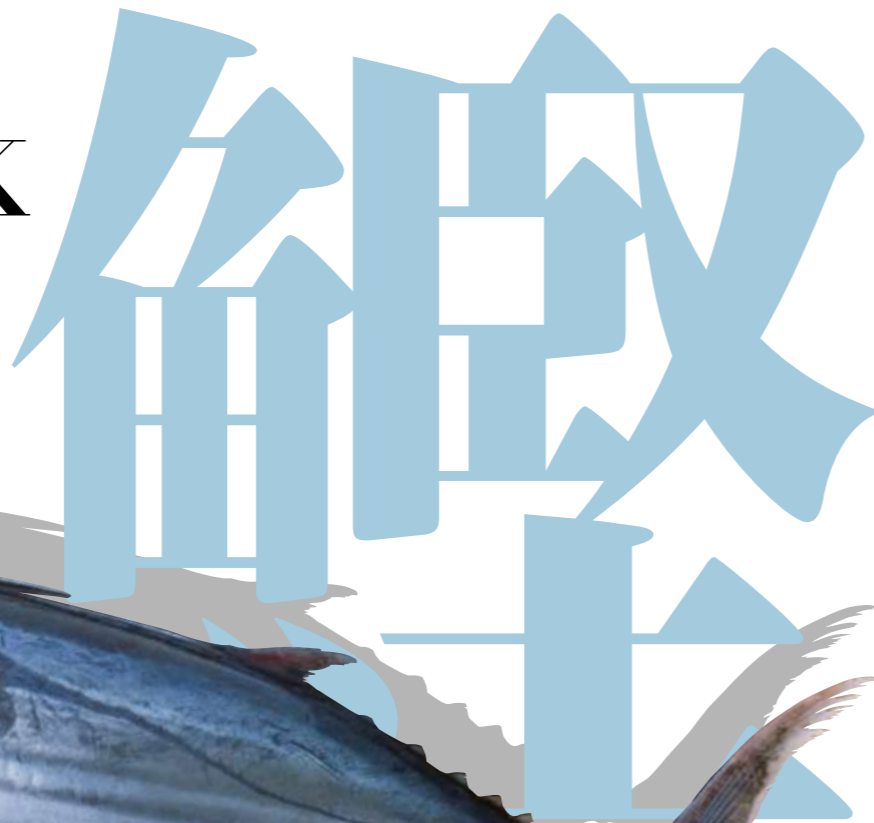


SKIPJACK TUNA

Katsuo



Skipjack tuna *sashimi* has a beautiful red color, and is of no less quality than other tuna species



Traditional *ippon zuri* style of skipjack tuna fishing is friendly to the environment and helps to conserve skipjack resources

Shift in export focus, from processing to raw consumption

Skipjack tuna migrates as the seasons progress, swimming northward with warm currents in the Pacific in the spring, and southward in the fall. Skipjack tuna is a critical ingredient in Japanese cuisine. For example, it is boiled and dried to produce *katsubushi* for producing the *dashi* (soup) stock that is the cornerstone of Japanese cooking, and is also eaten fresh as a seasonal item. Skipjack tuna caught in early summer are called *hatsugatsuo*, indicating that they are the year's first catch, while autumn-caught skipjack tuna are called *modorikatsuo*, taken from the fact that the fish are caught while returning from the north. Skipjack tuna is widely enjoyed today as *sashimi* or grilled rare, called as *tataki*.

One of the methods used to fish skipjack tuna is the traditional *ippon zuri* style employed by Japanese fishermen, which makes use of the poles and lines method. In this method, bait is scattered directly into the water to attract skipjack tuna, which are then hauled into boats one at a time using poles and lines. In addition to preserving freshness, this technique minimizes damage to the flesh of the skipjack tuna. The *ippon zuri* method is considered to be both ecologically sound and helpful in managing stocks. Skipjack tuna caught using the *ippon zuri* method is separately marketed in Japan as a prized luxury product.

Skipjack tuna was originally exported to countries such as Thailand and Vietnam primarily for canning purposes, but it is also exported today for other applications. Rising global interest in Japanese cuisine, combined with shrinking stocks of larger species of tuna, has created growing demand for skipjack tuna as a healthy alternative to other tunas. This interest has led Japanese processors to develop ways to process skipjack tuna for raw consumption by consumers in Europe and North America, in an effort to create new markets.

