

Direct emission of tritium to the ocean due to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster

NAOTO TAKAHATA^{1*}, YAMA TOMONAGA²,
YUICHIRO KUMAMOTO³, MASATOSHI YAMADA⁴,
YUJI SANO¹

¹The University of Tokyo, Japan (*correspondence: ntaka@aori.u-tokyo.ac.jp)

²Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, Switzerland

³Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science Technology, Japan

⁴Hirosaki University, Japan

Tritium is one of nuclides emitted from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant (F1 NPP) due to its accident in 2011. However there are few reports on tritium in environmental water such as rain water [1], river water [2] and seawater [3] because tritium concentration in natural water is not so high compared to background water like cesium-137 or iodine-129 [3]. In order to trace tritium derived from F1 NPP and estimate how much tritium was released from the Fukushima nuclear disaster, we investigated tritium distributions in the ocean off the Fukushima area.

We collected seawater samples in the northwestern Pacific Ocean two months after the accident in May 2011. We measured tritium concentrations in collected samples using the helium-3 ingrowth method.

Higher ³H concentrations were found close to the shore and lower concentrations were found offshore. The distribution of ³H concentration was similar to that of ¹³⁷Cs concentration. There seems to be a correlation between ³H and ¹³⁷Cs concentrations. This indicates that both radionuclides have the same origin, that is they came from the F1 NPP. The calculated ³H/¹³⁷Cs ratio from the correlation was similar to the production ratio of ³H/¹³⁷Cs in the broken reactors in the F1 NPP [4]. This indicates that observed radionuclides in seawater may have come from the F1 NPP with keeping the ratio that means no elemental fractionation. ¹³⁷Cs direct emission to the ocean has been estimated at about 3.5 PBq [5]. Multiplying this ¹³⁷Cs emission by observed ³H/¹³⁷Cs ratio may give tritium direct emission to the ocean from the F1 NPP.

[1] Matsumoto *et al.* (2013) *Sci. Tot. Env.*, **445-446**, 365-370. [2] Ueda *et al.* (2015) *J. Env. Radio.*, **146**, 102-109. [3] Povinec *et al.* (2013) *Biogeo.*, **10**, 5481-5496. [4] Nishihara *et al.* (2015) *J. Nuc. Sci. Tech.*, **52**, 301-307. [5] Tsumune *et al.* (2012) *J. Env. Radio.*, **111**, 100-108.