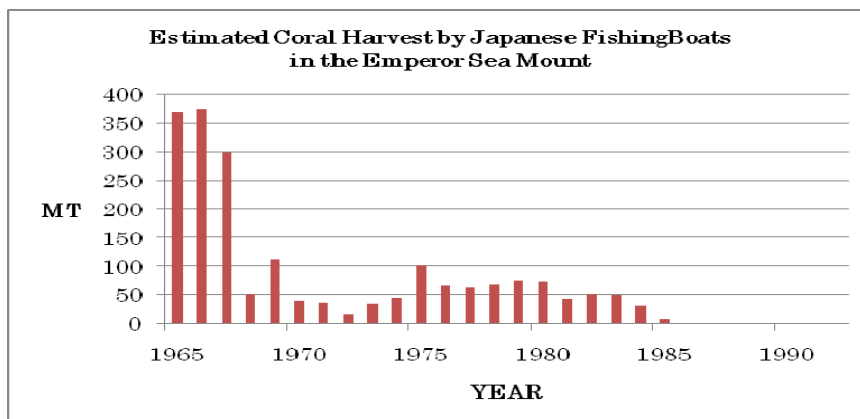


Information on Coral Fisheries in the Emperor Seamount Area

1. History of Japanese coral fisheries

(1) Summary of fisheries

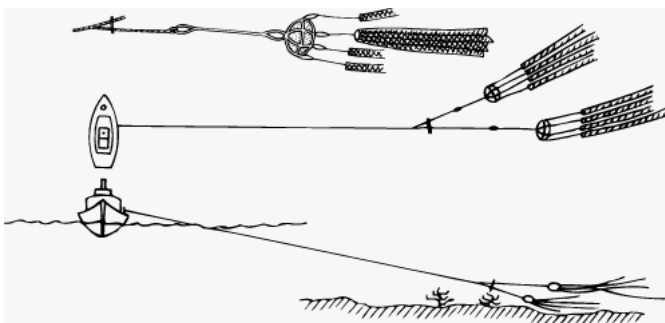
The Japanese coral fisheries in the Emperor Seamounts started in 1965 after a Japanese fishing boat discovered a huge bed of coral ground on the Milwaukee Banks (Koko Seamounts). In 1966 Japanese coral collection in the ground reached 375MT, a historic record. During the peak year, over 100 coral boats from Japan and Taiwan harvested corals (*Corallium* spp.) However, harvest of corals drastically decreased after that due to depletion of the coral stock, and operation by Japanese fishing boats in the Emperor Seamounts ended in 1992. The total harvest of corals by Japanese coral boats in the Emperor Seamounts was estimated approximately 2,000 MT. (Fujioka2004, Grigg2002)



Source: Fujioka (unpublished)

(2) Type of fishing gear

Japanese coral boats used tangle net dredges. Dredges consist of heavy stones or iron bars with attached netting as the figure below shows.



Source: Home Page of All Kochi Coral Fishery Association

2. History of Taiwanese coral fisheries

(1) Summary of fisheries

The Taiwanese coral fisheries in the Emperor Seamounts followed soon after start of the Japanese coral fisheries operation in 1965. In 1977 a Japanese training vessel sighted 26 Taiwanese coral boats around Koko seamounts. Due to depletion of the coral stock the number of Taiwanese coral fishing boats has been gradually decreased. However, even at present at least two Taiwanese coral fishing boats still have been continuing coral fisheries operation in the Emperor Seamounts since several Japanese research vessels and trawlers sighted those coral fishing boats many times.

One of the two coral boats is identified as follows: name: TUIFA, International Radio Call Sign: BH2444.



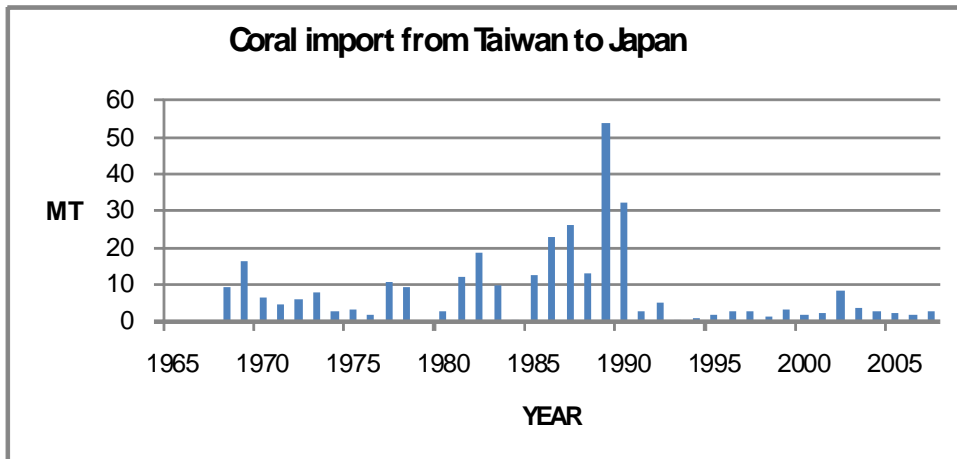
(The photo was taken by a Japanese trawler on June 9 2008 at Location: N32.02, E173.11 (Kammu Seamount). The boat was heading to north. According to the trawler, it sighted another one operating at N32.03, E173.40 (Kammu Seamount))

(2) Type of fishing gear

There is no information on their fishing gear. It is assumed that they use fishing gears similar to those of Japanese vessels.

(3) Coral import from Taiwan to Japan

Japan used to import tens of metric tons of corals from Taiwan until 1991. In recent years, however, the amount of import has dropped to a few metric tons. The origin of the imported corals from Taiwan is not identified.



Source: Trade Statistics, Ministry of Finance ※Data of 1979 is missing

REFERENCES

1 Yoshimi FUJIOKA Treasures of Kuroshio Current. (*Farming Japan Vol. 38-6, 2004*)

2 Richard W. GRIGG Precious Corals in Hawaii: Discovery of a New Bed and Revised Management Measures for Existing Beds. (*Marine Fisheries Review 64(1) 13-20*)

3 All Kochi Coral Fisheries Association
<http://www.sangokumiai.jp/coral/gather/index.html>