

Diving shops provide services such as selling and renting diving gear, running diving schools and organizing diving tours. Of the more than 1 000 diving shops in Japan, most are small and concentrated in the Tokyo (Kanto) and Kinki (Kyoto to Hiroshima) areas. In the last three years, diving tours have provided a much larger portion of overall sales. Retail outlets give considerable discounts on equipment and offer services such as made-to-order diving wear.

Scuba divers must pass a recognized diving course to qualify for their C-card, or licence. About 300 000 Japanese are card holders. The average age is between 21 and 35.

The number of female scuba divers has increased dramatically from a ratio of 10 men to 1 woman in 1981 to a ratio of 3 men to 2 women in 1989. The shift appears to have been influenced by the option of more fashionable and colourful diving wear.

Leisure divers spend about \$1 800 in the first six months of scuba diving.

How to Enter the Market

Scuba diving is a fashion and image conscious sport. When entering the market, Canadian manufacturers should consider: creating fashionable diving gear and clothing in fluorescent colours and designs; reducing the weight and size of equipment for women; sponsoring C-card issuers, such as schools that exercise influence over buyers; and selling equipment to resorts that, in turn, rent it to beginners.

11 Rowboats: A Declining Market

In 1988, rowboat sales excluding inflatables totalled \$10 million. Sales have declined in recent years, a trend expected to continue.

Most rowboats are made of FRP, polyethylene or aluminum which are the least popular because the Japanese prefer heavier boats. FRP boats, which account for 60 per cent of the market, consist of 4 m (13 ft.) plus, traditional rowboats and fishing catamarans. FRP boats can use an outboard motor.

Traditional boats are used mainly by the rental market. Sales are mostly for replacement craft. Fishing models include car toppers, portables (under 50 kg) and catamarans. Ninety-nine per cent of fishing catamaran buyers are men, aged between 30 and 60.

Most polyethylene boats are lightweight models used for fishing and leisure, only 20 to 30 per cent have an outboard motor. The design and colour of polyethylene rowboats leave room for improvement.

In general, 70 per cent of traditional rowboats are used in lakes, marshes and ponds, and 80 per cent of the fishing catamarans, with outboards, are used at sea.

There is little product variety in terms of design and quality. Sales are made based on price and relationship with dealers.

12 Useful Japanese Organizations

Governmental Agencies

Ministry of Transport

Maritime Technology and Safety Bureau
Inspection and Measurement Division
1-3, Kasumigaseki 2-chome
Chiyoda-ku Tokyo 100
Tel: 03-580-2311

Ministry of International Trade and Industry

Consumer Goods Industries Bureau
Recreation and Miscellaneous Goods Division
1-3, Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku Tokyo 100
Tel: 03-501-1511

Related Associations

Japan Boat Industry Association

5-1, Ginza 2-chome
Chuo-ku Tokyo 104
Tel: 03-567-6707

Association of Japan Sporting Goods Industries

20-12, Asakusabashi 3-chome
Taito-ku Tokyo 111
Tel: 03-863-2473

Association of Sporting Goods Imports

495 Asakusabashi
Taito-ku Tokyo 111
Tel: 03-281-2717

Japan Motorboat Association

20-34, Ginza 8-chome
Chuo-ku Tokyo 104
Tel: 03-543-7321

Nippon Surfing Association

3-1, Hongo 3-chome
Bunkyo-ku Tokyo 113
Tel: 03-818-0612

Japan Boardsailing Association

19-3, Hatsudai 1-chome
Shibuya-ku Tokyo 151
Tel: 03-374-5486