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## **Pre-war Japanese Fisheries in Micronesia —Focusing on Bonito and Tuna Fishing in the Northern Mariana Islands—**

**Wakako HIGUCHI**

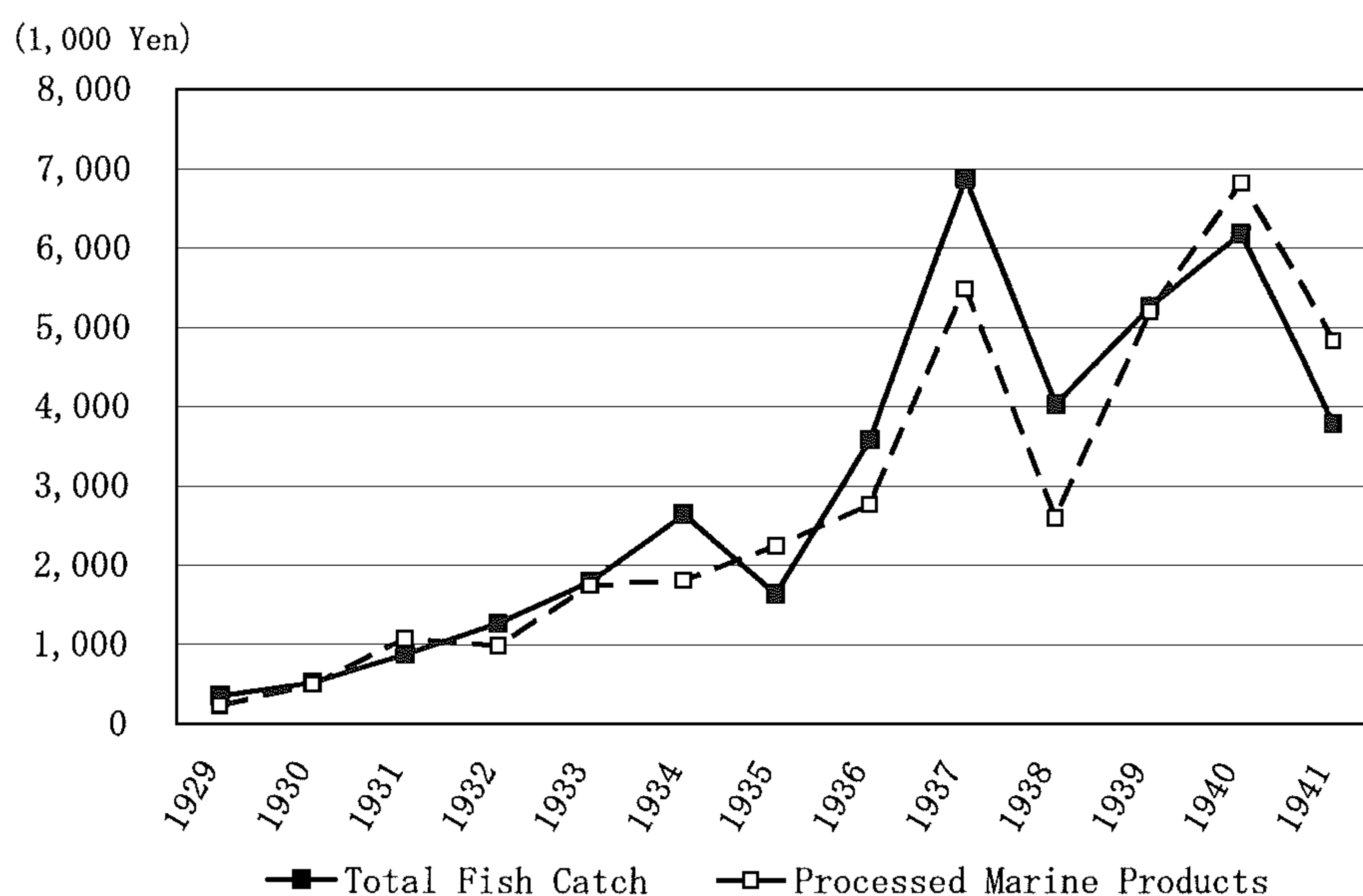
- I . Introduction
- II . Fisheries during the Experimentation Period (1922-1931)
- III . The Rise of Fishing Industries (1931-1941)
- IV . War and Fishery (1941-1944)
- V . Conclusion

**Key Word :** Micronesia, South Sea Islands, South Seas Bureau, Saipan District Branch, fishery, Northern Mariana Islands

### **I . Introduction**

As a participant in World War I, Japan took control of the German colonies in Micronesia in 1914, and called them the South Sea Islands — comprising Saipan, Palau, Yap, Chuuk (formerly Truk), Pohnpei (formerly Ponape) and the Marshalls. The Japanese Navy administered the islands until 1922. Later, the civilian-run South Seas Bureau governed the islands as a League of Nations mandate. By the mid-1930s, the navy again became politically and militarily involved in the administration of the islands. As seen in Graph 1 below, the fishing industry in Micronesia increased rapidly throughout the 1930s, becoming one of the major economic achievements in the islands during Japanese rule, along with the sugarcane, copra, and phosphate industries. The main marine product was bonito caught by pole-and-line. This report will review records of the bonito and tuna fisheries in the South Sea Islands during the South Seas Bureau administration. The review is divided into three periods: 1922 -1931, 1931-1941, 1941-1942. The period 1922-1931 can be termed the Experimentation Period. The next period, 1931-1941, saw the rise of fishery industries in the South Sea Islands. The last period covers fisheries during the early Pacific War, 1941-1942. There are no South Seas Bureau fishery statistics available between 1943 and 1944. Fishing efforts in the Saipan district will be examined separately, since the other areas within the South Sea Islands are not

pertinent to the present project. Japanese references compiled prior to 1951 do not specify each kind of bonito and tuna caught. They simply identify fish as either bonito (*katsuwo*) or tuna (*maguro*). According to Okamoto Hiroaki, National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries, Japan, when “bonito” pole-and-line fishery is discussed in Japanese references, the species taken included mainly *Katsuwonus pelamis* (skipjack, or *katsuwo*), also *Auxis thazard* (*hirasôda*) and *Auxis rochei* (frigate mackerel, or *marusôda*); and probably *Euthynnus affinis* (*suma*) and *Sarda orientalis* (bonito, or *hagatsuwo*). Japanese fishing grounds until then were limited to the western and central Pacific north of the equator.<sup>1</sup> In the same way, the term, “tuna” includes the following species: *Thunnus thynnus* (Pacific bluefin tuna), *T. alalunga* (albacore), *T. obesus* (bigeye tuna), and *T. albacares* (yellowfin tuna)



**Graph 1 Japanese Fishery in the South Sea Islands: Value per Year, 1929-1941**

Source: Nan'yôchô, *Daisankai, Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Tokyo: Nan'yôchô, 1935), p. 124-126; and Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yô Guntô yôran*, 1929-1942.

## II. Fisheries during the Experimentation Period (1922-1931)

With two fishery regulations — the Regulations for the Fishery Industry in the South Sea Islands (1916), and the Regulations for Encouragement of Fishery Industry in the South Sea Islands (1922), the South Seas Bureau's policy was always to promote and support fisheries in the islands. In 1925, the South Seas Bureau launched the

research ship *Hakuômaru* (10 tons), and began ocean research on bonito pole-and-line fisheries. Catches were poor in spite of the observation of large schools of fish. Though attempts at encouraging fisheries were made, they failed for a variety of reasons. The most serious problems throughout the pre-war years were difficulties in handling and marketing the fish — preservation, lack of local markets in the islands, a small Japanese population in the islands, and inadequate transportation to Japan.

**Bonito Fishing in the South Sea Islands:** It appears that the bonito fishery in the South Sea Islands first began in the 1920s. An individual by the name of Uehara Kamezô hired five Okinawan fishermen and an Okinawan-style large canoe on Saipan. In late 1925, he took *akadoro* (the general term for *Apogonidae*, *Amia*, *Apogon*, and *Chilodipterus*), small baitfish on the reef at Palau. They caught bonito — 50 to 100 bonito per day — two to three miles distant from the eastern channel and off the lighthouse at Palau.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Taiyô Suisan Kabushiki Kaisha (Taiyô Marine Products Company) on Saipan hired Okinawan fishermen and caught bonito, also in the Palau area. However, because of lack of bait and the strong trade winds, the catch was poor. Taiyô Suisan also took bonito using the South Seas Bureau's *Hakuômaru* for two years, but the poor catches resulted in the dissolution of the company. In Chuuk, Okinawan fisherman, Tamashiro Eishô, began a bonito fishery around 1918. Fishermen from Shizuoka also engaged in fishing. While other fishermen from Shizuoka failed, Tamashiro succeeded. The reason for Tamashiro's success was that his Okinawan employees were skillful at catching the bait needed for a good haul in the South Seas. Two things were required for successful fishing: quantity and quality of bait, and skilled Okinawan fishermen.<sup>3</sup> Bonito fishing was totally dependent on the right kind of bait. In Palau, there was abundant baitfish — *kibinago* (*Stolephorus delicatulus* [Bennett]), and especially *nan'yo katakuchi iwashi* (*Engraulis heterolobus* [Rueppel]). Although the latter was the best bait for bonito pole-and-line fishing, these small fish could not be caught in waters around Saipan. Instead, *akamura* (*Caessio chrysozoma* [Kuhl & Hass], *maaji* (*Trachinrus japonicus* [Temm. & Schl.]), *meaji* (*Trachurops crumenophthalma* [Bloch.]), *shimaaji* (*Caranx malabalicus* [Cuv. & Val.]), and another kind of horse mackerel (*C. leptolepis* [Cuv. & Val.]) were used on Saipan.<sup>4</sup> For catching bait, Okinawan divers were necessary. In the 1920s, bonito fisheries were gradually centered around the waters of Palau, and Saipan.<sup>5</sup> Okinawan fishermen, mainly from Itoman, Okinawa, were recruited to work in the South Sea

