

# FISHERIES NEWS

## The Seaside Flavor of Higashidoori

January-March 2017

### Fisheries Research

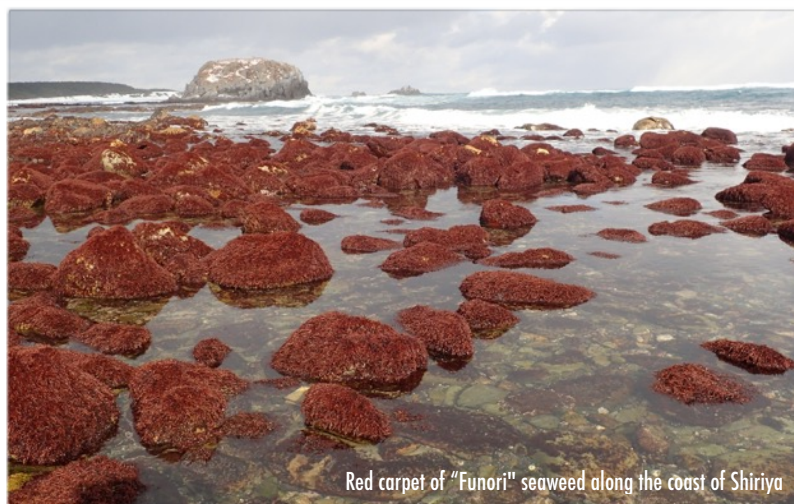
The Japanese Sandlance stock has been depleted in Aomori. A total 59 sandlance were collected off the coast of Shitsukari last September. Research to collect sandlance eggs was conducted this February. The author reports on how we collect tiny sandlance eggs from the vast Pacific ocean.

### Season of Seaweed

Seaweed in Higashidoori is at its best during this season. The harsh and cold winter in the village nurses 3 types of seaweed (Funori, Matsumo and Iwa-nori). The author introduces the biology, harvesting and cooking of these local delicacies.

### Trip Essay of Fisheries

Author's trip essay to learn about the fisheries in Oki islands, Shimane. While spending a time with the warm-hearted islanders, he enjoyed seafood, and learned a lot about fisheries there. The trip was full of encounters and experiences, even though he planned nothing but buying a ticket.



Red carpet of "Funori" seaweed along the coast of Shiriya

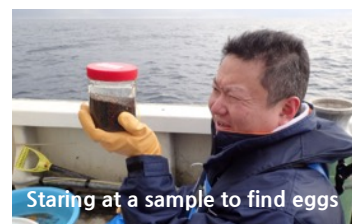
### Sandlance Spawning Research

Does Sandlance still spawn? If so, Where?

The author accompanied by Fisheries Research Station in Aomori to assist in research to collect sandlance eggs, which have been depleted in Aomori. Off the coast of Shitsukari where young fish were collected last year, we sank a plankton net (<1mm mesh aperture) down to the bottom, and collected the sand which whirled up when the net reached the bottom. We can find the eggs with the naked eye if collected. However, we could not find any this time. The author stared at small crustaceans (copepods) as they glittered in the sunlight, and remembered his days in university.



Casting a plankton net



Staring at a sample to find eggs

### Seaweeds in the best season

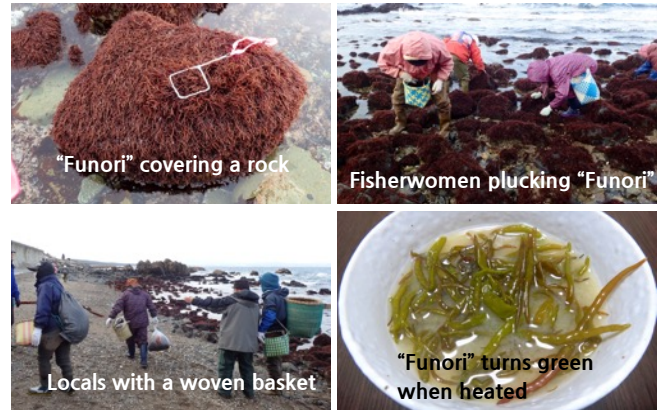
We can see fishermen/women harvesting seaweed around Higashidoori from Winter to Spring. The author introduces 3 tasty seaweeds (Funori, Matsumo and Iwa-nori), nursed by the harsh and cold winter. The author also talks about the habitat, life cycle, harvest, taste, and cooking.



