

The environmental water management in the enclosed coastal seas in Japan

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Coastal sea areas were once habitats of various species and provided much benefits to people. However, we experienced serious water pollution issues through the period of the high economic growth in 1960s. Due to the concentration of both population and industry in coastal areas, large amounts of pollutants began to flow from the land into the seas, resulting in critical damages to the fishing industry and the environment due to “red tides” and “dead zones.”

To resolve those issues, we have taken various measures, such as improving effluent regulation and sewerage systems based on the Water Pollution Control Act and various laws other. Total Pollutant Load Control System (TPLCS) have been implemented in Tokyo Bay, Ise Bay, and the Seto Inland Sea, which are relatively extensive, densely populated and industrialized regions. As a result, the amounts of pollutants have been steadily decreasing, and water quality has also gradually improved. However, red tides and dead zones still occur in some areas. Meanwhile, from the viewpoint of the "Bountiful Sea," what has been pointed out is the importance to secure bio-diversity and bio-productivity.

In the 8th Basic Policy of the TPLCS, formulated in 2016, we have incorporated a new set of initiatives including the conservation and restoration of seaweed beds and tidal flats in addition to improvement of water quality. In the same year, the standard for Dissolved Oxygen concentration at the sea bottom was introduced as an environmental standard with the intent to conserve and restore the habitats for aquatic life.

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