Islands. Out of a total of 1,336 workers engaged in the fisheries industry in 1932, 405 worked out of the Saipan district (30%), 425 in the Palau district (32%), 234 in the Chuuk district (18%), 178 in the Pohnpei district (13%), 83 in the Yap district (6.2%), and 11 in the Juluit district (0.8%).<sup>6</sup> Table 1 below shows the number of fishing permits issued by the South Seas Bureau. The permits for bonito fishing slowly increased in the Saipan district from the 1920s on, but the number of permits was still fewer than 8 by 1931. Table 2 below shows that there were 23 permitted vessels in the Saipan district, with 167 fishermen as of 1930. According to Table 3, the total value of the Saipan fish catch increased from 19,627 yen in 1929 to 70,296 yen in 1930, owing to the employment of four vessels of 20 tons and more. Also, as seen in Table 3, the bonito catch in Saipan district increased from 24,690 kg in 1929 to 258,004 kg in 1930, an increase of more than 10 times. Because of the increase of motorized vessels on Saipan, bonito catches rapidly increased to 564,258 kg by 1931, 23 times more than in 1929. These increases were catches by vessels from Yaizu, Japan, which organized as Nan'yô Suisan Kigyô Kumiai (South Seas Fishery Companies' Association, later Nankô Suisan) in 1931. In 1925, bonito catches made up 14% of the total fish catch in the South Sea Islands (33% in the Saipan district). This increased to 55% in 1929, 78% in 1930 and 73% in 1931 (53%, 87%, and 90% in the Saipan district respectively). As a result, bonito fishing became a major industry on Saipan, as well as in other parts of the South Sea Islands. And owing to the increase of bonito fish catches, dried bonito production also increased accordingly, as seen in Table 4.

**Tuna Fishing:** The South Seas Bureau Marine Laboratory reported in 1938 that the density of tuna schools in the South Sea Islands was the same as for bonito.<sup>7</sup> However, processing of tuna after catch was more difficult than bonito because tuna needed icing to keep it fresh. Further development of the tuna fisheries had to wait for construction of necessary refrigeration, ice storage, and processing facilities. As mentioned above, island conditions — such as distance from Japan's markets, and limited local consumption in the South Sea Islands — were also a detriment to growth of the tuna fishery. There were only three longliners for tuna fisheries, and these were only at Palau as late as 1935. Table 3 shows increasing tuna catches starting in 1930. Nan'yô Suisan's pole-and-line vessels probably took these tuna. During the Experimentation Period, Japanese bonito fisheries focused on the seas of Palau, Chuuk, and Saipan districts. Fishing grounds located near the outer islands and far

**Table 1 Fishing Permits Issued by the South Seas Bureau**  
(S: Saipan District = Saipan, Tinian, and Rota)

	Total	Fixed Net	Raising	Hawks-bill	<i>Tectus maximus</i> , Pearl Oyster	Bonito	Other Fish	Trepang	Coral	Whaling
1922	38 S: 9	---	2	1	3	1 S: 1	21 S: 7	9 S: ---	1 S: 1	---
1923	43 S: 10	1	2	1	3	2 S: 1	23 S: 7	10 S: 1	1 S: 1	---
1924	55 S: 15	1	2	1	3	3 S: 2	31 S: 10	13 S: 2	1 S: 1	---
1925	90 S: 31	2	2	5	6	4 S: 3	50 S: 24	19 S: 2	1 S: 1	1 S: 1
1926	86 S: 18	---	2	10	8	11 S: 6	35 S: 9	18 S: 1	1 S: 1	1 S: 1
1927	94 S: 21	1	2	9	7	12 S: 6	44 S: 11	17 S: 2	1 S: 1	1 S: 1
1928	94 S: 21	2	2	8	7	12 S: 5	48 S: 14	13 S: ---	1 S: 1	1 S: 1
1929	94 S: 23	2	2	6	6	17 S: 6	46 S: 15	13 S: ---	1 S: 1	1 S: 1
1930	87 S: 16	2	2	5	4	24 S: 8	37 S: 7	13 S: 1	---	---
1931	74 S: 9	1	2	4	1	36 S: 7	21 S: 1	9 S: 1	---	---
1932	103 S: 22	1	2	3	4	37 S: 10	47 S: 11	9 S: 1	---	---
1933	124 S: 47	1 S: ---	1 S: ---	5 S: ---	2 S: ---	51 S: 16	56 S: 30	8 S: 1	---	---

Source: Statistics 1922-1932: Nan'yôchô, *Dainikai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1934), pp. 348; and Statistics 1933: Nan'yôchô, *Daisankai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1935), pp. 126

**Table 2 Fishing Vessels and Fish Catch in the South Sea Islands**  
(S: Saipan District = Saipan, Tinian, and Rota)

Total Fishing Vessels		Fishing Vessels										Crew	Total Fish Catch (yen)*
		Non-Motorized Vessels					Motorized Vessels						
		Total	<5 tons	5-20 tons	>20 tons	Total	Steam Engine		Motor				
							<20 tons	>20 tons	<20 tons	>20 tons			
1928	1044 S: 35	1031 S: 32	1031 S: 32	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	13 S: 3	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	13 S: 3	--- S: ---	1781 S: 102	247933 S: 24,490	
1929	846 S: 34	825 S: 32	825 S: 32	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	21 S: 2	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	21 S: 2	--- S: ---	1665 S: 105	305849 S: 19,627	
1930	1007 S: 23	979 S: 19	975 S: 15	--- S: ---	4 S: 4	28 S: 4	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	23 S: ---	5 S: 4	1861 S: 167	488487 S: 70,296	
1931	1041 S: 40	980 S: 22	980 S: 22	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	61 S: 18	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	57 S: 18	4 S: ---	2599 S: 324	850490 S: 141,013	
1932	1116 S: 92	1053 S: 75	1053 S: 75	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	63 S: 17	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	62 S: 17	1 S: ---	2933 S: 498	1252121 S: 374,564	
1933	376 S: 90	314 S: 73	314 S: 73	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	62 S: 17	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	62 S: 17	--- S: ---	1882 S: 492	1790322 S: 406,964	

Source: 1928-1932 Statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Dainikai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1934), p. 349; and 1933 Statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Daisankai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1935), p. 126

\* Some of these statistics are not consistent with the grand total in Table 3.

