Chapter 1 Highlight: What Is Required of Fisheries and Fishing Communities in the Future

Section 1. Current Status of Fisheries and Fishing Communities

(Fisheries and fishing communities support Japan's coastal communities)
○ There are fishing communities all along Japan's coasts. On average, fishing communities are located every 5.6 km along the coastline.

Number of fishing communities: 6,298 (every 5.6 km along the coastline)

(Many fishing communities are located in less-favorable areas)
○ About 20% of all fishing communities around port in Japan are located on isolated islands, and 30% are on peninsulas. In 30% of the fishing communities on isolated islands, 50% or more of the people living there are aged 65 or above.
○ About 30% of fishing communities around port are located on steeply sloped areas, and 50% are in narrow areas immediately in front of a cliff or a mountain. Therefore, those communities lag behind in the development of infrastructure for daily living and are vulnerable to disasters such as large earthquakes and tsunamis.

Areas Designated as Fishing Communities around Port

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas Designated as Fishing Communities around Port</th>
<th>Isolated island areas</th>
<th>Peninsula areas</th>
<th>Depopulated areas</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of fishing communities around port</td>
<td>790 (17%)</td>
<td>1,468 (32%)</td>
<td>2,645 (57%)</td>
<td>4,653 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of communities where 50% or more of the population are aged 65 or above</td>
<td>210 (26.6%)</td>
<td>192 (13.1%)</td>
<td>399 (15.1%)</td>
<td>494 (10.6%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fisheries Agency (2009).

Comparison of Aging Rates of Fishing Community Population and National Population


Locational Characteristics of Fishing Communities around Port

Source: Fisheries Agency (2009).

Fishing community in a narrow area immediately in front of a cliff

Fishing community between mountains and the sea, isolated from towns
Section 2. Fisheries and Fishing Communities—Supporting Japan's Fish-eating Culture

(1) Fisheries, Fishing Communities, and Fish Culture Which Have Been Developed by Japan's Natural Environment

○ Japan has a diverse natural environment extending from a subarctic climate to a subtropical climate, which has developed a rich fishing ground that is regarded as one of the three richest in the world.
○ Japan has unique fishing communities with their own traditional culture and scenery all along its coasts.
○ The rich coastal and marine areas surrounding Japan has developed the fish-eating culture that is unique to each region.

World's Three Richest Fishing Grounds

Examples of Local Dishes of Farming, Mountain, and Fishing Communities Using Fishery Products

Source: "One Hundred Selected Local Dishes of Farming, Mountain, and Fishing Communities," Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

(2) Tracing Back the History of Japan's Fisheries and Fishing Communities

○ In ancient times, there were people who were involved in not only fisheries, but also in marine transportation and commerce, and had broad exchanges with neighboring countries. They were called “ama” or “amabe.”
○ Since medieval times, kaimin (sea people) emerged as multi business operators who served not only as fishers, but also as marine transporters and the navy. Coastal whaling, which became active in the Edo period (1600–1868), formed a major industry of fishing communities that supported various types of industries including meat processing and the production of whale oil, fertilizers, and fishing gear. It was said that catching one whale brings profits to seven fishing communities.
○ In the Edo period, the formation of fishing communities made progress as people began to settle in the communities and became full-time fishers due in part to the Edo shogunate's policy. Also, dried fishery products called tawaramono were actively exported.
○ Since the Meiji period (1868–1912), fisheries have expanded from coastal fisheries to offshore and far sea fisheries, and have contributed to the acquisition of foreign currency and the stable supply of food to the Japanese people.

History of Fisheries and Fishing Communities (From Ancient to Early-Modern and Modern Times)

Ancient times

- An Imperial order was issued that all people shall be allowed to equally use mountains, rivers, groves, and wetlands.
- Roles of sea people were fisheries, commerce, and the navy.
- Collection of land tax by temples, etc. was strengthened, and settled fishery was spread by recognizing exclusive rights over fishing grounds.
- Samurai dominated some fishers in their respective areas.
- Aomioto (heads of fishers' groups) and funanushi (shipowners) emerged.
- People engaged in migratory fishery or living in ebune (dwelling boats) came to settle in communities.

Late medieval times

- Isotakusumurai (communities of households half engaged in agriculture and half in fisheries), urakata (communities of households engaged in fisheries full-time)

Early modern times

- Industrial capitals were formed.
- Fisheries were modernized through the introduction of western technology.
- Fisheries expanded from coastal fisheries to offshore and far sea fisheries
- The era of Japan as a major fishing nation
- The fisheries industry shrank due to the strengthening of international regulations, such as the introduction of the 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone for coastal nations.

Modern times

Meiji (1868–1912)
- Imperial order was issued that all people shall be allowed to equally use mountains, rivers, groves, and wetlands.
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- Collection of land tax by temples, etc. was strengthened, and settled fishery was spread by recognizing exclusive rights over fishing grounds.
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- People engaged in migratory fishery or living in ebune (dwelling boats) came to settle in communities.
- Isotakusumurai (communities of households half engaged in agriculture and half in fisheries), urakata (communities of households engaged in fisheries full-time)

Taisho (1912–1926)
- Industrial capitals were formed.
- Fisheries were modernized through the introduction of western technology.
- Fisheries expanded from coastal fisheries to offshore and far sea fisheries
- The era of Japan as a major fishing nation
- The fisheries industry shrank due to the strengthening of international regulations, such as the introduction of the 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone for coastal nations.

