

Japan
Fisheries
Association



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Views and Opinions of Japan's Fisheries Industry

At-sea Terrorism

IWC members condemn Sea Shepherd's terrorist actions by consensus

International society should show its determination not to succumb to violence

The international Whaling Commission held an intersessional meeting in London, March 6-8, to discuss the future of the Commission now polarized sharply between countries supporting the sustainable use of whales and those who are against it.

The meeting was convened at the initiative of the IWC's Chair and U.S. Commissioner Dr. William Hogarth and 54 of the 78 IWC member countries, including Japan, participated.

Akira Nakamae, Deputy Director-General of the Fisheries Agency and head of the Japanese delegation at the meeting, said in a press conference in Tokyo on March 11: "The most important result of the meeting was that the IWC adopted by consensus a statement condemning the series of violent harassment activities against the Japanese whale research fleet by the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) in the Antarctic.

Nakamae also stated that the Government of Japan requested countries related with the SSCS to take definitive actions against that organization: the Netherlands in which the SSCS vessels are registered, Australia allowing port calls by SSCS vessels, and the United States where the SSCS has its headquarters.

He also called on these nations to broadly cooperate with Japan in the investigations into the SSCS's illegal actions.

Regarding the future course of the efforts to normalize the IWC, the meeting agreed that the Chair will lead further exchanges of views

among member countries and will develop his recommendations by May based on the points of improvement in the IWC administration proposed in the course of this meeting.

Nakamae expressed the hope that the Chair's recommendations will be agreed at the plenary meeting in Chile in June, paving the way for the administration of the Commission to be promoted in line with them.

He also noted that a steering committee consisting of five countries (Japan, the United States, Chile, New Zealand and Palau) met several times to prepare for this intersessional meeting.

Nakamae explained that three external experts on diplomatic negotiations (from Kenya, Peru and Argentina) were invited to the meeting to present their advice on the administration procedures at the IWC.

He added that the general atmosphere of the meeting was calm and constructive.

Fisheries Minister gives positive mark to the outcome of the meeting as a step forward to normalizing IWC

Commenting on the IWC intersessional meeting, Masatoshi Wakabayashi, Japan's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, valued the outcome of the meeting, especially in that the name of the SSCS was explicitly mentioned, clearly exposing their illegal activities to the international community, and as a result, a statement of condemnation was adopted by consensus.

He observed that "the motive of Dr. Hogarth to convene this meeting was obviously to discuss the

possibility of rebuilding the relations of trust and improve the course of discussion and negotiations, based on the recognition that the present anomalous state of the Commission is not the one desired by the member States."

Notably, he highly rated the invitation of external experts on international negotiations as a significant step forward to realizing a peaceful and smooth administration of the IWC meetings.

Criminal actions by SSCS can be stopped by Australia and the Netherlands

In the meantime, Keiichi Nakajima, president of the Japan Whaling Association (JWA), welcomed the adoption by consensus of a statement condemning the SSCS's dangerous interference with Japan's whale research in the Antarctic.

"The statement urged the SSCS to stop violent actions, and also called upon each member State to cooperate in coping with such criminal actions," he noted.

"Australia was a base for SSCS activities. We urge the Australian government not to allow SSCS vessels to call on its ports again. We also call on the Dutch government to immediately deprive the criminal group's ship of its registration. Further, we encourage all other countries concerned to impose rigid penalties on these kinds of unlawful activities," Nakajima said.

Australia criticized of hypocrisy over kangaroo cull

The Australian government is now exposed to widespread criticism both at home and overseas for being hypocritical over its planned kangaroo cull while harshly opposing Japanese whaling on the pretext of benefit to the environment and wildlife. The government plans to kill more than 400 grey kangaroos on Commonwealth land in North Canberra.

In face of the protest, the Australian Environment Minister Peter Garret ruled out the possibility of stopping the cull, saying that culling is necessary "to benefit the environment and wildlife in the long term," the Canberra Times reported in its March 13 issue. The Times also reported Mr. Garret as saying that he "did not intend to take any action on the cull 'other than to just observe' events as they unfolded." "I can understand that there is a degree of interest when programs of this kind are implemented."

Australia's kangaroo slaughter is linked to its stance on whaling. The country is known to be one of the hardest-line opponents to any type of whaling. To many sound-minded people in the world, the present action of Australia appears as nothing but hypocritical.

Seafood Show

5th Osaka International Seafood Show ends in success by attracting 120 participants from Japan and overseas

The 5th Japan International Seafood & Technology Expo Osaka was held under the sponsorship of the Japan Fisheries Association (JFA) at Intex Osaka on March 23 and 24, with 120 companies both from Japan and overseas displaying their products and technologies at their booths.

The number of visitors to the show during the two days totaled 7,554 mainly from the foodservice industry in western Japan.

At the opening ceremony, JFA president Isao Nakasu said: "It is a delight to be able to organize the fifth expo in Osaka, a region having long and unique food traditions. Although the fishing industry is now faced with some difficult issues, such as soaring oil prices, the preference for seafood remains strong among Japanese people. I believe the outlook for the fishing industry is bright if we continue our efforts in providing consumers with tasty seafood at reasonable prices."