**Table 3 Fish Catch in the South Sea Islands: Quantity and Value**  
(S: Saipan District = Saipan, Tinian, and Rota)

	Grand Total	Total Fish Catch	Bonito	Tuna	Mackerel	Horse Mackerel	Spanish Mackerel	Grey Mullet	Shark	Other Fish	Shellfish Others
1922		360,653 kg	9,713 kg	6,075 kg	13,399 kg	31,875 kg	---	10,500 kg	---	289,091 kg	
	113,596 yen	90,062 yen	6,770 yen	3,730 yen	3,573 yen	11,018 yen	---	4,200 yen	---	60,771 yen	23,534 yen
	S: 4,961 yen	S: 8,741 kg S: 4,961 yen	S: 2,363 kg S: 1,890 yen	S: 1,312 kg S: 875 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 1,275 kg S: 680 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: --- S: ---	S: --- S: ---	S: 3,791 kg S: 1,506 yen	S: ---
1923		304,740 kg	7,305 kg	6,652 kg	7,110 kg	19,695 kg	49 kg	6,473 kg	2,471 kg	254,985 kg	
	175,609 yen	78,525 yen	5,068 yen	3,673 yen	4,121 yen	8,364 yen	34 yen	2,627 yen	566 yen	54,072 yen	97,084 yen
	S: 10,202 yen	S: 19,680 kg S: 9,677 yen	S: 2,813 kg S: 2,250 yen	S: 1,252 kg S: 888 yen	S: 19 kg S: 14 yen	S: 1,856 kg S: 990 yen	S: 49 kg S: 34 yen	S: 285 kg S: 152 yen	S: 97 kg S: 26 yen	S: 13,309 kg S: 5,323 yen	S: 525 yen
1924		252,593 kg	17,741 kg	11,951 kg	11,944 kg	22,087 kg	668 kg	4,613 kg	6,356 kg	177,233 kg	
	115,178 yen	82,173 yen	11,580 yen	5,971 yen	9,545 yen	13,523 yen	363 yen	1,632 yen	1,969 yen	37,590 yen	33,005 yen
	S: 15,192 yen	S: 19,261 kg S: 10,447 yen	S: 9,097 kg S: 6,065 yen	S: 1,534 kg S: 1,024 yen	S: 45 kg S: 30 yen	S: 570 kg S: 304 yen	S: 349 kg S: 233 yen	S: 19 kg S: 15 yen	S: 1,519 kg S: 324 yen	S: 6,128 kg S: 2,452 yen	S: 4,745 yen
1925		251,445 kg	36,319 kg	12,229 kg	7,725 kg	27,697 kg	1,642 kg	2,606 kg	5,269 kg	157,958 kg	
	204,452 yen	93,453 yen	17,520 yen	4,557 yen	5,760 yen	17,462 yen	563 yen	1,187 yen	1,949 yen	44,455 yen	110,999 yen
	S: 18,740 yen	S: 43,061 kg S: 16,181 yen	S: 14,305 kg S: 6,348 yen	S: 1,403 kg S: 749 yen	S: 787 kg S: 210 yen	S: 2,610 kg S: 1,392 yen	S: 386 kg S: 228 yen	S: 127 kg S: 46 yen	S: 1,024 kg S: 273 yen	S: 21,919 kg S: 6,935 yen	S: 2,559 yen
1926		399,349 kg	92,284 kg	55,534 kg	31,043 kg	24,637 kg	1,425 kg	9,225 kg	3,941 kg	181,260 kg	
	254,372 yen	142,884 yen	42,282 yen	22,423 yen	15,813 yen	9,056 yen	406 yen	3,479 yen	653 yen	48,772 yen	111,488 yen
	S: 27,817 yen	S: 75,813 kg S: 27,022 yen	S: 44,842 kg S: 17,937 yen	S: 2,314 kg S: 1,235 yen	S: 690 kg S: 369 yen	S: 1,431 kg S: 665 yen	S: 94 kg S: 51 yen	S: 150 kg S: 80 yen	S: 2,347 kg S: 313 yen	S: 23,895 kg S: 6,372 yen	S: 795 yen
1927		380,467 kg	52,954 kg	54,266 kg	4,586 kg	61,601 kg	581 kg	16,796 kg	2,419 kg	187,264 kg	
	232,725 yen	136,378 yen	23,781 yen	24,327 yen	1,834 yen	25,224 yen	155 yen	6,410 yen	447 yen	54,200 yen	96,347 yen
	S: 19,417 yen	S: 51,416 kg S: 18,263 yen	S: 28,110 kg S: 10,778 yen	S: 2,906 kg S: 1,475 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 1,560 kg S: 599 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: --- S: ---	S: 1,800 kg S: 315 yen	S: 17,040 kg S: 5,096 yen	S: 1,154 yen
1928		583,995 kg	163,714 kg	164,182 kg	4,380 kg	40,192 kg	2,449 kg	13,264 kg	12,900 kg	182,914 kg	
	277,933 yen	166,045 yen	48,644 yen	38,629 yen	1,805 yen	16,223 yen	845 yen	4,990 yen	1,006 yen	53,903 yen	111,888 yen
	S: 24,490 yen	S: 57,855 kg S: 21,028 yen	S: 26,494 kg S: 10,219 yen	S: 1,260 kg S: 618 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 3,037 kg S: 1,201 yen	S: 615 kg S: 245 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 1,031 kg S: 124 yen	S: 25,418 kg S: 8,621 yen	S: 3,462 yen
1929		850,129 kg	469,511 kg	172,001 kg	9,784 kg	29,599 kg	926 kg	34,005 kg	2,186 kg	132,117 kg	
	342,659 yen	215,432 yen	126,937 yen	31,825 yen	3,910 yen	11,396 yen	241 yen	5,409 yen	337 yen	35,377 yen	127,227 yen
	S: 19,627 yen	S: 46,416 kg S: 16,832 yen	S: 24,690 kg S: 9,876 yen	S: 562 kg S: 300 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 2,100 kg S: 840 yen	S: 105 kg S: 50 yen	S: 337 kg S: 108 yen	S: 1,612 kg S: 215 yen	S: 17,010 kg S: 5,443 yen	S: 2,795 yen
1930		1,719,870 kg	1,335,720 kg	111,997 kg	2,993 kg	32,554 kg	1,796 kg	48,176 kg	5,445 kg	181,189 kg	
	510,767 yen	413,129 yen	327,861 yen	13,947 yen	714 yen	7,616 yen	243 yen	4,721 yen	760 yen	57,267 yen	97,638 yen
	S: 70,296 yen	S: 297,938 kg S: 68,430 yen	S: 258,004 kg S: 56,142 yen	S: 4,534 kg S: 2,493 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 244 kg S: 82 yen	S: 75 kg S: 36 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 4,871 kg S: 638 yen	S: 30,210 kg S: 9,089 yen	S: 1,866 yen
1931		3,873,968 kg	2,816,808 kg	211,910 kg	888 kg	75,970 kg	5,230 kg	269,610 kg	24,010 kg	469,542 kg	
	871,490 yen	787,888 yen	622,983 yen	29,898 yen	189 yen	16,983 yen	652 yen	16,052 yen	1,357 yen	99,774 yen	83,602 yen
	S: 141,013 yen	S: 628,255 kg S: 138,448 yen	S: 564,258 kg S: 122,022 yen	S: 16,734 kg S: 5,622 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 187 kg S: 60 yen	S: 907 kg S: 352 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 3,854 kg S: 503 yen	S: 42,315 kg S: 10,879 yen	S: 1,565 yen
1932		5,797,617 kg	4,861,263 kg	361,445 kg	341 kg	180,849 kg	1,583 kg	55,272 kg	6,055 kg	330,809 kg	
	1,266,866 yen	1,181,693 yen	944,261 yen	50,801 yen	137 yen	50,762 yen	627 yen	3,529 yen	626 yen	130,950 yen	85,173 yen
	S: 374,564 yen	S: 1,577,385 kg S: 372,021 yen	S: 1,308,725 kg S: 317,916 yen	S: 48,244 kg S: 15,438 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 86,671 kg S: 14,795 yen	S: 1,508 kg S: 603 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 6,055 kg S: 626 yen	S: 125,182 kg S: 22,643 yen	S: 2,543 yen
1933		7,725,086 kg	6,889,401 kg	374,796 kg	4,154 kg	62,413 kg	2,118 kg	29,957 kg	1,704 kg	360,543 kg	
	1,790,322 yen	1,708,886 yen	1,512,631 yen	59,811 yen	788 yen	20,771 yen	380 yen	6,713 yen	253 yen	107,539 yen	81,436 yen
	S: 406,964 yen	S: 1,902,707 kg S: 405,715 yen	S: 1,762,300 kg S: 370,184 yen	S: 9,584 kg S: 2,908 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 6,683 kg S: 2,704 yen	S: --- S: ---	S: 250 kg S: 50 yen	S: 1,704 kg S: 253 yen	S: 122,186 kg S: 29,616 yen	S: 1,249 yen

Source: 1922-1932 Statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Dainikai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1934), pp. 350-353; and 1933 Statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Daisankai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1935), pp. 124-125.

seas had been untouched. The South Seas Bureau wrote in 1935 that there was plenty of scope for the fishing industry in the South Sea Islands, if fishing methods were improved and fishing grounds expanded. However, it also added, “excluding of areas of poor condition such as Saipan.”<sup>8</sup> For increasing the catch of fish in the islands and because Saipan appeared more developed with many Okinawan immigrants, bonito fishery in the

Saipan district water was necessary and important. However, in the long term Saipan was not expected to yield as much fish as other islands along the equator would likely do.

**Table 4 Marine Products in the South Sea Islands: Quantity and Value**  
(S: Saipan District = Saipan, Tinian, and Rota)

