

The Ago Bay Management Initiatives in Japan

Miyuki Maegawa*

Hideto Uranaka

514-8507, Mie University
1577 Kurimamatiya, Tsu, Mie, Japan
E-mail Address: maegawa@bio.mie-u.ac.jp

Ago bay is semi-closed small inner sea located in Shima city, central Japan. This bay is famous for pearl oyster culture during one hundred years or more. All areas of Shima city including Ago bay are specified as national park. In recent years, organic loads of pearl oyster culture and drainages from coastal area increased gradually. So, frequent red tide and oxygen deficient waters occurred, and seriously damaged to pear oyster culture and other fisheries.

From 2002 to 2007, Ago bay restoration project was carried out as "Environmental Restoration Project on Enclosed Coastal Sea". The aim of this project was making better life through wise and sustainable use of coastal environment. In this project, we could develop important conservation techniques and systems for environmental restoration, such as construction of artificial tidal flats, recovering seagrass beds, continuous monitoring system and environmental simulation model of the bay. Many efforts were pay to corroboration with local populace, such as fishermen and regional public office. Outcomes of the project were pronounced to various academies, and applied to the many other regional and national projects. Also, report associations in region were held every year, and many populaces were participated in the association. In 2006 Shima city office announced the integrated plans for total conservation programs in Ago bay, such as effectively use of the results of the project, promoting pearl oyster culture and sightseeing industry, and applying to the environmental studies in the region.

After the project, environmental research center for closed sea was opened in fisheries research station of Mie prefecture, and worked as total managements and developing of the results of this project as an aspect of the administrative measure of Mie prefectural office. In addition, committee for the promotion of environmental restoration in Ago bay was started. This committee was established for reproduce the symbiosis relations between Ago bay and the regional citizens through an environmental restoration and maintenance of biological diversity and beautiful bay area, as an aspect of regional movements. In this committee, many participants were joined, such as Shima city office, fisherman union, several groups of NPO, representatives



around Ago Bay area, researchers of Mie prefectural research station, Mie and Yokkaichi University, Mie fisheries high school and others.

Around Ago bay area, social and economical circumstances changed drastically in recent years. Then, biological circulations and purification cycles were damaged by the excessive organic loads accumulating in the bay. Nowadays, we must have actions for symbiosis between natural environment and industry in region, as a new concept of the coastal sea management named "Sato Umi", as the coastal sea with high productivity and high biodiversity under the mankind's interaction.