



# OPRT

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FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF TUNAS

### Tuna Culture/Farming

## Culture of 1 million tons of tunas envisioned in Japan's EEZ

—Japan's first large bluefin tuna farming to start—

**N**obuaki Okamoto, vice president of the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology, proposed achieving the production of one million tons of cultured tunas in Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The proposal was made at a symposium held on April 26 in Tokyo to mark the establishment of the Tuna Research Institute by the Fisheries Research Agency. As a matter of fact, there has now been an active move at a rapid pace toward realization of tuna aquaculture in Japan.

In a lecture delivered at the symposium subtitled "Let's talk about the future," Okamoto noted, saying that he was making a somewhat bold statement, that "the demand for fish is certainly expanding rapidly around the world. The day will come when large fish such as tunas and halibut will be produced in large quantities. The tuna aquaculture Olympic in which countries compete will begin."

Citing the case of salmon in which 1.3 million tons of fish is being cultured, Okamoto proposed that "Japan should aim at realizing aquaculture of one million tons of tunas in its EEZ," adding that there is a need to develop technology to that goal.

Okamoto's proposal is no fantasy at all. Rather, in reality, Japan's fishing industry is moving vigorously in that direction. The fervor toward tuna farming has been rising at a rapid pace in Japan and commercialization has been advanced against the backdrop of increasingly rigorous fishing regulations for tunas in various parts of the world year by year.

Among major fishing companies, Maruha

Group Inc., the largest seafood corporation in Japan, is running at the forefront of tuna farming, followed by Nippon Suisan Kaisha Ltd. which made entry last year and Kyokuyo Co., Ltd. which announced it will launch into this field from this year. Also, regional fishing

*(Continued on Page 2-A)*

### Indian Ocean Tuna Management

## IOTC Chairman stresses the need to mobilize the wisdom and introduce management measures swiftly

Mr. Rondolph Payet, Chairman of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), recently visited the office of OPRT for exchange of views on the issues of the stock management of tuna resources in the Indian Ocean.



Mr. Payet

Mr. Payet, who is also Managing Director of the Seychelles Fishing Authority, was visiting Japan for consultations with the officials of Japan's Fisheries Agency on tuna management issues.

At the meeting with OPRT, Mr. Payet touched on the long-standing concerns over the management of bigeye tuna in the Indian Ocean, saying that it is a very difficult task

*(Continued on Page 2-B)*

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organizations have been tackling with bluefin farming.

As one example, Ine Fisheries Cooperative Association in Kyoto Prefecture, started in September this year farming of large bluefin tuna of the size of 100 kilograms for the first time in Japan. In the initial year, the association plans to produce about 700 bluefin tunas. The fish will be fed into the size of 110-120 kilograms, and will be shipped to the market in mid-December at the earliest.

Further, Uwa Sea Fisheries Production Cooperative in Shikoku, western Japan, has

been engaged in raising bluefin tuna in cages since two years ago. "We would like to promote tuna farming to vitalize the Uwa Sea region," says the head of the cooperative.

The enthusiasm and efforts of Japan's tuna farmers, backed by their technological development capability, will certainly realize supply of large quantities of high-grade tuna to the market in the near future. The day will be near when bluefin tunas farmed in Japan will be supplied not only to the Japanese markets but to the markets in other parts of the world as well.

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*(Continued from Page 1-B)*

as it involves the interests of a number of member countries.

He stressed, however, the need to mobilize the wisdom of all parties concerned and introduce management measures as swiftly as possible. "The longer we postpone the discussion of this issue, the solution will become certainly more difficult," he said.

What follows is an excerpt from his interview with OPRT.