	Total	Dried Bonitos	Dried Tuna	Trepang	Shark Fin	Canned Tuna
1922	19,957 yen	120 kg 160yen S: ---	--- --- S: ---	21,011 kg 19,797 yen S: ---	--- --- S: ---	--- --- S: ---
1923	20,353 yen S: 760 yen	--- --- S: ---	--- --- S: ---	23,149 kg 20,353 yen S: 1,200 kg S: 760 yen	--- --- S: --- S: ---	--- --- S: --- S: ---
1924	38,480 yen S: 19,290 yen	1,095 kg 3,404 yen S: 855 kg S: 2,508 yen	1,030 kg 3,744 yen S: --- S: ---	57,859 kg 30,969 yen S: 35,460 kg S: 16,419 yen	364 kg 363 yen S: 364 kg S: 363 yen	--- --- S: --- S: ---
1925	18,997 yen S: 4,240 yen	1,560 kg 4,116 yen S: 484 kg S: 1,292 yen	1,061 kg 2,264 yen S: --- S: ---	25,196 kg 12,072 yen S: 2,966 kg S: 2,798 yen	75 kg 150 yen S: 75 kg S: 150 yen	30 kg 15 yen S: --- S: ---
1926	77,414 yen S: 9,205 yen	9,543 kg 28,540 yen S: 3,293 kg S: 8,780 yen	16,054 kg 38,541 yen S: 19 kg S: 50 yen	14,861 kg 9,958 yen S: --- S: ---	188 kg 375 yen S: 188 kg S: 375 yen	--- --- S: --- S: ---
1927	40,940 yen S: 7,058 yen	4,751 kg 12,445 yen S: 1,976 kg S: 5,270 yen	6,169 kg 13,160 yen S: --- S: ---	9,326 kg 11,437 yen S: 1,965 kg S: 1,598 yen	128 kg 190 yen S: 128 kg S: 190 yen	--- --- S: --- S: ---
1928	111,424 yen S: 19,808 yen	18,893 kg 37,805 yen S: 2,235 kg S: 5,960 yen	28,219 kg 45,160 yen S: --- S: ---	35,520 kg 27,453 yen S: 18,210 kg S: 13,688 yen	289 kg 415 yen S: 75 kg S: 160 yen	--- --- S: --- S: ---
1929	220,209 yen S: 12,348 yen	104,310 kg 138,122 yen S: 2,580 kg S: 6,885 yen	33,735 kg 48,629 yen S: --- S: ---	48,480 kg 27,399 yen S: 9,885 kg S: 5,273 yen	203 kg 190 yen S: 203 kg S: 190 yen	--- --- S: --- S: ---
1930	484,547 yen S: 23,730 yen	232,825 kg 434,743 yen S: 13,654 kg S: 21,425 yen	22,954 kg 28,815 yen S: 113 kg S: 255 yen	31,271 kg 16,928 yen S: 1,140 kg S: 1,520 yen	668 kg 530 yen S: 668 kg S: 530 yen	--- --- S: --- S: ---
1931	1,064,341 yen S: 97,466 yen	842,210 kg 997,840 yen S: 68,044 kg S: 94,236 yen	42,665 kg 44,388 yen S: 755 kg S: 855 yen	14,213 kg 6,829 yen S: 2,760 kg S: 2,106 yen	794 kg 541 yen S: 386 kg S: 269 yen	--- --- S: --- S: ---
1932	981,634 yen S: 214,213 yen	972,875 kg 917,989 yen S: 192,172 kg S: 210,072yen	73,746 kg 55,985 yen S: 3,152 kg S: 3,278yen	3,412 kg 2,266 yen S: 1,087 kg S: 725 yen	206 kg 138 yen S: 206 kg S: 138 yen	--- --- S: --- S: ---
1933	1,747,595 yen S: 383,173 yen	1,305,290 kg 1,662,066 yen S: 297,654 kg S: 379,650 yen	68,626 kg 76,410 yen S: 4,100 kg S: 3,493 yen	5,216 kg 2,623 yen S: --- S: ---	60 kg 30 yen S: 60 kg S: 30 yen	? 6,466 yen S: --- S: ---

Source: 1922-1932 Statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Dainikai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1934), pp.354-355; and 1933 Statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Daisankai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1935), p. 126.



### Ⅲ. The Rise of Fishing Industries (1931-1941)

As seen in Table 4, the value of marine products in the South Sea Islands rapidly increased after 1930 — 2.2 times, 4.8 times, and 7.9 times in 1930, 1931, and 1933 respectively, compared with 1929. The industry that once concentrated on tortoise and other shells changed its focus and half the total catch was a single product — bonito. Hara Kô's bonito fishing efforts had success after his experience in 1927 and 1929 in the South Sea Islands. Hara, from Makurazaki, Kagoshima, showed that bonito fishing in the South Sea Islands could be highly profitable, and his efforts attracted other bonito fishermen from Japan. In 1931 Anbara Ichizô organized Nan'yô Suisan Kigyô Kuniai, a business association for bonito and tuna industries in Yaizu, Shizuoka. Nan'yô Suisan established a fishing base at Malakal, Palau, opened a Saipan office, and began bonito fishing. The company also purchased bonito caught by Okinawan fishermen. Seeking more investment, Anbara asked Nan'yô Kôhatsu President Matsue Haruji for financial support. Originally a sugar growing and processing company, Nan'yô Kôhatsu established a fishery department within the company to support Nan'yô Suisan's fishing activities. In January 1935, Anbara and Matsue established the Nankô Suisan Kabushiki Kaisha or Nankô Marine Production Company, capitalized with 1.2 million yen. The president was Matsue, and the vice President was Anbara, with headquarters at Palau. An office on Saipan was opened as well. Photo 1 shows Nankô Suisan's fishermen doing pole-and-line bonito fishing.

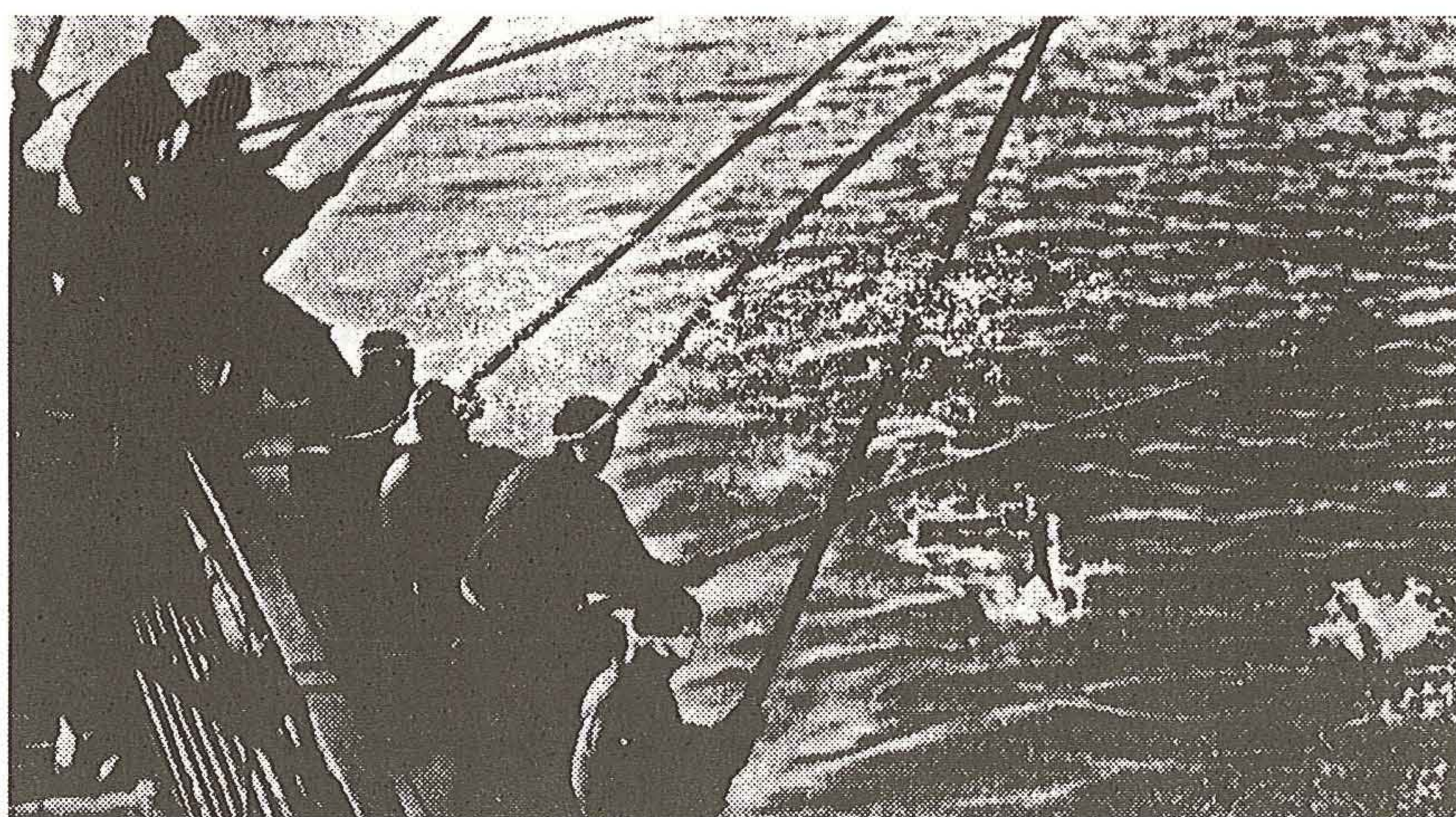


Photo 1 Nankô Suisan, *Nankô Suisan Kabushiki Kaisha gaiyô* (October 1942), p. 5.



By 1938, there were two more bonito fishery and canning companies —Kimi Suisan at Palau and Hamaichi Shôji at Palau and Chuuk—in addition to Nankô Suisan. Nankô Suisan mainly employed fishermen from Okinawa and Yaizu, and it was the only bonito fishery and processing company on Saipan. By 1942, Nankô Suisan was responsible for 90% of bonito caught in the South Sea Islands.<sup>9</sup> As to the background of the monopoly, Nankô Suisan's business was strongly supported by the South Seas Bureau, the Overseas Affairs Ministry (an upper body of the South Seas Bureau), and the Japanese Navy, which was responsible for the South Sea Islands ocean area.

**The South Sea Islands Ten-Year Development Plans (1935):** With Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1935, the Overseas Affairs Ministry of the Japanese government prepared a comprehensive ten-year development plan for the islands. The plan designated the islands as part of Japan's outer defence system, and as an advanced base for future planned expansion to the south. The development plan called for construction of infrastructure, particularly at Saipan and Palau, which included harbour facilities, roads, communication facilities, water supply systems to vessels, and housing—all of which were also necessary for the improvement of fisheries. The plan also budgeted 4.4 million yen for marine research and for the fishing industries (water service for fishing vessels, ice manufacture, cold storage, oil storage, shipbuilding, ironworks, and repair facilities at fishing ports). The plan also promoted excursions into new fishing grounds at New Guinea, and in the Arafra, Banda, Celebes, Sulu, and Flores Seas. The advance base for all of this expansion was designated the South Sea Islands.

