

A Review of Cuttlefish Basket Trap Fishery

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Abstract

While cuttlefish basket trap fishery is a traditional fishing activity with a long history, there has never been an article which comprehensively assesses this type of fishery. The present review compiles existing knowledge on cuttlefish trap fishery and the findings of interviews conducted with fishermen by the authors. It mainly covers such issues as the history of cuttlefish trap fishery, relationship between traps and the catch, structure of traps, characteristics of fishing grounds and trap operating methods. In addition, the spawning habits of cuttlefish, which are closely related to trap fishery, are briefly described and the credibility of various theories on the catching process (especially the motivation of cuttlefish to enter a trap) is examined. The review concludes that because of the virtual absence of research on cuttlefish trap fishery, behavioral research is extremely necessary to establish fishery oriented resource management.

Key words: Cuttlefish basket trap, Traditional fishery, Spawning habits, Catching process, Resource management

Introduction

Cuttlefishes (Sepiidae) are widely found in warm waters in the world. Cuttlefish basket trap has long been employed in Japan in areas around the Inland Sea and along the coast of Kyushu Island, on the Atlantic coast in Europe, and by countries around the Mediterranean Sea. In recent years, it has spread to African and Southeast Asian countries for the capture of cuttlefish for domestic consumption and export. Despite the increasing popularity of cuttlefish trap fishery, however, no article has so far been published which presents a comprehensive assessment of this type of fishery. This paper reviews existing knowledge on the history and present state of cuttlefish trap fishery in Japan and the findings of interviews conducted with fishermen by the authors. Overseas examples are also introduced where deemed necessary. Moreover, general knowledge and pending research issues are explained in relation to the catching process which poses a challenging issue for research on cuttlefish trap fishery.

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