*Question: You have been appointed as Chairman of the IOTC at the last annual meeting held in May this year. What do you think about the IOTC and how do you intend to lead it as Chairman?*

**Payet:** I have a very difficult task ahead of me and as you know there are concerns on the Indian Ocean, big eye tuna stock which is believed to be harvested beyond its maximum sustainable yield. The scientific committee reported that the sustainable catch level of big eye is 111,000 tons but the total annual catch in recent years has been around 120,000 tons. The SC recommended reducing the catch amount but the Commission could not agree on any form of reduction. It is very difficult to introduce a regulatory measure such as setting catch quota or capacity limitation due to differences of interests among parties for social, economic and political reasons. We have to find a solution where no one is worst off. For example, there are some countries with desire to increase their catch for developing their own industry, knowing the status of the stock, but we need to compromise sensitively and realistically. We cannot go on shifting management

measures to next year because the more we do that, the more difficult it will become.

*Question: It is said that tuna resources are declining because of increase of super purse-seiners. How do you think about it?*

**Payet:** Control of tuna fishing capacity must be solved globally and also regionally within the regional bodies, and the recent Kobe meeting was a step in the right direction. Only blaming purse-seine' or 'longline' fishing capacity unilaterally can not solve the problem of over fishing capacity.

A fair and balanced way to solve the problem must be developed. In order to ensure sustainable use of the resources, which is the common goal of IOTC parties, I wish to lead the Commission to introduce some new measures to address the over fishing capacity. For example, as far as I can recall, there is no capacity study done in the Indian Ocean tuna fisheries although one was recommended in the previous IOTC meetings. In my view, a single measure does not work, and measures incorporating multiple aspects and absorbing different interests are necessary.

*Question: Japanese tuna longliners have been permitted to fish in the 200 mile zone of the Seychelles. As Managing Director of the Seychelles Fishing Authority, what do you think about the entry of Japanese tuna vessels in your waters?*

**Payet:** The Seychelles respects the principles of UNCLOS which recognize the rights and duties of the coastal states and other states concerning access to the exclusive economic zone. We accept Japanese vessels as well as those from other parties based on this principle. Also, the Seychelles has a good cooperative relationship with Japan in the

field of fisheries over 40 years and we wish to maintain such a relationship in the future as well.

Regarding management of tuna fisheries, bilateral cooperation with Japan at the government level is important in order to solve the problems which are basically further addressed in the multilateral negotiations because of highly migratory nature of tunas. Perhaps the way forward is to foster further bilateral relations with a view to solve more complex multilateral fisheries issues.

No further increase of tuna fishing capacity, for example, is a challenge, and cooperation with Japan is necessary to realize it in the multilateral negotiations in the IOTC.

*Question: Do you know OPRT?*

**Payet:** Yes, I know very well. OPRT's role is important to develop sound and rational tuna fishing industries in the world through promoting responsible fisheries.

### OPRT News

#### OPRT promotes measures to prevent incidental catches of marine turtles and seabirds

OPRT has been promoting measures to reduce incidental catch in tuna longline fishing in the past. This fiscal year, by recommendations of a panel of experts from the National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries and Industries established by OPRT in dealing with the issue of incidental catch, OPRT made a poster and a pamphlet, with the assistance of the Fisheries Agency of Japan, to encourage the crew to use circle hooks during their operation in order to reduce the incidental catch of marine turtles. The poster and the pamphlet, presented also in the Indonesian language for Indonesian crew, show a sample of the circle hook, and were distributed to the Japanese longline tuna fishing vessels.



With respect to the incidental catch of seabirds, substantial effects have been achieved by the use of Tori Pole. In addition to this, OPRT is encouraging to develop a measure

to further reduce incidental catch such as the use of blue-dyed bait (designed to make the bait less visible to seabirds).

In promoting the measures against incidental catch, designs are needed not to cause reduction in the catch of tunas. OPRT will cope positively with the reduction of incidental catch as one of the measures to promote responsible tuna fisheries.

#### Seychelles Joins OPRT

At an extraordinary board meeting on August 28, OPRT approved the new membership of the Deep Sea Tuna Longline (Seychelles) Association (Chairman: Mr. Richard Tan). The association was established on November 23, 2006, and has a membership of 20 companies with a total number of 24 fishing vessels.

The Seychelles' joining OPRT has brought the number of OPRT member organizations to 17 with a total of 1,169 registered fishing vessels. The condition for the Seychelles to join OPRT is that its vessels do not engage in the catch of southern bluefin tuna and operate only within the Indian Ocean.

