

Record \$736k paid for single tuna fish in Japan

January 5 2012



Kiyoshi Kimura (R), the owner of Sushi-Zanmai, a restaurant chain, poses next to a 269 kilogram bluefin tuna he purchased on the first trading day of the new year at Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market on January 5, 2012. The bluefin tuna was traded at 56.5 million yen (724,000 US dollars) at the wholesale market auction.

A deep-pocketed restaurateur shelled out nearly three-quarters of a million dollars for a single tuna, the most ever paid for the fish, at Japan's Tsukiji fish market on Thursday.

The 269-kilogramme (592-pound) bluefin -- caught off the coast of Japan's northern Aomori prefecture -- stood at an eye-popping 56.49 million yen (\$736,500) when the hammer came down in the first auction of the year.

The figure dwarfs the previous high of 32.49 million yen paid at last year's inaugural auction at Tsukiji, a huge working market that also features on many Tokyo tourist itineraries.

Thursday's winning bidder was Kiyoshi Kimura, president of the company that runs the popular Sushi-Zanmai chain.

At around 210,000 yen per kilogramme, a single slice of [sushi](#) could cost as much as 5,000 yen, but the firm plans to sell it at a more regular price of up to 418 yen, local media reported.

"I wanted to win the best [tuna](#) so that Japanese customers, not overseas, can enjoy it," Kimura said, referring to a Hong Kong sushi restaurant owner who bought the previous year's record tuna.

Decades of [overfishing](#) have seen global tuna stocks crash, leading some Western nations to call for a ban on endangered [Atlantic bluefin tuna](#).

Japan consumes three-quarters of the global catch of bluefin, a highly prized sushi ingredient known in Japan as "kuro maguro" (black tuna) and dubbed by sushi connoisseurs the "black diamond" because of its scarcity.

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Citation: Record \$736k paid for single tuna fish in Japan (2012, January 5) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-01-736k-paid-tuna-fish-japan.html>

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