

Plan to drastically reduce drift-net fishing announced

Japan will drastically scale down its open-sea drift-net fishing before an international ban comes into force at the end of this year, the Fisheries Agency said Friday.

The measure is in line with a resolution adopted last December by the U.N. General Assembly calling for a 50 percent reduction in international drift-net catches by June

and a complete moratorium by 1993.

The agency said drift-net fishing zones in the North Pacific Ocean will be roughly halved, with the number of boats permitted to use drift nets lowered at the outset to less than 457 from last year's 525.

The number of such boats will then be reduced gradual-

ly to 140 between next month and December, it said.

Japan has the world's largest drift-net fleet, which fishes primarily for squid in the North Pacific.

The method has been criticized as indiscriminately trapping and killing all marine life that comes within the nets' paths.