

Tosashimizu and Shimizu Mackerel

Shimizu mackerel is the brand name for blue mackerel caught in Tosashimizu and shipped alive to buyers. The custom of keeping caught fish alive began in the 1990s, when local fishermen realized the live mackerel they used as bait when fishing for sharks, which are common outside Tosashimizu, were so tasty they could be sold in their own right. Shimizu mackerel is now in high demand, and most of the 40,000 fish shipped from Tosashimizu each year end up on restaurant tables in Tokyo.

[Captions]

Longline fishing is employed to catch blue mackerel one by one.

1. The fish are caught alive and put in temperature-controlled tanks on the boats.
2. The fish are kept untouched by human hands, as this could affect the quality.
3. Upon arrival at Tosashimizu Market, the fish are moved quickly from the boats into larger pools.
4. The fish are left to swim in the pools for a day or two to relieve stress before they are shipped to consumers.

Why the sea off Cape Ashizuri is ideal for fishing

Fishing in the Cape Ashizuri and Tosashimizu region benefits from a fortuitous interplay of ocean currents and underwater topography. The Kuroshio Current flows along the coast from the south. When it collides with depressions in the sea bed right outside Cape Ashizuri, nutrients gathered in these small valleys swirl upward, attracting fish in remarkable numbers.