

Bluefin tuna catches to be reduced in Pacific: reports

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A Japanese fisherman loads tuna fish caught at bluefin tuna farm around mid Adriatic Croatian town of Zadar before transporting them to Japan. Fishing nations have agreed to hold their catches of young bluefin tuna in the central and western Pacific in 2011 and 2012 below the 2002-2004 annual averages, press reports said.

Fishing nations have agreed to hold their catches of young bluefin tuna in the central and western Pacific in 2011 and 2012 below the 2002-2004 annual averages, press reports said Sunday.

The agreement was reached at an annual meeting of the 25-member Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, which ended in Honolulu, Hawaii, on Saturday [Japan](#) time, the reports said.

It was the first international agreement on cuts in bluefin catches in the

Pacific, following moves to reduce catch limits in the Atlantic.

The commission, including Japan, China, Samoa, South Korea, Taiwan and the United States, determines resource management measures on fish such as tuna, bonito and swordfish in the central and western Pacific.

The deal will obligate Japan to slash its annual catches of [bluefin tuna](#) aged three years or less by about 26 percent from the present level of 6,100 tonnes, the Asahi Shimbun said.

Japan's annual catch of young bluefin tuna averaged 4,500 tonnes between 2002 and 2004, the daily added.

But an official at Japan's fishery agency in Tokyo said the reduction "will not have a large impact on consumption in Japan" as the margin of reduction is equivalent to around one percent of the country's sashimi tuna supply, Jiji Press said.

South Korea has resisted the deal but agreed to "take necessary measures to restrict its catch of young bluefin tuna", the Asahi said.

Japanese and South Korean fishing boats have been catching large quantities of young bluefin tuna in the Pacific with large net fishing boats, and critics say the practice threatens to deplete the bluefin tuna stock in the waters, Kyodo news agency said.

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