**Fisheries as National Policy:** Because of Japan's worsening international reputation, and isolation in the early 1930s, Japanese fishing vessels were shut out from the major southern fishing grounds near the Dutch East Indies.<sup>10</sup> In order to achieve some sort of breakthrough, the government designed the "Fundamentals of National Policy" in August 1936. The policy called for expansion into new fishing grounds south of the South Sea Islands. Accordingly, the South Seas Bureau established the Marine Laboratory at Palau in 1937, for research on fishing, fish processing, and fishing-techniques. Marine resources research focused on the bonito fishery grounds in the Western and Central Caroline Islands. Also in 1937, Nan'yô Takushoku Kabushiki Kaisha (South Seas Colonization Company) was established to carry out

government policy under the guidance of the Overseas Affairs Ministry, and Nankô Suisan was purchased and operated by this semi-governmental company. With the financial assistance of Nan'yô Takushoku, Nankô Suisan increased its capital from 2.5 million yen in 1937 to 5.0 million yen in 1939, for the purchase of equipment for the tuna industry, expansion of existing facilities, and construction of a tuna-canning factory at Palau. The company's capital was again increased to 10 million yen in 1941, to build a ship for longline fishing only, and a refrigerator ship as well as to install ice manufacture, freezing, and cold storage facilities. In addition to bonito fisheries, Nankô Suisan began tuna fisheries. This entailed purchase of tuna and operation of transportation facilities and related businesses (shipbuilding, ironworks, and finance) — all with government assistance.

**Bonito Fisheries:** The bonito catch in the Saipan district was always ranked third behind Palau and Chuuk. Saipan had two characteristic disadvantages. One was the lack of bait. As mentioned above, Saipan lacked baitfish, *nan'yô katakushi iwashi* (*Engraulis heterolobus* [Rueppel]). Instead, young fish, *akamuro* (*Caecionidae*), were used at Saipan. Every September, schools of *akamuro* approached the west coast of Saipan. For one month while *akamuro* stayed at depths of 15 to 25 meters in rocky coral areas, vessels stopped fishing for bonito. Okinawan divers searched the bait area and used stretch nets called *chûsô shikiami* (25 meters height, and 12 meters width) amongst the rocks in 15 meters depths. The *akamuro* were chased by the divers into the nets. The live *akamuro*, 10-centimeters long, were kept alive in submerged fishnets (*katsusuami*) for 30 to 40 days. Only skilled Okinawan divers could catch *akamuro* using this method. Another disadvantage was that the bonito-fishing season in waters around the Saipan district was shorter than at Palau and Chuuk, because of Saipan's higher latitude. In comparison to the open ocean fishing (*yûri gyojô*) in the waters around Palau, Saipan's fishing grounds were close to the reef that rose steeply from the ocean bottom and neighboring areas (*sone gyojô*) where bonito were always found though the number was not large. Therefore, the catches at Saipan were not big takes. During the off-season around Saipan, pole-and-line fishing was conducted north of Anatahan, especially in the area of Maug Island. However, the conditions in the waters around Maug Island — *sone gyojô* — were the same as at Saipan so that the catch was limited. Fishing vessels also found schools of migratory fish and fish congregating near drift timbers and caught them.<sup>11</sup> As of 1935, Nankô Suisan's

Saipan office (5,600 square meters) in Garapan owned four bonito vessels (17 tons each) and contracted with another four vessels for purchase of fish, for a total of eight vessels. All bonito caught were transported in lighters from the fishing vessels at the port and unloaded at the wooden pier that jutted out 40 meters from the beach. All fish were then taken to the factory by handcart. Processing capacity at the factory was 20 tons/day. Ice manufacturing was 5 tons/day. In 1936, a new factory was built alongside a quay at Chikkô (Tanapag), north of Garapan. It included an ice manufacturing facility (15 tons/day), refrigeration facility (5 tons/day), cold storage facility (5 tons/day), and ice warehouse (400 tons). The Saipan factories processed fresh bonito into toasted, dried, and shaved dried bonito. Ironwork for repairing fishing vessels was done at the Nan'yô Kôhatsu's factory. For processing bonitos caught by three fishing vessels operating in the outer ocean north of Saipan, a branch factory was built at Pagan Island. The factory was able to cut and process bonito into rough dried bonito (*arabushi*) before sending it to the Saipan factory for completion of the process. Table 5 shows the bonito fishery catches at Saipan. After Nan'yô Suisan began business on Saipan, the catches reached 3,697,298 kg in 1937, up from the 564,258 kg caught in 1931 — a 6.6 times increase in six years. The 1937 catch was the peak of that four-year fishing cycle. The catch at Saipan also more than doubled in between 1936 and 1937. After that, the catch decreased for two years, but reached 3,379,048 kg in 1940. A Nankô Suisan publication, *Nan'kô Suisan no ashiato* (Nan'kô Suisan's Footmark), reported that 1941 was the peak of the next four-year bonito cycle. Again, according to the publication, the total value of the bonito catch in 1941 was worth 6,159,000 yen, and dried bonito was worth 6,816,000 yen.<sup>12</sup> However, corroborating data were not found in the South Seas Bureau's handbook. Therefore, in Table 5 note \*\*\*, the claim that 1941 was a bumper year cannot be verified. Again, referring to Table 5, the total number of bonito vessels in 1937 and 1938 was 145. Of these, Saipan had 36 in 1937 (25% of the total), and 34 in 1938 (23% of the total). Weight of Saipan's bonito catch was 11% of the total in 1937, and 17% in 1938. Catch per vessel at Saipan was less than the average catch in the South Sea Islands because of poor fishing grounds around Saipan, as mentioned before. More than 90% of the bonito caught was processed into dried bonito, called "*nankô bushi*" (Nankô's dried bonitos). Of that total, Nankô Suisan's factories produced nearly 80% of the total dried bonito. After processing, all dried bonito was shipped to Japan, amounting to about 60% of the total consumption of dried bonito in Japan in 1937.<sup>13</sup> In Photo 2,

**Table 5 Bonito Catches and Dried Bonito Production in the South Sea Islands**  
**(S: Saipan District = Saipan, Tinian, and Rota)**

	Permits of Bonito Fishery	Bonito Catches (kg)	Bonito Catches (yen)	Dried Bonito (kg)	Dried Bonito (yen)		Permits of Bonito Fishery	Bonito Catches (kg)	Bonito Catches (yen)	Dried Bonito (kg)	Dried Bonito (yen)
1922	1 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 1	9,713 kg S: 2,363 kg	6,770 yen S: 1,890 yen	120 kg S: ---	160 yen S: ---	1933	51 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 16	6,889,401 kg S: 1,762,300 kg	1,512,631 yen S: 370,184 yen	1,305,290 kg S: 297,654 kg	1,662,066 yen S: 379,650 yen
1923	2 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 1	7,305 kg S: 2,813 kg	5,068 yen S: 2,250 yen	--- S: ---	--- S: ---	1934	76 S: 23	8,956,411 kg S: 2,516,000 kg	2,205,050 yen S: 503,200 yen	1,594,170 kg S: 419,512 kg	1,714,590 yen S: 470,469 yen
1924	3 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 2	17,741 kg S: 9,097 kg	11,580 yen S: 6,065 yen	1,095 kg S: 855 kg	3,404 yen S: 2,508 yen	1935	67 S: 17	11,722,284 kg S: 1,785,977 kg	1,317,919 yen S: 420,983 yen	2,097,388 kg S: 264,133 kg	2,127,424 yen S: 360,593 yen
1925	4 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 3	36,319 kg S: 14,805 kg	17,520 yen S: 6,348 yen	1,560 kg S: 484 kg	4,116 yen S: 1,292 yen	1936	87 S: 19	14,265,772 kg S: 1,696,006 kg	1,468,996 yen S: 220,481 yen	2,422,856 kg S: 425,072 kg	2,671,357 yen S: 581,628 yen
1926	11 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 6	92,284 kg S: 44,842 kg	42,282 yen S: 17,937 yen	9,548 kg S: 3,293 kg	28,540 yen S: 8,780 yen	1937	145 S: 36	34,060,809 kg S: 3,697,298 kg	2,833,905 yen S: 382,210 yen	5,812,745 kg S: 626,176 kg	5,081,774 yen S: 601,738 yen
1927	12 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 6	52,954 kg S: 28,110 kg	23,781 yen S: 10,778 yen	4,751 kg S: 1,976 kg	12,445 yen S: 5,270 yen	1938	145 S: 34	14,958,592 kg S: 2,592,029 kg	1,356,969 yen S: 315,411 yen	2,501,222 kg S: 451,883 kg	2,429,521 yen S: 426,657 yen
1928	12 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 5	163,714 kg S: 26,494 kg	48,644 yen S: 10,219 yen	18,893 kg S: 2,235 kg	37,805 yen S: 5,960 yen	1939	135 S: 25	19,019,188 kg S: 1,297,354 kg	2,462,707 yen S: 358,996 yen	3,229,686 kg S: --- kg	4,963,052 yen S: --- yen
1929	17 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 6	469,511 kg S: 24,690 kg	126,937 yen S: 9,876 yen	104,310 kg S: 2,580 kg	138,122 yen S: 6,885 yen	1940	133 S: 26	18,233,967 kg S: 3,379,048 kg	4,430,385 yen*** S: 721,560 yen	2,973,270 kg S: 561,122 kg	5,193,000 yen S: 1,190,146 yen
1930	24 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 8	1,335,720 kg S: 258,004 kg	327,861 yen S: 56,142 yen	282,825 kg S: 13,654 kg	434,743 yen S: 21,425 yen	1941*	129 S: 27	11,545,053 kg S: 1,297,354 kg	2,918,934 yen*** S: 358,996 yen	1,333,840 kg S: 182,152 kg	4,250,434 yen*** S: 491,227 yen
1931	36 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 7	2,816,808 kg S: 564,258 kg	622,983 yen S: 122,022 yen	842,210 kg S: 68,044 kg	997,840 yen S: 94,236 yen	1942	113 S: ---	14,872,781 kg** S: ---	--- S: ---	1,905,130 kg** S: ---	5,307,063 yen** S: ---
1932	37 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 10	4,861,263 kg S: 1,309,725 kg	944,261 yen S: 317,916 yen	972,875 kg S: 192,172 kg	917,989 yen S: 210,072 yen						

Sources: 1922-1932 statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Dainikai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1934), pp. 348-355; 1933 statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Daisankai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1935), p. 125-126.

