

# **Japan/Tohoku - Only 4 percent of fishing boats in coastal town in useable condition after tsunami**

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## **1,000 Fishing Boats Repairable after March Disaster Damage**

Tokyo, May 16 (Jiji Press)—Some 1,000 small fishing boats damaged by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami in the Tohoku northeastern Japan region could be used again after minor repairs to holes or engine replacements, land ministry officials said Monday.

With support from the Nippon Foundation, Yamaha Motor Co. <7272>, Yanmar Co. and three other firms plan to set up a total of 10 temporary repair stations in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures, aiming to start work within this month.

About half of some 20,000 boats that were damaged are relatively small vessels, and 10 pct of them, or 1,000 boats, can be repaired easily, according to the ministry officials. The 1,000 fishing boats weigh less than one ton and are made of reinforced plastic.

These boats were used for farming seaweed and abalone or fishing in waters some 6 kilometers off the coast. The owners have asked for early repairs so that they can resume operations.

With many major ports and dockyards damaged by the disaster, the ministry is now looking for sites to be used as temporary repair stations for the five companies. The foundation plans to supply tents and generators for the facilities.

**Jiji Press**, May 16, 2011

<http://jen.jiji.com/jc/eng?g=eco&k=2011051600845>

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## **Only 4 percent of fishing boats in coastal town in useable condition after tsunami**

RIKUZENTAKATA, Iwate — Only around four percent of fishing boats in this town are useable

without needing repairs after the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, it has been learned.

According to the Hirota Bay fishermen's cooperative, out of 1,346 fishing boats in the area under its jurisdiction, only 53 remain in useable condition, while 287 will be ready for service after repairs. The remaining boats are either too damaged to be repaired or are missing.

Furthermore, while the national government has set aside funds in its first supplementary budget of the 2011 fiscal year to help fishermen replace their boats, the finances only apply to shared-use boats, such as ones offered by fishermen's cooperatives. Fishermen who lost their privately-owned boats are also seeking help from the government.

One 64-year-old fisherman said he lost all three of his privately-owned boats to the tsunami. He paid around 11 million yen in total to buy them.

"When things settle down I'd like to get started again raising seaweed because it brings in a steady profit," he says, but he doesn't know when he will be able to buy either the lighter ship he needs for aquaculture or the heavier ship he needs for fishing off coastal waters. He will receive around three million yen in fishing boat insurance, but when that money will come has not yet been decided.

The government set aside around 7.5 billion yen for "work to construct small-size fishing boats for shared use" in its first supplementary budget of the fiscal year. When fishermen's cooperatives build such boats, the national and prefectural government will each cover a third of the cost. Privately-owned boats, however, are not compensated because, the Fisheries Agency says, they "become a part of their owner's personal wealth."

However, the 64-year-old fisherman lost the boats he needs to make his living, and he only has enough savings to last about a year.

"A fisherman's boats are as important to him as his house. I understand that extending support to individuals is not easy, but I need my boats," he said.

According to the Fisheries Agency, nationwide around 21,000 boats worth around 140 billion yen were damaged by the March 11 disaster, but shared-used boats made up only a tiny fraction of that amount.

"After listening to the wants of (the members of) the various fishermen's cooperatives, we will consider a plan for the second supplementary budget," said a Fisheries Agency official.

**Mainichi** , May 16, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20110516p2a00m0na032000c.html>

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