

## Evacuation response of fishermen during the 2011 Great East Japan Tsunami and present recovery status

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The 2011 Great East Japan tsunami severely damaged or destroyed most of the fishing ports and facilities along the Sanriku coast. Fishing boats can be considered as the most important thing for fishermen as their activities are mostly depending on their boats. By getting out offshore to protect their boats from tsunamis is a custom in Japan but this is considered as a risky action. Interviews with fishermen were conducted to investigate their evacuation response, experience and opinion of the recovery status after the 2011 tsunami. We found that most of fishermen who did not decide to get out offshore but evacuated to high ground was although felt deploring in losing their boats but in all cases, they believed that their own lives are the most important. Knowing about tsunami characteristic of fishing port is also important. Tsunami generally arrives the Sanriku areas as fast as 30 min because of the deep sea and short distance from the earthquake epicenter. By this reason, boats can reach to the safety zone of 50 m sea depth very soon as well. However, boats in Sendai Plain will need about one hour to the deep sea. For the recovery, all of the villages are still facing problems resulting from land subsidence when the ports are partly submerged during high tide. In addition, land ownership is another issue that delays any recovery process as local governments need their permissions before doing any kind of construction. Although there are some small differences in detail, they have decided to move the entire community to high ground. Local residents feel that constructing high seawalls are unnecessary because there will be no more houses on the low part of the land and the local governments are trying to solve these problems neutrally.

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