

***Sukui* Fishing**

When walking along the Nagahama Seashore at low tide, you may see a low wall of stones forming an enclosure inside the tidal zone. This enclosure, called an *ishihibi* or an *ishihimi*, is a fundamental part of a traditional method of fishing called *sukui*, literally “scooping.”

The contrast between low tide and high tide in the Ariake Sea is dramatic, with a difference of as much as 6 meters. Since the Jōmon period (14,000–300 BCE), people living in Shimabara have leveraged the tides to provide for themselves. They built the *ishihibi* fishing weirs from the plentiful volcanic stone and then simply waited for the ocean to provide. At high tide, water completely covers the traps so that fish, crabs, and other sea creatures can make their way inside. When low tide returns, an abundance of fresh seafood remains trapped in the enclosure, ready to be harvested.

The fishermen of Shimabara used *sukui* for generations, but the tradition began to disappear in the 1920s. A group of local fishermen revitalized the tradition in 2008, restoring this enclosure. A *sukui* festival is held here every spring.