Showa (1926–1989)
- Industrial capitals were formed.
- Fisheries were modernized through the introduction of western technology.
- Fisheries expanded from coastal fisheries to offshore and far sea fisheries
- The era of Japan as a major fishing nation
- The fisheries industry shrank due to the strengthening of international regulations, such as the introduction of the 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone for coastal nations.

Heisei (1989–)
- Industrial capitals were formed.
- Fisheries were modernized through the introduction of western technology.
- Fisheries expanded from coastal fisheries to offshore and far sea fisheries
- The era of Japan as a major fishing nation
- The fisheries industry shrank due to the strengthening of international regulations, such as the introduction of the 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone for coastal nations.

Source: Compiled by Fisheries Agency based on "Economic History of Japan's Ancient Fisheries" (Kazusha) by Yukichi Habara and other materials.
Okikamuro Island in Suo-Oshima: The Sea Is the Way to the World
[Suo-Oshima Town, Yamaguchi Prefecture]
Fishermen of the Okikamuro Island in Suo-Oshima Town, Yamaguchi Prefecture, which prospered through pole and line fishing, made daring fishing expeditions to Kyushu, Tsushima, Taiwan, and even to the Hawaiian Islands, seeking fishing grounds. They developed relationships with such regions via the sea and formed settlements there. Although the aging rate has reached 66%, former residents who have moved outside the island still gather during the summer Bon period and at the New Year, and call Okikamuro an "island that sinks in the Bon period (with so many people coming back)."

Hot Springs on a Remote Island Serving as a Place of Exchange for Fishery Operators from Various Regions
[Goto City, Nagasaki Prefecture]
Until the latter 1960s to early 1970s, there were fishers who lived in boats called ebune and engaged in fishing, moving from place to place while selling their catches. Arakawa Port in Goto City, Nagasaki Prefecture is known as a base for the fishing ground off Goto and as a port of refuge during rough weather. At Arakawa hot springs near this port, fishers who gathered from various regions used to reserve a washbowl with a towel and soap at the watch stand of public baths, and exchange information on fishing conditions. Such a scene can still be seen today.

(3) Roots of Fishery Management in Japan

○ In the Nara period (710–784), unsustainable fishery called kokugyo, which included private monopolization of fishery resources and taking all the fish in an area by draining a pond or using poison, became a problem. In response, an Imperial order was issued that all people shall be allowed to equally use mountains, rivers, groves, and wetlands.

○ In the Edo period, the shogunate indicated a principle that inshore fishing grounds shall be managed by nearby fishing communities, while offshore fishing grounds shall be common areas, and a concept that serves as the basis for the present fishery rights system was established.

Basic Concept of Fishery Management in the Edo Period

![Diagram of fishery management in the Edo period]

Source: Compiled by the Fisheries Agency based on the "Guide to the Fishery Act" (Seizando Shoten) by Yoshiyuki Kaneda.

Ura and Isotsukimura in the Edo Period: Edo-style Fishery Policy

As an Edo-style fishery policy, the shogunate restricted farmers from becoming full-time fishers, and permitted only those who had traditionally been engaged in fisheries to engage in fisheries full time. Communities of such full-time fisherfolk were called ura. Meanwhile, communities mainly consisting of households half engaged in farming and half in fishing, only for home consumption without using vessels were called isotsukimura.

The first signs of fishery management can be observed in the Edo period, such as limiting the number of fishery workers and fishing communities, and prohibiting the sale and purchase of fish caught in isotsukimura.

Source: "Fishing in the Edo Bay" (owned by the Research Center for Nonwritten Cultural Materials, Kanagawa University).
Section 3. What Is Required of Fisheries and Fishing Communities

(People expect fisheries and fishing communities to play diverse roles)
○ Fishing communities, serving as the bases of fishery activities, not only provide places for people to live, but also have multiple functions that are demonstrated through the daily lives of people in those communities and their activities of fisheries.
○ Consumers place importance on such roles to be played by fisheries as eco-system conservation, inheritance of traditional culture, and marine environment conservation, in addition to the supply of food.
○ In order to revitalize fisheries and fishing communities, efforts should be made to enhance their added value by rediscovering the appeal of fishing communities through exchanges with urban residents, and making effective use of such appeal.

Multifunctionality of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Source: Compiled by Fisheries Agency based on a report by the Science Council of Japan.