Processor's Voice



Skipjack tuna *tataki*

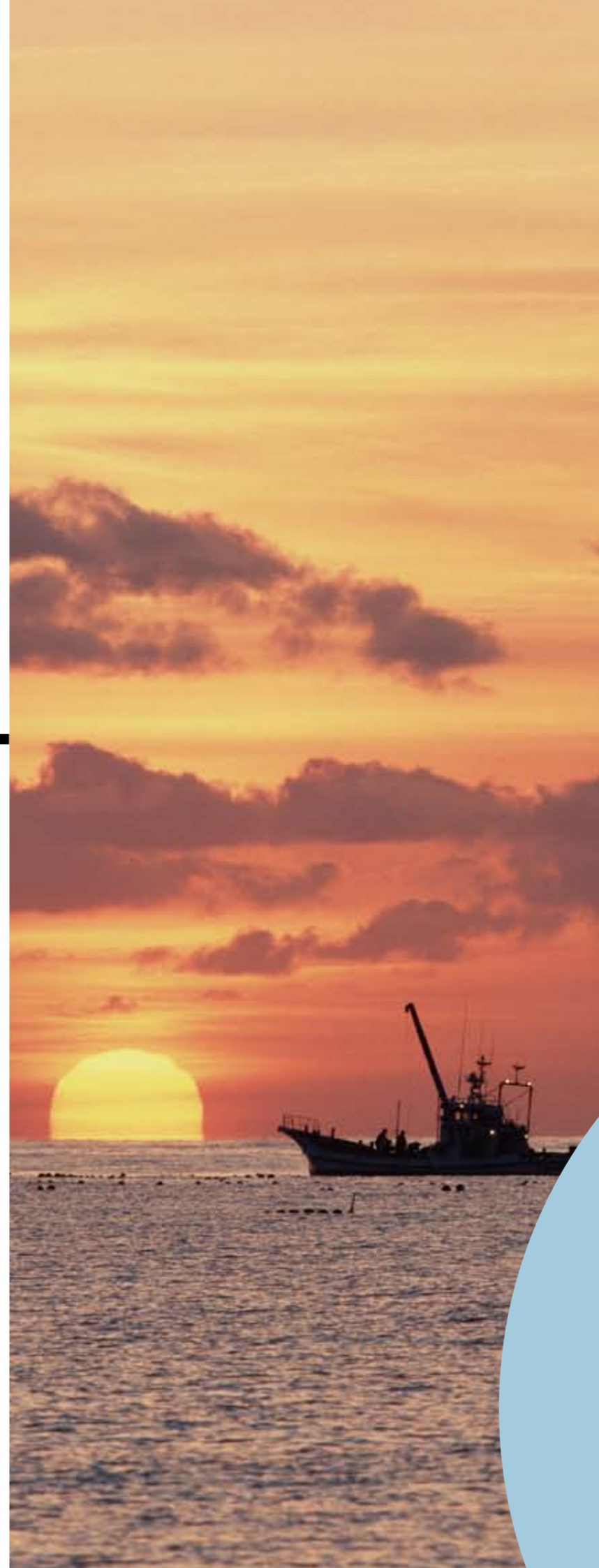
Skipjack tuna is primarily sold for canning in the global market, but in Japan, it is sometimes sold at prices rivaling that of other large tuna species. There are significant stocks of skipjack tuna, so it is available in abundant quantity. Considering its excellent flavor, we hope that more people across the world will learn to appreciate the quality of skipjack tuna *sashimi*, together with the other larger tuna species.

Main fishing grounds



Amount of catch
399,465 tons (2005)

Main landing place
Shizuoka, Miyagi, Kagoshima



In order to conserve its precious ocean resources, Japan promotes sustainable fishery practices through implementation of appropriate conservation and management measures. Japan is also working on various fronts to ensure that consumers can enjoy the highest standards of safety and quality from marine products.

The global market for Japan's marine products is continually growing. Through active promotion of exports, Japan's marine products are expected to share the same global spotlight that *sushi* enjoys today.

Cooperating Organizations: Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations; Marine Products Management Division, Bureau of Fisheries, Department of Fisheries and Forestry, Hokkaido Government; Aomori Prefectural Federation of Fisheries Cooperatives; Abecho Shoten Co., Ltd. of Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, Kaneyama Group of Asahi City, Chiba Prefecture, Ehime Prefectural Federation of Fisheries Co-operative Associations; Azumacho Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations, Kagoshima Prefecture
Photos courtesy of Tourism Sections of Miyagi Prefecture and Kesennuma City
Recipe photos courtesy of Masami Suzuki
Recipes courtesy of Seiko Taguchi