long assertion of the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) that management of fishery resources should be left to FAO and regional fisheries management organizations. CITES is basically a forum to take “emergency measures” in the form of trade controls in face of “urgent status” i.e. the risk of extinction to some wildlife resources. It is unrealistic that CITES having such “a limited role” has launched into the domain of comprehensive management of wildlife resources with the backing of environmental NGOs.

Conservation of wildlife, in its essence, is an accumulation of simple and at times tedious works. It seems to me that CITES began to deviate itself from its original track from the time it became a theater of dealing with showy issues such as the conservation of elephants and whales. I believe CITES’ efforts to return to normal track on this occasion is the path of regaining its credibility and integrity.

I would hope to see CITES remember its original work in the 15th COP to be held in Doha, Qatar, in 2010.

## Japan gains support on the IWC and CITES from Atlantic coast African countries

The 7th Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO) was held in the Ivory Coast on July 25-27.

The Japanese delegation headed by Jun Yamashita of the Fisheries Agency attended the meeting as an observer.

The meeting agenda included the sustainable utilization of fishery resources by the African countries on the Atlantic coast. Appreciation was expressed by many countries attending the meeting for Japan’s assistance in the area of fisheries.

At the meeting, Japan made its position clear on the International Whaling Commission and the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and gained the support of participating countries.