

JICA Expert, Mr. Takafumi Toshihara
toshihara@fishengn.co.jp

Skipjack Tuna fishing in future

Skipjack tuna is a streamlined, fast-swimming pelagic fish, common in tropical waters throughout the world, where it inhabits surface waters in large shoals (up to 50,000 fish), feeding on fish, crustaceans, cephalopods and mollusks. It is an important prey species for large pelagic fishes and sharks.

Skipjack is the most fecund of the main commercial tunas, and its population is considered sustainable against its current consumption. Fishing Skipjack is still controversial due to the methodology; with rod and reel or fishery options being promoted as ecologically preferable.

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Skipjack is currently mainly processed into frozen steak shape.

In St. Lucia and St. Vincent, large quantity of skipjack is landed. It contributes to more than 25% of the tuna-family caught.

	Skipjack	
St. Lucia	142.1 ton	(29.21%)
St. Vincent	51.9 ton	(46.96%)

figure is based on 2009 data

However, skipjack is not the first choice of many consumers and fishermen and vendors are having a lot of difficulty in selling. It is assumed this is so because of their dark, blood-rich meat and strong flavour.

It is scientifically explained that meat color of skipjack is dark red and more changeable than that of tuna such as bluefin and bigeye tuna, which is caused by high content of reduced hemoglobin, low pH and low metmyoglobin reductase activity in the skipjack meat.

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In Japan, skipjack shared about 43% (390,000 tons) of tuna family species, and 53% of them are processed or used in Japanese cuisine and is commonly smoked and dried to make *katsuobushi*, the central ingredient in making *dashi* (fish stock). In order to keep freshness and to avoid color change, instant killing and bleeding and then stored quick freezing (-50 °C) on board is done.



If skipjack is bled promptly and kept on ice they are quite palatable in casseroles, pies or when baked. There are other options to process them into fish croquette (potato and fish), fish ball or fish burgers by the changing flavour and giving a better taste, until proper handling skipjack on board fishing vessels is adopted and implemented.



COLUMN Effective Use of Unused Fish: *Mottainai* 2/2

Effective use of unused fish with new processing technology
[Ibaraki Prefecture]

Purse seine fishers and a fishery processing company have collaborated to develop new processed products made of unused fish for school meals and restaurants.



Product development using unused fish parts
[Kagoshima Prefecture]

Stock company K has developed a new product by effectively using the flesh attached to the backbone of filleted farmed fish.



Japan International Cooperation Agency

Takafumi TOSHIHARA

JICA Fisheries Expert,

Fish Marketing and Development Advisor

Tel & Fax : 1-758-453-7843

e-mail: toshihara@fishengn.co.jp