ISARIBI **油火** Fishing Fire

NO.82, SEPT. 2014

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Views and Opinions of Japan's Fisheries Industry

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Japan

Fisheries

Association

Rigorous radioactive monitoring ensures safety of seafood in Japan's disaster area

eakage of radioactive contaminated water from the crippled Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant as well as rootless negative rumors on fishery products in the disaster area are imposing immeasurable additional damage on fishermen and fishing communities seriously affected by the Eastern Japan Great Earthquake and Tsunami that devastated the Pacific coasts of northern Japan in March 2011.

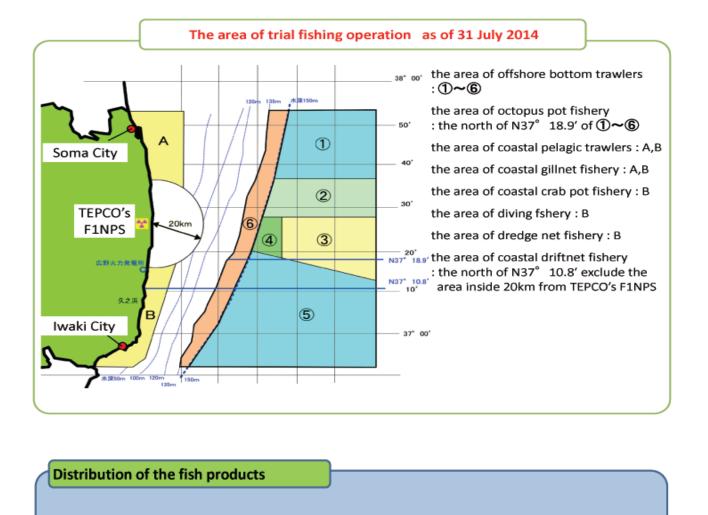
Fishermen in Fukushima have managed to expand the scale of experimental fishing in some area with painful efforts amid general constraints, but the problem of leakage of polluted water from the reactor into the sea has not yet fully settled. Some countries are reinforcing their restrictions on the imports of seafood from Japan. An overall embargo has been imposed on fish landed in broader area of Japan including the prefectures directly affected by the disaster, regardless of whether or not radioactive substances are found in the fish landed in those areas.

Thoroughgoing monitoring and provision of accurate information to consumers are indispensable to dissipate negative rumors related to the accident of the nuclear power reactor. Regarding the excessive actions not based on scientific findings, we should continue efforts to explain extensively about the measures that have been taken by the Japanese government so as to gain understanding of the importing countries that safety in seafood distribution is fully ensured in Japan.

The Japan Fisheries Association (JFA), on its part, has been explaining about the safety of Japanese seafood at private-level fisheries meetings with the Republic of Korea, China and Taiwan and other international fisheries fora like the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). It also took part in seafood exhibitions in Korea and China to publicize the seafood safety.

Immediately after the earthquake and tsunami, about 50 countries and territories introduced restrictive measures on imports of seafood from the areas affected by the accident of the nuclear power plant. However, Vietnam, for instance, which imports bulk of seafood from Japan, abolished the requirement for sampling inspection of imported Japanese seafood which it introduced after the disaster. Malaysia also lifted its restricitons on Japanese seafood in March 2013. A total of 12 countries have by now fully removed their restrictive requirements on imports. The European Union (EU) announced that it would mitigate its import restrictions from April 2014. Thus, the number of countries that appreciate the safety of Japanese seafood has been increasing gradually. Either way, efforts should be continued to resolve the issues of leakage of contaminated reactor water and the negative rootless rumor on Japanese seafood.

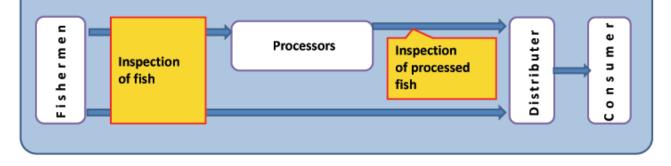
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O Since June 2012 to July 2014, 1,863 products(fresh or boiled) are inspected for radioactive cesium after being landed.

O These results are publicized on the home page of Fukushima Prefectural Federation of Fisheries Co-operative Association.(Japanese only) http://www.jf-net.ne.jp/fsgyoren/siso/sisotop.html

Inspection of radioactive materials and the distribution management of the fish products are conducted under the initiative of the Fukushima Prefectural Federation of Fishery Cooperative Association.



