



## EDITORIAL | Strict Enforcement of Saury Catch Quotas Needed for North Pacific Countries

Continuing from the previous season, Pacific saury (sanma) catches in Japan have reached a record low in 2020.

Saury prices have been soaring, as the popular fish are reaching the table far less often in Japanese households.

Among the primary causes of the scarcity are reported to be overfishing by large foreign fishing vessels, along with rising sea temperatures affecting the fish migration to northern waters.

As the kanji characters for Pacific saury or sanma read “autumn swordfish,” the fish is synonymous with the flavor of fall, and is eaten throughout the season in Japan. Enjoying seasonal dishes is an important part of food culture for the Japanese. In order to preserve this tradition for coming generations, international rules for resource conservation are essential.

In late August, the season’s first fishing boats in the saury fishery arrived at Hanasaki large port in Nemuro, Hokkaido, which takes in the largest volume of saury catches in Japan. However, their combined haul amounted to only a few tons, drastically lower than the first haul of 500 tons in 2019.

Saury migrates from the North Pacific to the waters around Japan to spawn during the summer and autumn. It is thought that the poor catches are spurred by Chinese and Taiwanese fishing vessels are overfishing while the fish are still in the high seas, just outside of Japan’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ). This high seas fishery causes huge damage to Japan’s fishing style, where local fishermen using smaller vessels catch the saury in coastal fisheries.

Yoshihide Suga, Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary, stressed in his August 28 press conference, “It is extremely crucial that resource management be strengthened.”

[GO TO THE NEXT PAGE]

What needs to take place immediately is compliance with annual country-by-country catch quotas for Pacific saury.

However, because the annual North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) meeting was postponed this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, discussions on the catch quota for 2021 have not progressed. Although member countries in 2019 agreed to the quota limit, there is still a need to convince countries that are reluctant to cooperate, such as China. An initiative is necessary among countries calling for tighter quotas, including Russia, to reinforce quota compliance.

NPFC is an international committee — consisting of eight countries and regions, including Japan, China, and Taiwan — that discusses the management of Pacific saury. For the first time last year, the committee agreed to limit catches to some 550,000 tons around international waters and the EEZ in 2020.

Because the agreed quota is higher than recent catch figures of 440,000 tons and enforcement is lax, its effectiveness in terms of resource conservation is questionable. A stronger appeal will need to take place in each country if scientific research determines further regulations are necessary.

In addition to strict monitoring through the NPFC's satellite-based vessel monitoring system, detailed data analysis is required on the number of operating vessels, landings, imports, and exports in order to achieve effective conservation management.

Japan needs to take the lead in strictly monitoring whether or not the countries involved in the saury fishery are keeping their quotas.

Source: EDITORIAL | [Strict Enforcement of Saury Catch Quotas Needed for North Pacific Countries](https://japan-forward.com/editorial-strict-enforcement-of-saury-catch-quotas-needed-for-north-pacific-countries/)  
<https://japan-forward.com/editorial-strict-enforcement-of-saury-catch-quotas-needed-for-north-pacific-countries/>

## 【主張】サンマの不漁 漁獲割り当て監視徹底を

昨シーズンに続きサンマが記録的な不漁だ。

ここ数年、品薄で価格も高騰し、食卓にのぼる機会も減っている。原因は、外国の大型船による乱獲で資源量が減ったのと、海水温の上昇で魚群が北方海域に移ったためとみられる。

秋刀魚と書くこの魚は文字通り、秋の味覚の代名詞だ。日本人にとって季節を丸ごと食べる食文化でもある。これを将来にわたって楽しみ続けるためにも、資源保護に向け、国際的なルールづくりが欠かせない。

サンマ水揚げ量が日本一の北海道根室市の花咲港で先月下旬、サンマ漁の大型棒受け網漁船が今年初めて水揚げした。量は数トンで昨年初水揚げした500トンと比べると大幅な減少となった。

サンマは夏から秋にかけて産卵のために北太平洋から日本近海に來遊する。それを中国や台湾の漁船が、日本の排他的経済水域（EEZ）手前の公海で先取りしたり乱獲したりしてきたことが不漁に拍車をかけているとみられる。小型船が多く、近海での漁が主体の日本への被害は甚大である。

菅義偉官房長官は会見で、「資源管理の強化を図ることが極めて重要だ」と語った。

急ぐべきは、国別の漁獲割り当ての順守だ。だが、2015年から毎年開催してきた北太平洋漁業委員会（NPF C）が新型コロナウイルスの影響で延期され、来年の漁獲割り当てについての協議が進んでいない。昨年、最終的に割り当てに応じたが、それに否定的な中国などを説得する必要がある。割り当て強化を求めるロシアなど他の加盟国を巻き込んでの取り組みが欠かせない。

NPF Cは、日本や中国、台湾など8カ国・地域が、サンマの資源管理を話し合う国際機関だ。昨年初めて、今年の漁獲割り当ての導入で合意したが、公海とEEZで年約55万トンに止（とど）まった。

最近の漁獲量である44万トンを上回る緩い内容だけに、資源保護の点で効果は疑問が残る。科学調査により、さらなる制限が必要と判断した場合は、各国への働きかけを強めていくべきだ。

NPF Cが決めた衛星による各国の船位監視装置の厳格な運用のほか、操業隻数や水揚げ量、輸出入など細かなデータ分析も欠かせない。日本が主導し、各国が割り当てを守っているか、厳しく監視していく必要がある。

出典：【主張】サンマの不漁 漁獲割り当て監視徹底を

<https://japan-forward.com/japanese/> 【主張】サンマの不漁%e3%80%80漁獲割り当て監視徹底を/