Fishermen harvesting "Iwa-nori"

**“Funori”**

Rhodophyta seaweed belongs to the Endocladaceae family distributed all over the coast of Japan. This seaweed inhabits the upper intertidal zone. This seaweed sprouts from an adhesive root on a rock in September. In the village, this seaweed is harvested in April and May in Shiriya and Iwaya. However, the texture of this seaweed in April and May is chunky, and a softer. This texture is favored by the locals. Fishermen/women in Iwaya and Shiranuka harvest “Funori” with soft texture in February and March for house consumption. This seaweed is also utilized as an adhesive ingredient of Buckwheat noodle “Hegi-soba”, and as a traditional starch adhesive. The scene of harvesting this seaweed in Shiriya is a Spring tradition of the village. A green color, which represents green pigmentation (Chlorophyl), appears when it is heated, but afterwards the green disappears and red appears again. The author enjoyed this transient change of color when he put it into a soup.



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**“Matsumo”**

Phaeophyta seaweed belongs to the Ralfsiaceae family distributed on the Pacific coast of the Tohoku region and Hokkaido. This seaweed inhabits between the middle and upper intertidal zone. This seaweed named after the shape of its leaves which look like pine needles. “Matsu” means pine and “Mo” means algae. This seaweed also sprouts from an adhesive root on a rock in early Winter. In early Spring (March), we see the scene in which local fishermen/women are harvesting this seaweed in Iwaya, Shiriya, and Shiranuka. Locals harvest with a knife and leave the adhesive root for the next season. This seaweed is preserved in dried or frozen forms, however, fresh is the best. Locals enjoy this seaweed with the cooking of “Matsumo-nabe” which is a one-pot dish in which this seaweed is swished in boiling broth and eaten with a soy-based sauce, or “Miso-kai-yaki” which is a traditional scallop dish flavored with a soybean paste cooked in a scallop shell. This seaweed turns bright green when it is cooked. The sticky and crispy texture, and the seaside flavor of this seaweed are favored by locals. The author thinks that “Matsumo” is the best local delicacy among 3 seaweeds introduced here. Aquacultural trials of “Matsumo” just started last year because there is a high demand as a delicacy. But the culture and method have not been fully established yet and it is challenging.



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**“Iwa-nori”**

Rhodophyta seaweed belongs to the Bangiaceae family distributed all over the coast of Japan. This seaweed inhabits the upper intertidal zone. This seaweed does not have an adhesive root, and reproduction takes place via spores. Locals in Iwaya only harvest this seaweed which inhabits mussel using a special stick called “Nori-pashi”. Locals say that the seaweed growing on a mussel has the best taste. The taste of this seaweed is said to be different in each community by locals. Locals in each community tell me that they are proud of the seaweed around them. The author has not tasted all “Iwa-nori” in the village yet. It will take time. This seaweed is thoroughly washed in freshwater, and dried near a stove. The best way to taste dried “Iwa-nori” is baking. Lightly bake the dried seaweed in an oven, and sprinkle salt over it. You will enjoy its crispy and tender texture along with the seaside flavor within it.



## Essay ① 『Author's Trip to Fisheries island, Oki islands, Shimane』

The author travelled to the Oki islands in Shimane during his Christmas holiday last year to pray for a good catch of squid in Higashidoori this year. Yurahime shrine on Nishinoshima island venerates "Squid". There is a myth in the island that once upon a time, a squid bit a beautiful prince who was setting out to the sea and the squid felt ashamed of what he did. Thereafter the squid



came to be washed ashore every year to apologize for his transgression. Luckily the author could meet a chief priest of the shrine and was able to hear about this myth. He said that he used to pick up a squid on a beach on his way back to home from school when he was a child. For some reason the squid does not wash ashore now a days, however, this myth was definitely true. The author silently prayed from the heart for a good catch this year, while imagining a picture of people on the island busily picking up a squid in front of the shrine.

## Essay ② 『Trip without a plan is full of encounters』

The author visited a fish company selling live fish, and heard about the business from the president. His story was interesting. The president kindly looked for a place to stay for me whom had not planned for anything else but visiting that company and the shrine. The Nishinoshima tourism office offered me a car to sightsee around the beautiful coast. The view from "Matengai" along Kuniga Coast was magnificent. I stayed at the guesthouse run by a fisherman's family in Ama-town, and spent a great New Year's Eve with delicious seafood. On New Year's Day, a fisherman (owner) from the guesthouse took me to retrieve a gill net laid in the day before. Watching a beautiful sunrise, I had a "omiki", which is the sacred sake which is used as a ritual libation offered to a god with him, and caught some fish. With a happy expression on his face, the old fisherman said to me that he had rarely been out at a sea on New Year's Day. I wrote a tanka poem and dedicated it to the Oki shrine venerating the Gotoba Emperor long long ago. This unplanned trip was full of experiences and encounters. The author is now thinking about the next place he will go. Where might that be??



"Watching at sunrise

Net in my hands

Full of fishes, full of hopes

What a nice day on New Year's Day

What nice islands, Oki islands"