Risk communication to support the revitalisation of Fukushima fisheries since 2011

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1. Why does risk communication matter for Fukushima's seas?

- Coastal fisheries in Fukushima were voluntarily suspended after the 2011 disaster. Since 2012, more and more species have returned to market on a small-scale trial basis. By 2021, nearly all species had been released;
- Revitalisation of full-scale fisheries is a long-term goal of the fisheries • cooperatives in Fukushima, as part of local recovery more widely;
- But whilst fish are subject to stringent monitoring and screening, public • concerns over the safety of Fukushima fish remain. There is particular concern due to the prospect of upcoming releases of treated water from the Fukushima Dai'ichi Nuclear Power Plant.







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Abalone landed in trial fishing operations on sale in Iwaki, Fukushima Prefecture

2. Who has been most effective in Fukushima at communicating risk?

• In the years since the disaster, we have been doing interviews, workshops and observation with fishers, fishing cooperatives, local government officials, and citizens on the Fukushima coast;

Public demonstration of radiation monitoring techniques – and seafood tasting session – held by UmiLabo

Fukushima Prefecture Fisheries Section extension officer (left) facilitating workshop with fishers in Soma, north Fukushima, on issues and priorities for long-term revitalisation

- Extension officers in Fukushima Prefecture Fisheries Section have been vital in facilitating dialogue with fishers on radiation risk and fisheries revitalisation;
- Non-governmental groups, such as the UmiLabo organisation, key to engage citizens and build trust.

3. What next for fishing and Fukushima's coastal communities?

- Fishing in Fukushima is not simply an economic \bullet activity. Being able to go fishing again, and eat local seafood again, means a lot to citizens and to local society and culture;
- So anything that might jeopardise the revitalisation of fisheries – such as the planned releases of treated water from the nuclear plant into the sea – are likely to be met with concern;
- Risk communication on marine radioactivity in Fukushima is thus not only about correcting misunderstandings, but about understanding how decisions affect people's livelihoods and sense of identity.

READ MORE: Mabon, L, Kawabe, M, Huang, Y-C, Moller, L, Gu, J, Wakamori, D, Narita, K, Ito, T, Matsumoto, A, Niizeki, K, Suzuki, S, and Watanabe, M (2020) 'Inherent resilience, major marine environmental change and revitalisation of coastal communities in Soma, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan' International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction DOI: 10.1016/j.ijdrr.2020.101852;



Clockwise from top left: 'Joban-Mono' campaign to show businesses selling local marine produce in Iwaki, south Fukushima; fishers discuss risk communication priorities in Minamisoma, north Fukushima; Ryugasaki Shrine, for safety at sea, near Nakanosaku Fishing Port.