<Reference> The State of the Trial Fishing Operation for Actual Human Consumption in Fukushima Prefecture

The target species of trial fishing operation: 38 species (exclude overlap), as of 31 July 2014

 by offshore bottom trawlers: 28 species>

Giant Pacific octopus, Chestnut octopus, Japanese flying squid, Spear squid, Swordtip squid, Japanese dwarf squid, Horsehair crab, Snow crab, Beni-zuwai crab(Chionoecetes japonicus), Prawn, Botan shrimp, Deepwater prawn, Whelks (Japanese whelk, Whelk(*Neptunea constricta*), Double sculptured neptune, and Whelk(*Beringius polynematicus*)), Thornhead, Greeneyes, Rikuzen flounder, Willowy flounder, Angler fish, Roughscale sole, Rosy seabass, Blackfin flounder, Crimson sea bream, Japanese jack mackerel, Pacific barrelfish and Alaska pollock

<by octopus pot fishery : 5 species>

Giant Pacific octopus, Chestnut octopus, Whelks (Japanese whelk, Whelk(*Neptunea constricta*) and Double sculptured neptune)

by coastal pelagic trawlers : 2 species>

Kounago (Juvenile of Japanese sandlance) and Whitebait

<by coastal gillnet fishery : 3 species>

Salangichthys isikawae, Hiratsume-gani (Ovalipes punctatus) and Swimming crab

by coastal crab pot fishery : 2 species>

Hiratsume-gani (Ovalipes punctatus) and Swimming crab

<by diving fishery : 1 species>

Abalone

species>

Sakhalin Surf Clam

by coastal driftnet fishery : 4 species>

Sardine , Japanese jack mackerel, Chub mackerel and Spotted mackerel

日本 Pacific tuna management

Japan proposes reducing catch of immature Pacific bluefin tuna by 50% at IATTC meeting

he members of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) discussed conservation and management measures for the eastern Pacific tunas at the 89th annual meeting in Lima, Peru, July 14-18, 2014.

No agreement was achieved regarding the Pacific bluefin tuna as Mexico opposed to the proposal to curtail catch based on the stock assessment by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) in February. It was agreed that Japan, the United States and Mexico will continue consultations with the aim to achieve a conclusion by around October this year.

Currently, there is no catch of bluefin tuna by Japan in the eastern Pacific. Mexico catches around 5,000 tons a year, making it the largest harvester of Pacific bluefin tuna only next to Japan.

Mexico's tuna catch rate has been rising in recent years. In 2012, the country harvested 6,300 tons of tuna, the largest amount surpassing that of Japan.

Japan has been taking domestic measures, based on the ISC's recommendation, to reduce its catch volume of immature tuna to the level half of the annual average in 2002-2004. At the same time, Japan has developed a policy to have other tuna fishing countries to halve their catch of immature tunas. For Japan, this meeting of IATTC became the first occasion to present its proposal.

At the meeting, Japan proposed: (1)

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reducing the catch of immature fish (less than 20 kg) to half the average annual catch in 2002-2004 (i.e. from 3,770 tons to 1,885 tons), and (2) maintaining the catch of large-size fish at the present level (i.e. 1,549 tons). However, no agreement was obtained on this proposal.

The meeting participants agreed to place recreational fisheries in the U.S.--which had been exempted from IATTC rules-- under IATTC management based on Japan's proposal along the principle that there should be no exception in stock management. For this reason, it was agreed that Japan, Mexico and the United States will continue consultations among them.

IATTC decided to set bluefin tuna catch quota in the eastern Pacific for this year at 5,000 tons.



Marine Eco-Label Japan and its Contribution to Sustainable Fisheries

Masashi Nishimura, the Marine Eco-Label Japan (or MEL Japan) secretariat, made a presentation in the 13th World Tuna Trade Conference hosted by INFOFISH at Shagri-La Hotel, Bangkok, 21-23 May, 2014. The following is the manuscript of Nishimura's presentation. This is one big step to increase recognition by foreign stake holders and MEL Japan plans to further strengthen communication with foreign public relations.

1. Establishment of MEL Japan

Japanese stakeholders in the fishing industry and fisheries management established their own



ecolabelling scheme, Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL Japan) in 2007. The goal of the scheme is the promotion of sustainable fisheries through respect for the co-management of fisheries by

fisheries communities. After the establishment of the scheme, we started without restricting various possibilities. There were questions to be answered such as, "Are we going to certify foreign fisheries, certify aquaculture, and export certified products to foreign countries?" What we have been doing is to do what we can and what we need to do first. So, what we actually do is certify Japanese fisheries (we do not have



the capacity to certify foreign fisheries), and certify wild fisheries. Regarding the export of certified products, it is now under preparation. My participation in this meeting is an important part of such preparation.

2. Basic Framework and Features of MEL Japan

The basic framework of MEL Japan is established in line with the FAO guidelines. The MEL Japan standard, therefore, is based upon the good old three pillars, namely, that:

1) Fisheries are conducted under an established and effective management system;

2) The target stock is maintained at a level that allows its sustainable utilization;

and,

3) Appropriate measures are taken for the preservation of the ecosystem.

MEL Japan is a third party certification scheme to ensure scientific and objective certification. We have an independent certification body, the Japan Fisheries Resource Conservation Association. We need more bodies, and I hope we will have another in the near future.

(This article is presented in two installments. The second part will be printed in the next issue of ISARIBI)