

20% cut to bluefin catches OK'd

Kyodo News

An international group overseeing the conservation of southern bluefin tuna has agreed to reduce total catches of the dwindling fish in 2010 and 2011 by 20 percent from this year to 18,898 tons, the Fisheries Agency said Friday.

Japan will be allowed to catch 4,800 tons of tuna during the two years, compared with its annual quota of 3,000 tons in 2009, according to the accord worked out by the nine-member Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna.

Bluefin tuna, which are being endangered by overfishing, are widely used in sushi and sashimi dishes. Most of the catches made by member countries are shipped to Japan.

Given the sharp increase in the bluefin tuna population around Japan due to the recession, the commission's decision is unlikely to cause sharp price hikes or otherwise impact consumption in the country, agency officials said.

The Japan Times: Sunday, Oct. 25, 2009
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