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Incorporated Administrative Agency, Fisheries Research Agency

**Herrings released as fertilized eggs come home!**  
**– Herring cultivation activities by fishermen starting to produce results –**

The Fisheries Research Agency, Miyako Station of National Center for Stock Enhancement, has been releasing seeds of herrings since 1984 in Miyako Bay. The herring catch, which used to be only several kilograms at one time, has sharply increased and now exceeds one ton. As the number of herrings has increased, herring eggs spawned on fixed nets have also increased. Since 2004, fishermen have worked to protect the eggs<sup>\*1</sup> and release fertilized eggs<sup>\*2</sup>.

Fertilized eggs are released simply by hanging nets into the sea with artificially fertilized eggs attached. Because there is no need to grow the eggs into fry, the method is easy, inexpensive, and practical for fishermen, and inspires them to protect resources.

Miyako Station has conducted follow-up surveys of the released eggs to assess the effects. It has been found that the hatched herring fry have grown steadily in Miyako Bay, and 10 tagged herrings have returned to Miyako Bay to lay eggs that were released at least 2 years ago.

This confirmation of the effectiveness of voluntary activities by fishermen to protect spawning herrings is not only good news but is also the first-ever confirmation of the effects of releasing fertilized eggs in a marine fish species. The Station will collect more data on the effects of releasing fertilized eggs to increasing the herring resources.

**\*1: Protection of eggs**

Fishing nets are left in the sea until the eggs hatch in order to protect the eggs.

**\*2: Release of fertilized eggs**

Eggs are fertilized artificially, and nets on which the eggs are attached are suspended in the sea until the eggs hatch. Before suspending the nets in the sea, the eggs can be labeled at the otolith.

For more information, call the Fisheries Research Agency at:

TEL: 045-227-2621

Public Relations Section, General Planning and Coordination Department Headquarters

Hideaki Aono (Director, Station)

Miyako Station, National Center for Stock Enhancement

Yoshitomo Nagakura (Chief of Technology Development)

15F Queen's Tower B, 2-3-3 Minato Mirai, Nishi-ku, Yokohama 220-6115

TEL: 045-227-2600 FAX: 045-227-2700

<http://www.fra.affrc.go.jp>