1934-1942 statistics for bonito fishery permits: Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yô Guntô yôran*, 1934-1942.

1934-1937 statistics for fisheries except for bonito fishery permits: Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yôchô Suisan*

*Shinkenjô yôran* (Palau: Nan'yôchô Suisan Shikenjô, 1938), pp. 42-58.

1938, 1940, and 1941 statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yô Guntô yôran*, 1939, 1941, and 1942.

1939 and 1942 statistics: Ôkurashô Kanrikyoku, *Nihonjin no kaigai katsudô ni kansuru rekishiteki chôsa: Tsûkan dai nijûissatsu Nan'yô Guntô hen daini bunsatsu: Dainibu Nan'yô Guntô keizai sangyô*, 1949, p. 86-87, and pp. 147-148.

\* All statistics for bonito fishery for 1941 and 1942, printed in 1942 and 1943 editions of *Nan'yô Guntô yôran*, respectively, are identical. The statistics for 1941 are used in this table.

\*\* This statistics were cited from the text of Ôkurashô Kanrikyoku publication.

\*\*\* According to Kawakami *Zenkurô's Nankô Suisan no ashiato*, the bonito catch in 1940 was 5,255,000 yen in value; 6,159,000 yen in 1941; and the value of dried bonito in 1941 was 6,816,000 yen.

Nankô Suisan employees pack dried bonito in wooden boxes.

In contrast, the Japanese residents in the islands consumed fresh fish such as horse mackerel, Spanish mackerel, striped mullet and other reef fish (*meyasu*, *sunakuchi*,



*kamasu*, and *itoyori*). The fishing industry's exemption from fuel taxation was abolished in 1937 because of the costly Japan-China War. The price of fuel suddenly rose in Japan and influenced fishery operations in the South Sea Islands. In October 1937, the South Seas Bureau promulgated "Regulations on Financial Assistance to Fishery Management" that subsidized 30% to 50% of the cost of the fisheries. One of the reasons for this large government assistance was the importance of dried bonito to support the food requirements of the Japanese military in China and at home.



Photo 2 Nankô Suisan, *Nankô Suisan Kabushiki Kaisha gaiyô* (October 1942), p. 6.

**Tuna Fisheries:** Until the mid-1930s, Japan's tuna fisheries were secondary and seasonal operations. Tuna was occasionally caught during pole-and-line bonito fishing. After some home-based longliners began catching tuna near the Western Caroline Islands in 1938, tuna fishing became a year-round industry in the South Sea Islands. Some records show that in 1938, *Daini Shinkômaru* (118 tons), belonging to Tôhoku Shinkôsha, was loaded to capacity with *Pacific* bluefin tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*) and yellowfin, 200 nautical miles east of the Mariana Islands and returned to Japan. In autumn of the same year, *Fukujumaru* (80 tons), from Wakayama, operated tuna fisheries off Saipan. *Hideyoshimaru* (99 tons) from Hiyori Fushimaru port, Wakayama, returned to its homeport in Japan with a full load of tuna after 60-70 days of operation in the "South Seas." Such good catches attracted tuna fishermen



from all over Japan. In 1938, the South Seas Bureau Marine Laboratory found a new yellowfin fishing ground near the north equatorial current. It was estimated that the value of catches in these waters would be close to 20 million yen. By 1939, the number of Japanese longliners fishing the grounds south of 20-degree north latitude was 76.<sup>14</sup> Although Japan had been exporting albacore to the U.S., it suddenly became more difficult after 1938, because the U.S. imposed custom duties of 30% to 45% and then 75%.<sup>15</sup> Partly as a result of these increases, the Japanese long-liners, which were used for taking albacore in Japan's eastern fishing ground, changed their grounds to the south, aiming at yellowfin. Through this effort, the Japanese fisheries expanded from Saipan, south to New Guinea, New Britain, and the Solomon Islands. As mentioned above, one of the greatest problems these vessels faced was how to keep tuna fresh during the long return voyage to Japan. Wooden ships of less than 100 tons did not have an ice machine. As a result, Saipan became an important supply base because Nankô Suisan had ice making machines and cold storage there. In base because Nankô Suisan had ice making machines and cold storage there. In addition, fresh water and food were located at Saipan. Table 6 shows tuna catches in the South Sea Islands. In 1939, 40 longliners (120 tons) from Japan, mainly from Misaki, Kanagawa, and 10 from the South Sea Islands, caught 41,400,000 kg. However, because of their small size and low numbers, ships from the South Sea Islands caught only 1.3% (551,250 kg) of total tuna catch for 1939.<sup>16</sup> Nankô Suisan became involved in tuna fisheries after contracting with longliners in Fukushima in November 1939, and in Miyagi in 1940. It purchased bait — *nakaba iwashi* (one of the sardines) — in Misaki, and caught yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna in the seas near Palau. The company began a full-scale tuna fishery in 1941, once it was determined that the catch would remain fresh after long-distance transportation. Yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna were the two major tuna fisheries in the South Sea Islands, but total catch of the former was considerably larger than the latter. The longliners also caught striped marlin, bonito and shark. Flying fish (*tobiowo*), and brown-striped mackerel scad (*muroaji*) were the main baitfish on Saipan, while brown-striped mackerel scad (*muroaji*) and sardine (*iwashi*) were used in the waters around Palau. According to Table 6, tuna caught by longliners in the South Sea Islands increased from 858,793 kg in 1940, to 1,023,093 kg in 1941, after Nankô Suinsa began its tuna fishery.

However, the catch in waters around the Saipan district decreased rapidly from 84,506 kg to 33,699 kg for unknown reasons. In September 1941, a tuna-canning

**Table 6 Tuna Catches and Dried Tuna Production in the South Sea Islands**  
(S: Saipan District = Saipan, Tinian, and Rota)

	Permits of Tuna	Tuna Catches (kg)	Tuna Catches (yen)	Dried Tuna (kg)	Dried Tuna (yen)		Permits of Tuna	Tuna Catches (kg)	Tuna Catches (yen)	Dried Tuna (kg)	Dried Tuna (yen)
1922	1 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 1	6,075 kg S: 1,312 kg	3,730 yen S: 875 yen	---	---	1933	51 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 16	374,796 kg S: 9,584 kg	59,811 yen S: 2,908 yen	68,626 kg S: 4,100 yen	76,410 yen S: 3,493 yen
1923	2 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 1	6,652 kg S: 1,252 kg	3,673 yen S: 888 yen	---	---	1934		427,041 kg S: 27,289 kg	116,449 yen S: 9,366 yen	93,329 kg S: 3,160 kg	85,237 yen S: 2,293 yen
1924	3 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 2	11,951 kg S: 1,534 kg	5,971 yen S: 1,024 yen	1,030 kg S: ---	3,744 yen S: ---	1935	13 S: 10	480,014 kg S: 42,915 kg	105,501 yen S: 15,530	102,404 kg S: 6,264 kg	99,485 yen S: 5,172 yen
1925	4 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 3	12,229 kg S: 1,403 kg	4,557 yen S: 749 yen	1,061 kg S: ---	2,264 yen S: ---	1936		587,116 kg S: 151,019	110,160 yen S: 52,857	71,972 kg S: ---	75,172 yen S: ---
1926	11 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 6	55,534 kg S: 2,314 kg	22,423 yen S: 1,235 yen	16,054 kg S: 19 kg	38,541 yen S: 50 yen	1937	7 S: 3	681,176 kg S: 88,876 kg	90,828 yen S: 27,121	384,011 kg S: ---	381,377 yen S: ---
1927	12 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 6	54,266 kg S: 2,906 kg	24,327 yen S: 1,475 yen	6,169 kg S: ---	13,160 yen S: ---	1938	8 S: 2	270,899 kg S: 33,920 kg	42,934 yen S: 11,786	49,127 kg S: 675 kg	41,634 yen S: 608 yen
1928	12 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 5	164,182 kg S: 1,260 kg	38,629 yen S: 618 yen	28,219 kg S: ---	45,160 yen S: ---	1939	Japan: 40 Ships (120 tons), South Sea Islands: 10 Ships (20 tons)*	Japan & SSI: 41,400,000 kg* SSI: 551,250 kg* SSI: 361,530 kg**	Japan & SSI: 16,560,000 yen* SSI: 98,500 yen* SSI: 93,043 yen**	SSI: 54,831 kg**	SSI: 66,777 yen**
1929	17 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 6	172,001 kg S: 562 kg	31,825 yen S: 300 yen	33,735 kg S: ---	48,629 yen S: ---						
1930	24 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 8	111,997 kg S: 4,534 kg	13,947 yen S: 2,493 yen	22,954 kg S: 113 kg	28,815 yen S: 255 yen	1940	23 S: 2	Japan & SSI: 64,875,000 kg* SSI: 858,793 kg S: 84,506	Japan & SSI: 25,950,000 yen* SSI: 306,126 yen S: 34,787	85,496 kg S: 101 kg	119,140 yen S: 284 yen
1931	36 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 7	211,910 kg S: 16,734 kg	29,898 yen S: 5,622 yen	42,665 kg S: 755 kg	44,388 yen S: 855 yen						
1932	37 (Bonito & Tuna) S: 10	361,445 kg S: 48,244 kg	50,801 yen S: 15,438	73,746 kg S: 3,152 kg	55,985 yen S: 3,278 yen	1941** *	21 S: 2	1,023,093 kg S: 33,669 kg	315,705 yen S: 19,913	66,719 kg S: ---	129,882 yen S: ---

