

# Bluefin tuna nets \$37,000 in Tokyo new year auction

January 5 2015

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Kiyoshi Kimura, president of the Sushi-Zanmai restaurant chain, displays a 180kg bluefin tuna at his main restaurant near Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market on January 5, 2015

A giant bluefin tuna sold for more than \$37,000 in the first auction of the year at a Tokyo fish market on Monday, as Japan faces growing pressure to cut back on consumption of the threatened fish.

The 180.4-kilogramme (380 pound) tuna, caught off Japan's northern region of Aomori, fetched a winning bid of 4.51 million yen (\$37,480), said an official at the Tsukiji [fish](#) market.

The bid marked the second consecutive decline at the annual new year sales, after a record 155.4 million yen was paid in 2013—driven by a bidding war led by a Hong Kong restaurant chain—for a slightly larger fish of similar quality.

Monday's winner, Kiyoshi Kimura, president of the firm behind the popular Sushi-Zanmai restaurant chain, said he was "surprised to win the bid at such a low price."

"But it's the best quality," he told local media.

"I'm satisfied with buying the best one—it has a good shape and great fat."

The price decline was due to a "lack of rival bids" and a higher number of bluefins in the waters off Japan's northern coast, a prime spot for [tuna fishing](#), reports said.

Bluefin is usually the most expensive fish available at Tsukiji, the biggest fish and wholesale seafood market in the world.

A piece of "otoro", or the fish's fatty underbelly, can cost up to several thousand yen at high-end Tokyo restaurants.



Fishmongers inspect bluefin tuna before the first trading of the new year at Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market on January 5, 2015

The growing popularity of Japanese sushi worldwide has also stoked demand.

The auction came as Japan, the world's largest bluefin [tuna](#) consumer, faces growing calls for a trade ban on the fish, which environmentalists warn is on its way to extinction.

In November, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature updated its "red list" of threatened species, warning that surging global demand for the fish was placing "unsustainable pressure" on the species.

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