

Bluefin Tuna – Sea Giants in the Japanese Food Market

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In the Japanese market, the bluefin [tuna] is worth fantastic money. Fishers can be paid, depending on the quality and condition of the individual fish, more than \$50 per pound for a fish that can weigh hundreds of pounds (the largest bluefin tuna on record weighed nearly 1,500 pounds). Although the mighty bluefin tuna is capable of trans-Atlantic migrations, probably more bluefins from the east coast of North America cross the Pacific, because the next step in the transaction is a one-way air-freight ticket to Tokyo. Here wholesalers auction the fish to retailers. One bluefin tuna recently sold for \$83,500, nearly \$117 per pound. The 715-pound giant was to be reduced to 2,400 servings of sushi, which, because of the exceptional quality of this individual fish, would be served to elite businessmen and government officials for \$75 per serving, bringing in, altogether, an estimated \$180,000. One fish.

Excerpted from *Song for the Blue Ocean, Encounters Along the World's Coasts and Beneath the Seas*, Chapter 1, by Carl Safina, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1997.

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