Particularly Important Functions of Fisheries (multiple answers)

Supply of food to people 95.2%
Eco-system conservation 66.9%
Inheritance of traditional culture, including traditional fishing methods 55.9%
Water purification and marine environment conservation 47.7%
Re-production through the food chain 22.1%
Marine salvage (saving drowning people, etc.) 13.1%
Border surveillance 3.8%
Others

Source: "Survey Results of Awareness/Intent on Securing/Fostering Fishery Workers" (2009), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

(Sustainable use of fishery resources is required)
○ Appropriate management and sustainable use of fishery resources are essential for fisheries and fishing communities to demonstrate multiple functions.
○ Japan's unique method of jointly managing local fishery resources has been inherited up until today, and contributes to the existence of local communities.
○ There are various parts of Japan where, in addition to official regulations under the Fishery Act, local fishery operators have independently and voluntarily concluded agreements to manage fishery resources so as to preserve their respective local communities.
**Fishing Community Taking Actions for Sustainable Use of Local Resources [Notsuke Peninsula, Hokkaido Prefecture]**

Toward sustainable use of Hokkaido shrimp, voluntary resource management efforts have been made, including restrictions on the use of power-driven vessels, resource surveys conducted before the fishing season, and the establishment of no-fishing zones. Due to efforts to stabilize fisheries income, the aging rate in this area is 4.4%, significantly lower than the national average of 34.2%.

**Age Distribution of Fishery Operators in the Notsuke Fishing District**

![Graph showing age distribution of fishery operators in the Notsuke Fishing District]

Source: "Fisheries Census" (2008), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

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**Cooperative and Active Challenges among Communities [Suruga Bay, Shizuoka Prefecture]**

Fishers in this district are conducting joint and voluntary operations for the purpose of managing the resources of Sakura shrimp (Sergia lucens). They have implemented measures including equal distribution of landed value. Since the effectiveness of this resource management was recognized, the fishery cooperatives concerned acquired certification from the Marine Eco-Label Japan.

**Changes in the Catch Quantity of Sakura Shrimp in Suruga Bay**

![Graph showing changes in the catch quantity of Sakura shrimp in Suruga Bay]

Source: Shizuoka Prefecture surveys.

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(Shifting from marine transportation, trade and navy to recreational fishing guide services and accommodation services)

- Coastal fishery households also engage in economic activities other than fisheries, such as agriculture, recreational fishing guide services, accommodation services, and fishery processing.
- Fisheries and fishing communities still play diverse roles, similar to those in the medieval to early modern times.

**Types of Business Management by Coastal Fishery Households (2003)**

![Graph showing types of business management by coastal fishery households (2003)]

Source: Compiled by Fisheries Agency based on "Fisheries Census" (2003), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

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(Effective use of diverse human resources, including women is required)

- It is important to promote direct store sales and the processing and sales of fishery products, by using the female workforce in order to increase fishery households’ earnings and to revitalize fishing communities.
- Some communities have been making revitalization efforts to make full use of local resources, including fisheries and fishing communities, by using people moving in from other areas and former residents returning from other areas, while some have improved the work environment for people moving in from other areas with the aim to foster and secure fishery workers.
- The future challenge is to facilitate the revitalization of fisheries and fishing communities based on exchanges of information among fishing communities, through a renewed recognition of the history of fisheries and fishing communities, which have developed by introducing new knowledge and technology through active exchanges with other communities.

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**Using an Island as a Nature School [Ojika Island, Nagasaki Prefecture]**

A non-profit organization promotes experiential activities and tours, such as a stay at an agricultural, forestry, or fisheries household, and sea kayaking, and hires young people both from the island and from other areas.

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**Beach Lifestyle: Fisheries and Surfing [Kamogawa City, Chiba Prefecture]**

Surfers engage in fisheries under the leadership of a female fisheries cooperative president, combining their hobby with work.
Efforts to develop fisheries and fishery communities into a sixth industry (combined form of primary, secondary and tertiary sector industries) have become active. Such efforts include fishery processing, direct sales of fishery products, fishery household restaurants, fishery household accommodations, experiential and tourist fishery, recreational fishing, and diving.

Section 4. Developing Fisheries and Fishery Communities into a “Sixth Industry” (Summary)

In Kyoto Prefecture, fishery cooperatives and recreational fishing-related organizations have made progress in making rules together, such as the establishment of harvest-prohibited zones and hours.

In Wakayama Prefecture, fishers have started a whale-watching business, and have contributed to revitalizing the region, which is also a hot springs resort.

Fishers function as the core of local industries that utilize local resources, including fishery processing, refrigerated warehousing, and fertilizer manufacturing, which clusters around fishery product landing ports.

It is important to spur the local economy by enhancing cooperation among fishery processors and distributors within the area, and to strive to supply fishery products desired by the actual users, through the development of new products and sales channels.

Development of Premium Canned Products Using Large, Sashimi-Grade Saury [Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture]

In Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, fishers, a canner, and a soy sauce manufacturer have cooperated to develop and sell canned products using large, fatty, sashimi-grade, high-quality saury.

The fisheries industry is an important local core industry for areas where a large fishery product landing port is located. For example, in Yaizu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, the number of marine fishery workers is 767, only accounting for 1.2% of the number of workers of all industries, which is 65,135. However, workers of industries related to fishery constitute 20% of the workers of all industries, and an industrial cluster has developed with fisheries at the core.

Industries Surrounding Fisheries in Yaizu City

Source: “Fisheries Census” (2008), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and 2006 Establishment and Enterprise Census (Yaizu City).