

NEW MEASURES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION IN ENCLOSED COASTAL SEAS IN JAPAN

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Japan is an island country surrounded by seas on all sides, and there are a large number of enclosed sea areas along its complex coastlines. The major enclosed sea areas with metropolitan cities such as Tokyo Bay, Ise Bay and Seto Inland Sea are suitable locations to integrate socio-economic activities and they have been playing vital roles to achieve the rapid economic growth. However, on the other hand, these areas were seriously polluted by inflow of organic substances, Nitrogen and Phosphorus, and consequently the favorable sea environment and fishery resources were diminished.

As concerns over the water pollution of enclosed sea areas were intensifying, Basic Law for Environmental Pollution was enacted in 1967, followed by Water Pollution Control Law in 1970. Both laws are aimed constrain pollution load and to conserve natural environment to the greatest extent. Thus, regulations have been playing a key role to improve water quality in enclosed sea areas so far.

As a result, the water quality of enclosed sea areas was improved to a certain level, but not sufficient enough to accomplish environmental quality standards yet. Therefore, in addition to enhancement of measures to conserve the sea environment, new measures are required to restore lost natural habitat as well as beautiful landscapes and to improve ocean access.

This paper is intended to provide the latest information on the following new measures and efforts of Ministry of the Environment, Japanese Government to enhance conservation of sea environment as well as to promote restoration of lost natural environment in enclosed sea areas: (1) Law for Promotion of Nature Restoration enacted in 2002, (2) Restoration Project for Tokyo Bay Area (3) new efforts to restore natural environment of Seto Inland Sea, Ariake Sea and Yatsushiro Sea, and (4) studies on technological development for restoration of enclosed sea environment.