Poster of the Osaka Seafood Show

The show featured a variety of exhibitions and displays in such areas as processing, seasonings and food additives, freezing and refrigeration, packaging, distribution machinery, HACCP-supporting equipment and services and food sanitation management machinery.

Among the booths of foreign countries, one that attracted special attention from visitors was that of the Marine Products Export Development Authority of India which introduced seafood curry for business use, developed jointly with the Indian Spice Board with the specific aim to suit the taste of Japanese consumers. Also displayed at the booth was "Paratha nan," an Indian bread that matches well with the curry. The products are now used at major restaurant chains throughout Japan.

New products and technologies were also presented. As one example, M.I.K. Co. based in

Osaka displayed equipment related to sushi such as a fully automated sushi roll maker.

Also, fishery research institutions, including the Fisheries Research Agency, introduced the results of their academic activities. Among them, Kagoshima University presented its studies on aquaculture feed, and the National Fisheries University demonstrated technology to maintain the freshness of seafood.

In the course of the show, a total of 25 seminars and symposiums were held on such themes as fishery aquaculture and sushi. Kazunori Saito, managing director of the JFA, made a presentation on the newly launched Marine Eco-label Japan (MEL Japan) system. Many participants at the expo showed interest in the new system which is based on the concept of co-management and is designed to curtail unnecessary financial and physical burdens on the part of producers and distributors.



Outline of Marine Eco-label Japan

Marine Eco-label Japan (MEL Japan), Japan's first seafood eco-labeling system established last December, is now about to be finalized, with application for certification to be accepted shortly. The Japan Fisheries Association, which is provisionally serving as the Secretariat of MEL Japan, is now staging active publicity campaigns on various occasions both in Japan and overseas, and the new system has generally been accepted favorably.

What follows is an outline of MEL Japan.

1. Administration of the system

The system is administered by MEL Japan, and the Japan Fisheries Association's Operations Division is provisionally serving as the Secretariat.

2. Organization of the system

MEL Japan's Council administers the entire scheme, accredits the certification bodies, registers industry organizations, and makes decisions on the certification standards and procedural rules with the aim to ensure fairness and objectivity. Under the Council, the Technical Committee oversees the development and application of the certification standards, the Public Relations Committee publicizes the system in Japan and overseas, and the Audit Committee supervises the requirements of the certification bodies and administration of the system. Furthermore, the Board, composed mainly of experts and academics from various areas, is established in order to make the objectives of MEL Japan widely acceptable. The Board examines the basic administrative matters and advises MEL Japan.

3. Certification Bodies

A certification body is an entity having a staff with certain technical knowledge and expertise by type of certification (Fisheries Certification and Chain of Custody Certification) in order to exercise fair and neutral judgment independent from that of the applicant and to ensure highly precise inspections. MEL Japan accredits a certification body on the basis of its compliance with the objectives of MEL Japan. The effective accreditation period shall be five years unless special reasons exist. A certification body conducts inspection activities for certification based on the application from the applicant, reports the results to MEL Japan, and carries out regular management inspections regarding the contents of certification.

4. Industry organizations, etc.

Industry organizations by sector consenting to the activities of MEL Japan shall be recruited to positively participate in, propagate the system and engage in the exchange of views.

Industry organizations shall advise or act as proxies in the application for certification by their members for registration in MEL Japan.

5. Certification methods

Certification consists of two types: certification in the production stage and certification in the distribution and processing stage. In the production stage, producers (including fisheries cooperative associations and fisheries organizations) will apply for certification to an accredited certification body as classified by target species using the identical fishing method. In the distribution and processing stage, application will be made to a certification body by operators as classified by target catch and product. Where necessary, a unified application can be made for both certification in the production stage and distribution and processing stage. Certification standards and guidelines shall be determined by the Council after discussion at the Technical Committee on the basis of the following requirements.

(Certification standards in the production stage)

- (1) Fisheries should be conducted under an effective management scheme;
- (2) The target resource should maintain the level of being used sustainably; and,
- (3) Appropriate measures should be taken for the conservation of the ecosystem.

(Certification standards in the distribution and processing stage)

- (1) A management system should be in place, such as the appointment of persons in charge and custody of related documents; and,
- (2) Traceability should be secured through (1), etc., and the co-mingling of seafood other than the target seafood should not occur.

MEL Japan conducts certification after consultations at the Audit Committee upon receipt of the certification report of a certification body, and issues a certificate to the applicant through the certification body. Certification shall be effective for five years or less for the production

stage and for three years or less for the distribution and processing stage, but regular examinations by a certification body may be conducted even in the course of the effective period.

6. Attachment of labels

- (1) Persons or entities that have received certification for their product shall be entitled to attach labels set separately for the units of sales or cargo of the product certified.
- (2) The costs required for the printing of labels shall be borne by the persons or entities that have received the certification.

7. Review of the system

The MEL Japan system should be reviewed every two years to ensure further improvement.