Commenting on Seychelles' membership, OPRT Managing Director Yuichiro Harada stated: "The Seychelles, which had once been a base of flag-of-convenience fishing vessels, transformed itself into a country practicing and promoting responsible tuna fishing, through the efforts of the Fisheries Agency of Japan and the Seychelles Fishing Authority in advancing cooperation in tuna resource management. We recognize that the establishment of the Deep Sea Longline (Seychelles) Association is a concrete indication of this commitment. For the tuna resource management in the Indian Ocean, it is very significant that the Seychelles Association and OPRT have come to agreement on the restriction on the number of fishing vessels in the present circumstances where developing countries are willing to increase their fishing capacity at a rapid pace."

### Topics

#### "Fish Rockers" on Stage

A rock band named Gyoko ("fish port" in English) from Urayasu near Tokyo is gaining popularity with its hard punk beat and fish-related lyrics, as well as

its performance, which involves cutting up the head of tuna on stage. The leader of the



(Photo by Hitoshi Kato)

band talks about the band and its mission.

Following is an excerpt from an article written by Yas Sato in Detour Japan.

Research whaling has been subject to international pressure and tuna quotas will be more strictly enforced, thus forcing prices of one of Japan's favorite foods ever higher. The ocean surrounding the island country has been very rough in recent years.

Pushing back against this sea change, a unique rock band from Urayasu, a city near Tokyo, which calls themselves fish rockers, is gaining popularity in the Tokyo club scene. The name of the band is Gyoko, or "fishing port" in English, and it has three members—Tsurizao Morita, the leader or "captain" and lead vocalist (His first name means "fishing rod" in English.); Koichi Shinkai, electric guitar (His family name means "deep sea" in English.); and Taro Kujira the Trainee, on sound effects (His family name means whale.).

Near the end of their show, Morita cuts up the head of a tuna on stage. Also, all the songs are related to fish or marine products, which are familiar to many Japanese. They are about tuna, Japanese Spanish mackerel, yellowtail, and octopus, as well as dry bonito.

Such "freshness" gained the attention of the media, giving them an opportunity to release their first CD from an indie music company in May.

### **Sushi boom overseas causes shortage of sushi cooks**

**A** seminar under the theme of "market trend in the wake of the sushi boom overseas" was held on July 19 at the

9th Japan International Seafood and Technology Expo sponsored by the Japan Fisheries Association.

The lecturer at the seminar was Mr. Makoto Fukue, representative of Tokyo Sushi Academy Co., which has opened a sushi school in Tokyo, to train in a short period of time sushi cooks who can work at sushi shops, including revolving sushi restaurants.

At the seminar, Fukue observed that the sushi boom overseas is a real trend and is steadily expanding even further. As the reason for this phenomenon overseas, he noted that local people have become main customers at sushi restaurants. Sushi is now served in restaurants other than those specializing in Japanese cuisine, and an increasing number of shops are extending take-out services.

After the Olympic Games in Sydney, for example, the number of the Japanese restaurants, including revolving sushi restaurants, in that city increased rapidly to 700. Sushi is also booming in Russia. This suggests that the sushi cuisine is steadily expanding beyond the conventional overseas markets in the United States and Europe.

### **Chinese Taipei to construct super low-temperature freezing facility**

**T**he construction of Chinese Taipei's largest super low-temperature freezing facility, started last December, has been advancing at an accelerated pace. The present prospect is that it will be completed by next spring.

The facility has a freezer with a capacity of 1,070 tons and also super low temperature product cold store with a capacity of 160 tons. The processing plant, to be built alongside the facility, will be able to process 20 tons of tuna per day. The facility aims to obtain HACCP certification when completed.

Premier Chang Chun-hsiung of Chinese Taipei's Executive Yuan (the highest administrative organ), who visited the construction site, said "it is necessary to appeal to the people about the good quality of tunas supplied through the super low temperature facility, which contains healthy ingredients such as DHA," thus showing a high expectation toward the progress of tuna sashimi market in Chinese Taipei.