SSI: South Sea Islands

Sources: 1922-1932 statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Dainikai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1934), pp. 348-355;

1933 statistics: Nan'yôchô, *Daisankai*, *Nan'yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan'yôchô, 1935), p. 125-126.

1934-1942 statistics for tuna fishery permits: Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yô Guntô yôran*, 1934-1942.

1934-1937 statistics for fisheries except for tuna fishery permits: Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yôchô Suisan*

*Shinkenjô yôran* (Palau: Nan'yôchô Suisan Shikenjô, 1938), pp. 42-58.

1938, 1940, and 1941 statistics: Nanyôchô, *Nan'yô Guntô yôran*, 1938, 1940, and 1941.

\*1939 statistics: "Takumu daijin seigi Nanyôchô Suisan Shikenjô kansei chû kaisei ni kansuru ken" October 1, 1940.

\*\*1939 statistics: Ôkurashô Kanrikyoku, *Nihonjin no kaigai katsudô ni kansuru rekishiteki chôsa: Tsûkan dai nijûissatsu Nanyô Guntô hen daini bunsatsu: Dainibu Nan'yô Guntô keizai sangyô*, 1949, p. 86-87, and pp. 147-148.

\* 1940 statistics: "Takumu daijin seigi Nanyôchô Suisan Shikenjô kansei chû kaisei ni kansuru ken" October 1, 1940.

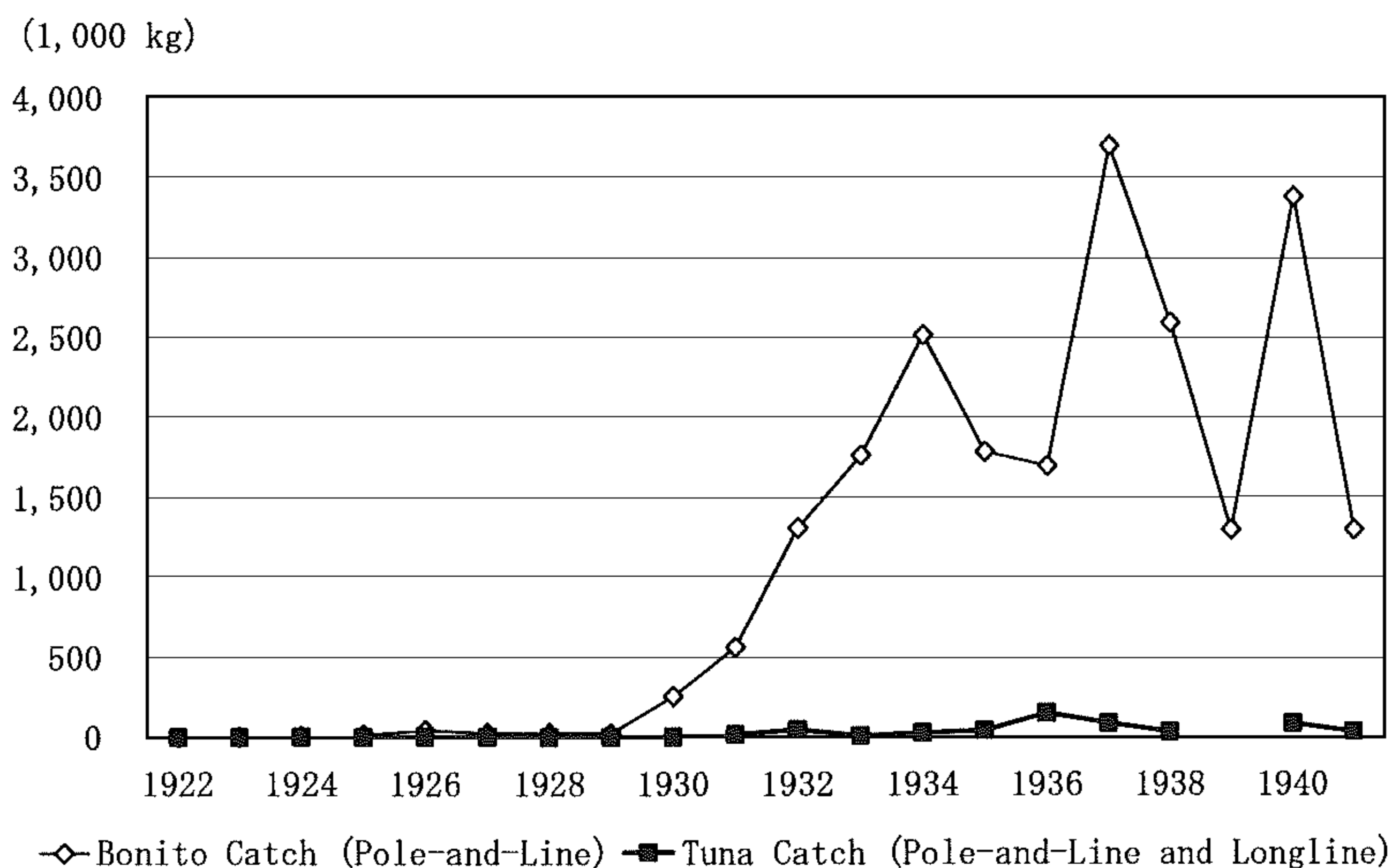
\*\*\* All statistics for tuna fishery for 1941 and 1942, printed in 1942 and 1943 editions of *Nan'yô Guntô yôran*, respectively, are identical. The statistics for 1941 are used in this table.

factory was opened on Malakal Island, Palau, after the catch of yellowfin started looking up. In December 1940, cans of tuna in oil were exported to New York from Palau, via Java in order to get around the high tariff imposed on Japanese marine products. Mitsubishi Shoji, a major trading firm in Japan, also exported 10,000 cases



of canned tuna to Germany during this same period. Frozen fillet of yellowfin and bigeye tuna were also exported to the Chinese cities of Tientsin and Beijing. There are no details on tuna caught in waters around Saipan during this time period.

Graph 2 presents data on bonito and tuna catches in the Saipan district during 1922-1941. Note that the marked increase in bonito in the early 1930s is not matched by a similar increase in tuna. In all years, the bonito catch greatly exceeded the tuna catch. Furthermore, bonito was cyclical in that every three or four years the catches were huge, viz, in 1943, 1935, and 1939.

