

## Sea and Life Museum

The Sea and Life Museum is an intriguing museum primarily devoted to fish. Opened in 1994, it displays approximately 4,000 taxidermy specimens of marine life made by Tane Masayuki. Realizing that schoolchildren had to rely on picture books to learn about the appearance of fish species, Tane developed a technique that allowed him to remove the internal organs, skeleton, and flesh of specimens while preserving their shape and exterior appearance. Though his technique is largely secret, it involves stuffing the empty skin with sawdust and carefully restoring the shape of the fish, using chemicals for preservation and resin for hardening. It is an extremely time-consuming process. The Sea and Life Museum displays very large species, including white shark, bluefin tuna, gigantic oarfish, and gigantic sunfish. Most of the species were caught locally, and they are grouped taxonomically, highlighting habitat and subspecies. A variety of colorful crabs and other crustaceans are exhibited, along with an amusing display of hundreds of puffed-up blowfish that is designed to be the background of memorable souvenir photos.

### *Repurposed Sake Warehouses*

The museum is housed within former sake warehouses that were built alongside the port more than 100 years ago, when Sakaiminato's economy was more centered on trade than on fishing. The museum exterior recalls the white-plaster walls and tiled roofs of the former warehouses, which were beloved local landmarks, while the original wooden structural frames define the museum's interior spaces. Other aspects of the fishing industry and nautical life, including many examples of tools and equipment and an entire fishing boat, are also on display. Visitors can even board a boat, the *Minato Maru*. The museum also seeks to educate visitors about other aspects of traditional local life, with a sizable collection of farming implements, garments, and tools. In addition, it has a collection of artworks, notably modern woodblock prints by the noted local printmaker Hashimoto Okiie (1899-1993). These are displayed in a second-floor gallery with antique wooden trusses overhead.