

Coexisting with the Sea

Visitors from all over the world travel to the Kujukushima area to see the natural beauty of the sea and islands. But for locals, it is what lies below the surface that counts, as the ocean provides a rich bounty of seafood of all kinds, and fishing has been an important part of local food culture for centuries.

- Use the QR code to get more information about the photos on display. Free WiFi is available.

Traditional methods of fishing are still practiced here, with many fishermen still using old-fashioned nets, baited lines and traps, and other methods. Aquaculture is also a thriving industry, especially for oysters, a special local delicacy.

It is common to see boats of oyster farmers tending to the mollusks, either scrubbing the shells of juveniles or pulling up long chains of mature oysters. Of course, oysters create pearls, and pearl cultivation is another local industry. Since the early twentieth century, Akoya pearl oysters (*Pinctada fucata*) have been artificially seeded by hand, starting the production of perfectly shaped and colored pearls.

Visitors interested in seeing Kujukushima from a fisherman's perspective can join a boat tour around the islands. The excursion boats, which resemble square-rigged European sailing ships, depart several times a day from a pier close to the Visitor Center.

<PHOTOS>

An excursion boat passes behind an oyster farmer working an aquaculture net.

Throughout the islands, there are fixed nets that catch fish moving through the area.

An example of seine fishing. Large hauls of horse mackerel and sardines are caught in the seas just off Kujukushima.

People in this area have relied on local fish for their diet for centuries.

Ikashiba, a traditional method of squid fishing. Fishermen use tree branches, which squid mistake for seaweed beds, to attract spawning squid into a trap net.