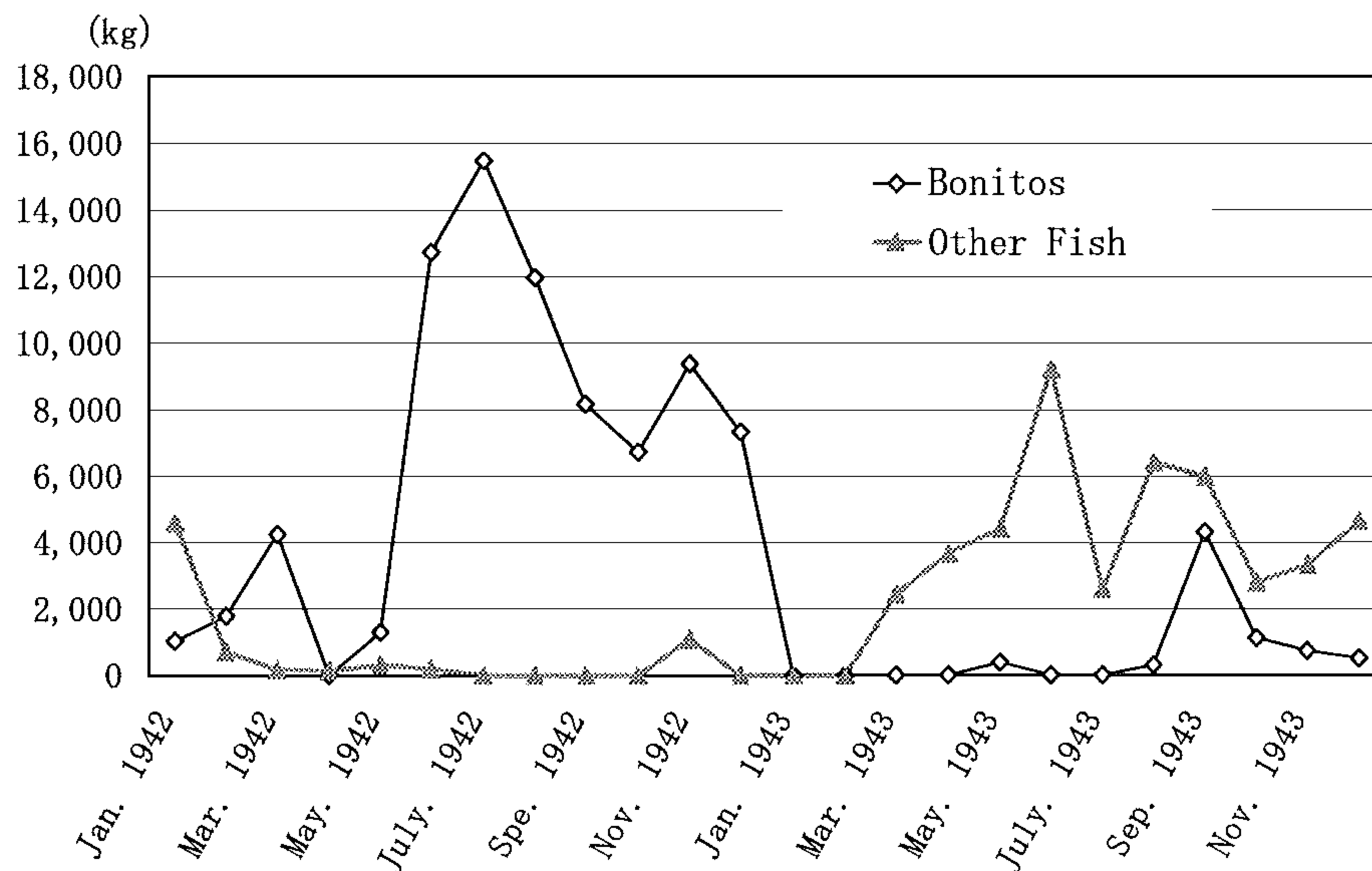


**Graph 2 Weight of Bonito and Tuna Catches in Saipan District, 1922-1941**

#### IV. War and Fishery (1941-1944)

Because of the long-term Japan-China War that began in 1937, the Japanese government tightened material controls starting in late 1939. This caused a shortage of fuel and supplies for some fisheries. In particular, the shortage of fiber nets and line was serious. After the Pacific War broke out in December 1941, fishing vessels, along with their crews, were gradually requisitioned for military service. As of 1942, Nankô Suisan had offices in Tokyo, Saipan, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Jaluit, Dalian (China), Yaizu, and Okinawa. There were also offices at Guam, Ambon, Rabaul, Kavieng (New Ireland), and Manila — areas that Japanese forces had taken. However,

because of the war, Japan's commercial fishing activities in the South Sea Islands declined. After the outbreak of war with the U.S., the Nankô Suisan Saipan ice plant and cold storage facility were taken over by the Japanese Navy. All fresh and semi-processed bonito were distributed for military use. Dried bonito was also supplied to the military. In June 1942, 8,000 dried bonitos — emergency food for 4,000 military personnel — were distributed to the Japanese troops on Saipan. Some 10,000 additional Japanese army troops were landed on Saipan and Tinian after March 1944, and the factories and attached buildings of Nankô Suisan in Garapan were taken over completely by the military. The company employees, except for those engaged in fishing, were mobilized for construction work on airfields and fortifications, and fishing activities in the Mariana Islands ended completely when U.S. forces approached the islands in mid-1944. Guam, a U.S. territory in the Mariana Islands since 1898, was occupied by Japan on December 10, 1941. According to Japanese Navy orders, Nankô Suisan's Saipan office established its Ômiya (Guam) Branch Office in Agana. Two bonito pole-and-line vessels from Saipan started fishing off Guam and supported the military's self-sufficiency efforts on the island. These vessels were later used to patrol around the island in anticipation of a U.S. attack, and fishing activities were dramatically reduced. The following is a summary of the Japanese Navy's Civil Administration Department report on Nan'kô Suisan's fishing on Guam between 1942 and 1943: "The company began bonito fishing with two 21-ton ships southwest of Matsuyama (Merizo), in the southern part of the island, and between Guam and Rota. A dried bonito factory was built to process 60 *kan* (225 kg) of bonito per month, but the result was disappointing, with 'no hope of increasing production' because of an unfavorable period of migratory fish, and few schools of baitfish in the Guam and Saipan areas. Large catches were not expected because of the influence of seasonal winds and rough waters. The catch for 1942 was 82,170 kg of bonito and 7,230 kg of other types of fish, totalling 89,400 kg. There was no catch of other fish in July, October, and December. Since no bonito was caught between January and April, and between June and July 1943, the total fell to 7,340 kg for that year. Other fish catches also decreased to 45,465 kg. After the *Daini Tôkaimaru*, a cargo-passenger ship and a commercial cruiser, was sunk in Apra Harbor in January 1943, the fisheries rapidly declined."<sup>17</sup>



Graph 3 Fish Catch in Guam Waters (kg)

## V. Conclusion

During the Experimentation Period, 1922-1931, fishing permits, total fish catches, including bonito catches, in the South Seas Islands increased markedly during the 1920s and early 1930s (Table 1-3). As well, the Saipan district went through an historic change in 1930 and 1931. The Saipan district caught a large percentage of bonito (20% in 1931, 27% in 1932 and 26% in 1933) in the South Sea Islands, even though the seas around Saipan were regarded as poor fishing grounds. This increase in bonito catches resulted from the introduction of motorized vessels and increased Japanese government support (Table 2-3). From 1931-1941, the government's national fisheries policy was directed at increasing the amount of fish caught and processed for consumption in Japan and China. Catches of bonito rose markedly in the 1930s, but the Saipan district's contribution actually declined percentagewise (Table 5 and Graph 2). This shows that the fishing grounds expanded in both the South Sea Islands and further south to newly occupied areas. In the period from 1941 to 1942, fisheries in the South Sea Islands collapsed due to the Pacific War. Fisheries in the Saipan district were no exception. In conclusion, it should be pointed out that from the 1930s through to the 1940s, the fisheries in the South Sea Islands were influenced not only by the coming of war, but by Japanese government policy, both in terms of financial assistance and administrative policy.

## NOTE

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- 1 Okamoto Hiroaki, “Taiheiyô sensô izen oyobi shûsen chokugo no Nihon no maguro gyogyô dêta no tansaku (Search for the Japanese Tuna Fishing Data Before and Just After World War II),” *Suisan Sôgô Kenkyûjo Sentô Kenkyû Hôkoku 13* (Shizuoka: Suisan Sôgô Kenkyû Sentô, 2004): 18.
- 2 Marukawa Hisatoshi, “Nan’yô Guntô no suisan (2)” *Nan’yô Suisan 5, no. 3* (March 1939): 8.
- 3 Marukawa Hisatoshi, *ibid.*, p. 12.
- 4 Marukawa Hisatoshi, “Nan’yô Guntô no suisan (4)” *Nan’yô Suisan 5, no. 5* (May 1939): 4-9.
- 5 The total Japanese population in the South Sea Islands in 1929 was 16,202 (male: 10,291, and female: 5,911). Of them, 8,289 were from Okinawa – 51%. 7,754 Okinawans (94%) lived on the Saipan District, while 347 Okinawan (4%) lived on the Palau District. Nan’yôchô, *Nan’yôchô tôkei nenkan* (Palau: Nan’yôchô, December 1934), pp. 34-39.
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- 8 Nan’yôchô, “Takumu daijin seigi Nan’yôchô bunai rinji shokuin secchi sei chû kaisei no ken,” April 18, 1935.
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- 16 Ibid.
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(Wakako HIGUCHI • Research Associate • Micronesian Area Research Center,  
University of Guam • Pacific and Asian History)

## 戦前ミクロネシアにおける日本漁業：北マリアナの鰹・鮪漁業

樋口和佳子

**キーワード：**ミクロネシア，南洋群島，南洋庁サイパン支庁区，漁業，北マリアナ諸島

1930年代初頭以降，南洋群島における総漁獲高は著しく増加し、その主体となったのは鰹漁業であった。その成長の一端を担ったのがサイパン支庁区である。サイパン近海はけっして優良な漁場ではなかったが、その北部において積極的操業活動が行われた。その理由として、日本人人口、とりわけ南方漁業の経験豊かな沖縄出身者が多かったこと、南洋庁が群島中、パラオとともにサイパンの開発に最も重点を置いたこと、鰹の加工業のためのインフラ整備が比較的容易に実施できたことがあげられる。しかし南洋群島の漁業は住民の自給政策の一環として奨励されたのではなく、国策として推進されたものであった。漁業基地はサイパンからパラオに移り、さらに南方へと拡大するが、太平洋戦争の戦局悪化により漁業は不可能となる。

それはサイパン支庁区も例外ではない。南洋群島の漁獲統計から考察できるのは資源量の推移というよりも、戦前の国策を背景とした水産業の変化であった。

(ひぐち わかこ・グアム大学ミクロネシア研究センター研究員・アジア太平洋史)