

Excerpt from the Wild Salmon Centre Newsletter

http://www.wildsalmoncenter.org/press/wsc_news_winter_2010.php

New Protected Area in Japan

The Wild Salmon Center and Oji Paper Company partner to protect one of the country's last free-flowing wild salmon rivers



Oji Paper, the largest paper company in Japan, has made a landmark commitment to create a Protected Area on private timber lands surrounding the Sarufutsu River, one of the last wild and free-flowing rivers in Japan. The 6,573 acre [Sarufutsu Environmental Conservation Forest](#) is the first Protected Area on private lands in Japan specifically devoted to aquatic biodiversity. It will safeguard critical habitat for a number of species, including the endangered sea run taimen (also called Itou)—the largest freshwater fish in Japan. Taimen can reach up to one meter in length and live over 20 years.

"We believe the creation of the Sarufutsu Environmental Conservation Forest and Sarufutsu Conservation Council represents a win-win for both business and biodiversity conservation," said Gemmei Shimamura, General Manager Strategic Resource Management Division, Oji Paper Company. "Oji is committed to take the steps necessary to balance the protection of this remarkable natural treasure with sustainable timber harvests."



Hokkaido, Japan. A 30m "no cut" zone along 100% of the Sarufutsu and its tributaries will help protect critical salmon habitat. [See map](#) of Sarufutsu Environmental Conservation Forest.

The Wild Salmon Center has been working with Oji Paper for several years to create a plan that would ensure that the most ecologically important segments of the Sarufutsu River watershed are protected for the purpose of fisheries conservation. The new Protected Area will include a **30 meter "no-cut" timber zone along 100% of the Sarufutsu River and its tributaries** within Oji Paper boundaries, ensuring that riparian areas are buffered and critical habitat stays intact. The area will also encompass healthy floodplain forests and large wetlands areas that are recognized as an "Important Bird Area" by Birdlife International.

"Oji Paper Company has done what no other private timber company has ever done in Japan: they have voluntarily set aside a large track of productive forests for the preservation of aquatic biodiversity," notes Brian Caouette, Program Manager at Wild Salmon Center.

Oji Paper Company has also taken the next step in good stewardship by establishing the Sarufutsu Itou Conservation Council, a collaborative effort that will help guide future conservation activities in the region.

"The creation of the protected area on the Sarufutsu is incredibly timely," said Dr. Michio Fukushima, a scientist with the National Institute for Environmental Studies Japan and a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). "The Sarufutsu Environmental Conservation Forest will act as an insurance policy in the face of growing threats to biodiversity globally including climate change."