Hideaki Nakata

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Guides & Mentors

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Tell us about your job. What inspired you to pursue this career?

My speciality is "Fisheries Oceanography," a scientific field having to do with the relationship between marine environments and marine living resources. I was born in Nagasaki on the western coast of Japan, and I enjoyed much fresh seafood there when I was child. This may have sparked my interest in fish and the ocean.

What is the health of the Tokyo Bay ecosystem?

An ecosystem consists of producers, consumers and decomposers. Various materials discharged from the land, including nutrients, are taken in by the producers, transferred by the consumers and recycled by the decomposers in the ecosystem. A healthy ecosystem has a good balance and smooth recycling.

What are the major sources of pollution entering Tokyo Bay?

Huge amounts of nutrients and organic materials deposited from the land, possibly causing degradation of water and ocean bottom quality, must be one of the most serious pollution sources. Land reclamation accelerates environmental degradation by doing great damage to coastal habitats such as tidal flats and seagrass/seaweed beds.

How has urban development changed Tokyo Bay since 1900?

It has caused serious red tide blooms and subsequently oxygen-depleted water on the bottom in summer, which often leads to formation of azoic zones where no organism can live. In addition,

increased discharge of chemical pollutants such as heavy metals and PCBs have been a serious threat to marine life.

How do you think urban development will affect Tokyo Bay in the next 20 years?

Due to various regulations, I do not think that the situation in Tokyo Bay will be getting worse. However, the present situation is bad enough. The first necessary step is the restoration of the marine environment and the ecosystem of Tokyo Bay.

For you, what does it mean to live near a bay?

There is a variety of life in the water. It is therefore valuable to enjoy a symbiotic life together with those various marine lives near the sea coast. For this purpose, I think that it will be essential to look at the daily life on land from the perspective of the sea. But so far we mainly have made efforts to expand the life on land toward the sea, as seen in "waterfront development."

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