

Conservation and Science Program



Japan Seafood Market & Fisheries Strategy Brief

The ocean makes life on our planet possible, but it is in danger. Increasing threats such as overfishing and climate change are putting pressure on the ocean and damaging its ability to sustain ocean life, ultimately endangering our own well-being.

For half a century, the Packard Foundation has made investments to expand our understanding of the ocean and has worked with partners to improve its long-term health. We invest in countries and global strategies that together offer great potential for accelerating positive change. Japan is one of the six countries where we carry out this work.

THE CHALLENGE

Some of our ocean's biggest threats come from unsustainable fishing practices. All too often, our waters are overfished, or marine aquaculture is operated in a way that harms coastal habitats. But because these threats are caused by human activity, we as a society have the power to shape the ocean's future today.

The Japanese seafood market plays a significant role on the global stage. A market for sustainable seafood in Japan could become a powerful force for fisheries sustainability both in Japan and globally. Japan is the third largest importer of fishery products by value, accounts for 13 percent of global seafood imports alone, and consumes more fish per capita than any other country. On top of this, some of the largest seafood companies in the world are based in Japan.

However, a sustainable seafood movement has been slow to develop in Japan and many Japanese fisheries are overfished. This means we have an opportunity to help create a sustainable seafood market in Japan by working with NGOs, businesses, and government.

OUR STRATEGY

The Packard Foundation is working to catalyze the recovery of fisheries worldwide by transforming global seafood markets to help fisheries recover and thrive. In Japan, we seek to build a movement that drives change for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture production in Japan and globally. As a key seafood consuming nation, Japan's voice on international and regional ocean, fisheries, and seafood trade policies presents an opportunity for progress.

Strides toward sustainability in Japan would be a tremendous complement to the US and European sustainable seafood movements, and would help to cement the movement globally, especially in Asia.

We specifically aim to support the development of a thriving marketplace for sustainable seafood in Japan by 2025, use that demand for sustainability to help improve domestic fishery management in Japan, and engage Japan on key international policy issues.

OUR APPROACH

Our strategy is focused on three linked areas of work. We aim to:

1. *Build a sustainable seafood market in Japan*

To accomplish this by 2025, we will seek to secure stronger sustainable seafood commitments from Japanese buyers and to strengthen awareness of sustainability issues.

2. *Use that movement to help address Japan's fishery management*

We plan to align with others to encourage fisheries to move toward Fishery Improvement Projects and certification, and to support existing domestic fishery reform efforts, including around fisheries rebuilding strategies. We will also work to establish a coordinated network of NGOs, governments, and private sector champions with fisheries, trade, and policy expertise.

3. *Engage Japan on key international policy issues*

We will work in partnership with Oceans 5 to encourage momentum toward a domestic illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing import control and related efforts to curb the market for IUU products in Japan. We will also seek guidance on the viability of more progressive engagement on international tuna issues; if advisable, we would consider pursuing efforts through a coordinated approach.

4. *Build capacity across all three areas of focus*

Underpinning the efforts of these three areas of work, by 2023, the Foundation seeks to strengthen the human and field capacity of civil society in Japan so that it can become an effective force for ocean stewardship. To support this goal, we will help build the capacity of NGOs so that they are individually effective and effectively networked to have an impact on public awareness and public and private sector actions.

PROGRESS

The Packard Foundation began grantmaking in Japan in 2012. Our early grants focused on increasing our own understanding of the Japanese seafood market, fisheries management, and Japan's position on key global issues such as IUU. In 2015, we made grants to seven organizations primarily in support of building market demand for sustainable seafood.

In the last few years, NGOs, businesses, and the government of Japan have made significant progress including ratification of the Port State Measures Agreement, increased corporate awareness and engagement on sustainable seafood issues, and the launch of the first fishery improvement project in Japan. As this progress continues, the Foundation expects to continue to iterate and refine our strategy.

HOW TO GET SUPPORT

The Conservation and Science program welcomes your ideas for funding requests. Please review our existing strategies and, if your work is aligned with our funding priorities and geographic focus, send a short description to the relevant Program Officer and Program Associate or send the description using the form [here](#). Please do not send a full proposal until requested by the Program Officer.

- Sarah Hogan, Program Officer
shogan@packard.org
- Laura Sullivan, Program Associate
lsullivan@packard.org