

相模湾初島沖化学合成生物群集域における深海底長期映像のアーカイブ Archives of long-term deep seafloor videos at chemo-synthetic biological community off Hatsushima Island in Sagami Bay

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More than 20 years of multidisciplinary long-term observation, including visual observation, has been carried out with a cabled observatory on deep seafloor at a depth of 1175 m off Hatsushima Island in Sagami Bay since the first deployment in 1993, experiencing entire replacement for upgrade in 2000. The observatory was installed at a cold seepage site where large chemo-synthetic biological communities mainly consisted of vesicomyid clams exist. The observatory is composed of several kinds of sensors, including video cameras, a hydrophone, CTD sensor and seismometer in order to observe biological phenomena visually and also to investigate environmental fluctuation on deep seafloor.

All those data obtained with the underwater unit are transmitted through a submarine cable to the shore station in Hatsushima Island. The video signal was recorded on S-VHS videotape before the replacement of the observatory in 2000 and mainly on DVCAM videotape after the replacement, both with acoustic signal obtained with a hydrophone on soundtrack as audible sound. The shore station is usually uninhabited, and daily visual monitoring of seafloor, 30 minutes a day before the replacement and 26 minutes a day after the replacement, has been performed automatically. The videotape has been replaced once a week on the day when manual observation is performed usually for 6 hours. As for lighting, six halogen lights were attached at first and two of them were turned on simultaneously by turn for usual observation considering lifetimes. However, most of those lights were broken by 2008 and since then an LED light is used which is darker but has longer lifetime than the halogen lights, resulting narrow view.

Although visual observation has been performed about ten hours a week, more than 20 year observation produced thousands of videotapes. Archiving those videotapes becomes important because they degrade over time and the devices to replay them are going out of production and the opportunities to utilize them are being lost.

Meanwhile, vocalizations of sperm whales were found in the acoustic signal recorded on the soundtrack of the videotapes and, in order to utilize them as one of the *in situ* data for the remote species identification, archiving the videotapes started under one of the research project in Core Researches for Evolutional Science and Technology (CREST) founded by Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) since December 2011. At the end of the fiscal year 2013, more than half of those videotapes will be archived. Although the main target of the CREST project is acoustic data, video signals on the videotapes are converted to MPEG-2 files for S-VHS tapes and both AVI and MPEG-2 files for DVCAM tapes before extracting acoustic data.

In those video images, not only the long term change of the clam colony but also some episodic events, such as spawning of the clams, sudden increase of snails and other unidentified events have been recognized, which would be invaluable data for the investigation of chemo-synthetic ecosystems. Those archived video images will be able to supply researchers outside the project in near future. However, there still exists a problem that the number of hard disks in which the video images are stored is very large even though it is less than a thousand.

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