

## Development of precious coral fishery and its effects in Kashiwajima Island, Kochi prefecture

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Since old times, precious coral has been harvested, and processed into jewels and ornaments. Red coral (*Corallium rubrum*) is a major species of precious corals and mainly inhabits and has been harvested in Mediterranean Sea. In Japan, precious coral fishery was launched in the 19th century. As the decrease in the population of red coral in Mediterranean Sea, precious corals being harvested in Japan and Taiwan, especially *Paracorallium japonicum* and *Corallium elatius*, draw much attention.

In recent years, the price of raw coral has been soaring related to increasing in the demand of precious corals in China. Given this situation, there arises a concern that the abundance of precious corals as resource might be depleted owing to excessive or inappropriate fishing. In response to the suggestion about a need for imposing international regulation on precious coral fishery from several countries, international discussions had been made at the Washington Convention Conference of the Parties (2007). While such a discussion is being developed, the habitat and biomass of precious corals are not yet known clearly. Therefore, some local governments and research institutions undertake a survey for proper use of precious corals as resource.

Kashiwajima Island is one of the regions where people are engaged in precious coral fishery in Kochi prefecture, Japan. Owing to the effects of the Kuroshio Current, the waters around the island have rich biodiversity. Before 2008, there were few fishermen harvesting precious corals. Then, in 2010, the number of fishermen had increased sharply in response to the increase in the demand of precious coral. Most of them usually engaged in other fisheries, so that there are various relationships between precious coral and each fisherman. In this presentation, I would like to show the details of local activity of precious coral fishing, and consider the impact of the revival and continuation of capturing precious corals on the region.

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