

Results of Pacific bluefin tuna juvenile survey in the Sea of Japan

The Fisheries Agency and the Fisheries Research Agency have surveyed the distribution of Pacific bluefin tuna juveniles in the Sea of Japan in August, 2010, and succeeded in capturing the juveniles.

1. Overview of the results

From August 16 to September 2, 2010, the Fisheries Agency, the Fisheries Research Agency, and prefectural governments of Shimane, Tottori and Ishikawa conducted a joint survey for the distribution of juveniles of Pacific bluefin tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*) with observation of oceanic environment in the Sea of Japan, which is a major spawning ground of Pacific bluefin tuna, aiming to identify the specific spawning ground and to understand the ecology during the early life stage of the fish.

The team caught 19 Pacific bluefin tuna juveniles in the sea north of the Noto Peninsula toward Sado Island, which were 4 to 12 cm in body length (BL) and were recognized to be 1 to 2 months after hatching. Thirty juveniles of longtail tuna (*Thunnus tonggol*) were also captured off the shore of Shimane Prefecture and the western part of Yamaguchi Prefecture, which were 3 to 18 cm BL.

2. Significance of the survey

The sea area around the Nansei Islands and the Sea of Japan are known the major spawning grounds of Pacific bluefin tuna. For the sustainable management of the resources, it is important to protect spawning ground of the species. That is why the survey for reproductive biology in the spawning ground is necessary. However, a little is known about the spawning grounds and the ecology of early life stages of Pacific bluefin tuna in the Sea of Japan than those in the sea around the Nansei islands. As the survey team captured juveniles of Pacific bluefin tuna in late August, which were supposed to be small enough to have been born in the Sea of Japan, it is expected that future surveys will reveal the ecology of such juveniles, which are grown up to be 40 to 50 cm BL within a half year after hatching and captured by fisheries along the Sea of Japan in the autumn and winter.

For more information, call:

TEL: 03-3502-8111 (ext. 6803) (Tahara, Kagawa, International Resources Group)

TEL: 03-6744-2380 (direct)

FAX: 03-3592-0759

Resources and Environment Research Division, Resources Enhancement Promotion Division,
Fisheries Agency

TEL: 045-227-2621

Public Relations Section, General Planning and Coordination Department, Fisheries Research
Agency, Headquarters

TEL: 054-336-6000 (Honda, Director, Project Management Division)

National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries, Fisheries Research Agency

TEL: 054-336-6032 (Nakano, Director, Bluefin Tuna Resources Division)

National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries, Fisheries Research Agency

TEL: 054-336-6033 (Tanabe, Chief, Pacific Bluefin Tuna Biology Section, Bluefin Tuna
Resources Division)

National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries, Fisheries Research Agency