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First-Ever Fishery Improvement Project Launched in Japan

Sustainable seafood movement takes a big step forward in East Asia as industry, fishermen, and NGOs come together to launch the “Tokyo Bay Sea Perch FIP”, the first project of its kind in Japan.

November 10, 2016, Tokyo, Japan – In 2016, the market value of sustainable seafood reached an all-time high of $11.5 billion USD, placing further incentive to increase the sustainability of fisheries across the globe. Asia’s share of global seafood production is up to 69%, by some estimates, but only 11% of this is certified as sustainable seafood production including Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certifications. As such, implementation of Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) in Japan will ensure the growth of the Asian sustainable seafood market.

Ocean Outcomes (O2) and Kaiko Bussan Inc. today announced its launch of the “Tokyo Bay Sea Perch FIP”, Japan’s first Fishery Improvement Project (FIP). The project was introduced by Seafood Legacy Co., Ltd. to Seiyu GK, a subsidiary of Walmart Stores, Inc., the American multinational retail corporation and global leader in sustainable seafood, who have decided to support this project that will improve the sustainability of the sea perch fisheries in Tokyo Bay. As part of the project, at the end of October 2016, Seiyu test marketed the “Tokyo Bay Sea Perch FIP” product in 4 stores in the Kanto area and received positive feedback from customers regarding the quality, freshness and the reasonable price of the products. Going forward, Seiyu will discuss its support for this project including continued “Tokyo Bay Sea Perch FIP” product sales in stores and project grant contribution.

■ About Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs)
A Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) is a collaborative project between fisheries stakeholders, such as fishermen, businesses, distributors, and NGOs, to improve the sustainability of a fishery. Two-thirds of
the top 25 North American retailers, comprising 90% of the global seafood market, have committed to supporting FIPs. Projects like the “Tokyo Bay Sea Perch FIP” are vital if fisheries want to improve and access global markets.

Tokyo Bay is a major fishing ground for sea perch and a historically and culturally important sourcing region for edomae sushi, the style of sushi created during the late Edo-period (late 19th century) that influenced the nigiri sushi that is common today. The “Tokyo Bay Sea Perch FIP” will ensure sustainable fisheries management and the enjoyment of sea perch for generations to come.

As a first step in the project, Ocean Outcomes collaborated with Kaiko Bussan to complete an assessment of current fishing practices calibrated against internationally recognized best practices standards. The assessment found opportunities to modify fishing practices and gather additional data as steps which could better inform fisheries management and lead to more sustainable practices overall. These opportunities, described in detail in the FIP work plan, include plans to better monitor bycatch of endangered, threatened, and protected species, plans to collect fishery data to better evaluate and monitor stock abundance, and a commitment to work towards a more collaborative management plan.

Below are comments from each organization regarding the launch of the FIP.

**Shunji Murakami (Ocean Outcomes / Japan Program Director)**
“Launching the Tokyo Bay Sea Perch FIP is a monumental moment for the sustainable seafood movement in Japan. Improving fisheries practices benefits both marine resources and fishing communities.”

**Kazuhiko Oono (Kaiko Bussan, Inc. / President and CEO)**
“Fishery improvement, while a new concept for Japanese fishermen, makes sense. We harvest, process, and sell the sea perch we catch, so our business is completely reliant on abundant sea perch resources. As the resource declines, so does our fishery. This project will ensure we’re harvesting the optimal amount of sea perch while not negatively affecting the amazing environment in which we work.”

**Wakao Hanaoka (Seafood Legacy Co., Ltd. / CEO and Founder)**
“Our hope for this project is to invigorate the Japanese market in a way that encourages cooperation amongst retailers and producers in the implementation of more sustainable fishing practices. This will benefit ocean ecosystems, businesses, fisheries, and local communities.”
Kumie Wama (Seiyu GK / Vice President of Corporate Affairs)

“Responsible and sustainable fishing practices, which the participants of “Tokyo Bay Sea Perch FIP” have committed to undertake, are very important for the future of marine resources in Japan. As a company that relies on shared marine resources, we consider it our corporate social responsibility to provide environmentally friendly products to our consumers.”

Additional resources:
Ocean Outcomes (O2) website (http://www.oceanoutcomes.jp)
Kaiko Bussan, Inc. website (http://www.daidenmaru.com)
Seafood Legacy Co., Ltd. website (http://www.seafoodlegacy.com/ja/)
Seiyu GK website (http://www.seiyu.co.jp)

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Ocean Outcomes (O2):
O2 is a sustainable fisheries consultancy that works in partnership with commercial fisheries, local communities, and the seafood industry to improve the sustainability of global fisheries. O2 provides expert advice, guidance, and technical support to fisheries seeking to distinguish themselves in the competitive domestic and international seafood market through the adoption of sustainable, environmentally sound fishery management practices.

Kaiko Bussan, Inc.:
Kaiko Bussan is a seafood wholesaler in Funabashi City, Chiba that is co-owned by two purse seine fishing companies, Daiden Maru Co. Ltd. And Nakasen Maru Ltd. Daiden Maru and Nakasen Maru
each own 2 purse seine vessels and are members of the Northern Tokyo Bay Purse Seine Association. Kazuhiko Oono, CEO of Daiden Maru, and Shigehisa Nakamura, CEO of Nakasen Maru, are both members of the Funabashi City Fishermen’s Cooperative Association. Kaiko Bussan handles over 75% of the sea perch landed in Funabashi City, a region that has the highest catch volume of sea perch in Japan. They are known for their highly technical method of sea perch processing called “shunjime”, a process in which hand selected, in-season sea perch is bled and nerves removed in a matter of seconds to preserve the maximum quality and flavor of the fish. In 2015, their brand of “Edomae Funabashi Shunjime Sea Perch” was certified as an official “Chiba Brand Seafood”, and in 2016 it was also chosen as a Japan Federation of Fisheries Cooperatives Association’s “PRIDE FISH” item for Chiba Prefecture.

**Seafood Legacy Co., Ltd.:**

Seafood Legacy is a consulting firm that has a mission to ensure “Seafood”, the symbol of the connection between society and the sea, continues to be abundant for future generations as a “Legacy”. Through strategic networking and support of sustainable seafood businesses and environmental organizations in Japan and around the world, Seafood Legacy incorporates lessons learned from global examples and works to find solutions that align with Japanese businesses and culture.

**Seiyu GK:**

Seiyu advocates for the resolution of social and environmental issues and multi-faceted promotion of sustainability and social contribution activities under parent company Wal-Mart’s three “Global Responsibility” focuses: “Opportunity”, “Sustainability”, and “Community” by collaborating with customers, suppliers, NGOs, and local authorities. In regards to “Sustainability”, the ultimate goal is to “sell products that sustain the environment and lives of people”. Seiyu’s support for “Tokyo Bay Sea Perch FIP” will join other sustainability efforts, such as switching Seiyu private brand palm oil to 100% sustainable RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) certified palm oil.