

***Shishamo*: The Willow-Leaf Fish**

Shishamo (*Spirinchus lanceolatus*), a type of smelt, is found along Hokkaido's Pacific coast. Its name is derived from the Ainu words *susu ham* or *shushu hamo*, meaning "willow-leaf fish," as it is similar in size and shape to a willow leaf.

Shishamo are anadromous, meaning that they migrate from the sea to freshwater to spawn. From mid-October to early December, *shishamo* in the Kushiro region migrate upstream to spawn in the Shin-Kushiro, Akan, Shoro, and Charo Rivers. They are a prized food source in Japan, usually grilled whole. Fishing is limited to the spawning season.