

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** November 16, 2022

**Report Number:** JA2022-0107

**Report Name:** Japan Accepts NOAA Catch Document for Seafood  
Vulnerable to Illegal Fishing

**Country:** Japan

**Post:** Tokyo

**Report Category:** Fishery Products, FAIRS Subject Report

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**Report Highlights:**

Japan will require importers of U.S. products containing mackerel, Pacific saury, sardine, squid and cuttlefish to submit a newly approved Catch Certificate issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The requirement extends to all seafood originating from these species if the marine product is harvested after November 30, 2022.

## **General Information**

On December 4, 2020, Japan introduced the Adjustment for the Domestic Distribution of Specified Marine Animals and Plants Act (hereafter referred to as “the Act”, [available in Japanese](#)) to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing (for details, see [JA2021-0006](#)). The Act classified fishery resources at high risk of IUU fishing as Class I (domestically harvested) or Class II (imported). For additional details about the Act, please see [Fisheries Agency’s website](#).

On April 26, 2022, MAFF designated mackerel (*Scomber spp.*), Pacific saury (*Cololabis spp.*), sardine (*Sardinops spp.*), squid and cuttlefish as Class II marine resources (see [JA2022-0040](#)).

Following negotiations with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Japan’s Fisheries Agency accepted the Catch Certificate issued by NOAA’s Seafood Inspection Program (see Attachment: United States Attestation of Legal Catch for Products Caught by U.S.-Flagged Vessels).

Japan will require a Catch Certificate for all imports of Class II-designated species, including in processed food, caught in the United States after November 30, 2022. If the Class II catch occurred prior to December 1, 2022 then Japan Customs will accept documentation (e.g., transaction records, invoice) that prove the earlier catch date. Importers will be responsible for submitting the relevant documentation to Japan Customs.

Japan will only require the NOAA Catch Certificate for imports of Class II species caught and processed in the United States. In cases where the Class II marine resource was harvested in the United States and processed in a third country prior to export to Japan, Japan will require the NOAA Catch Certificate and a Processing Statement to be issued by the third country.

For general information about export certificates required by the Japanese government to export seafood and other food products from the United States to Japan, please consult the [Japan FAIRS Export Certificate Report](#).

## **Attachments:**

[United States Attestation of Legal Catch for Products Caught by U.S.-Flagged Vessels.pdf](#)