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Ibaraki fishermen suspend fishing activities

Most local fishery cooperatives in Ibaraki Prefecture are suspending all fishing activities, after small fish caught in waters off its coast were found to contain radioactive cesium above the legal limit.

Ibaraki is located just south of Fukushima, which hosts the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Earlier this week, 526 becquerels of radioactive cesium, exceeding the legal limit of 500, was detected in one kilogram of the small fish called sand lance caught in seas off northern Ibaraki.

As a result, the federation of fisheries cooperatives in Ibaraki decided to stop fishing sand lance, while allowing each cooperative to decide what to do about other catch.

But NHK's survey of local cooperatives in the prefecture found that most of them had decided to halt all fishing for some time to come.

The cooperatives say their fish would not be accepted by brokers or retailers, and as prices are bound to fall it would be unprofitable to fish given the cost of fuel.

The head of the federation says fishermen cannot catch fish in contaminated seawater. He urges the government and Tokyo Electric Power Company to quickly stop the flow of radioactive water.

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