

A traditional fishing method on the Nagara River that has been passed down for over 1300 years

## "Cormorant Fishing on the Nagara River in Gifu"

## Event duration May 11th - October 15th

History

Ukai (cormorant fishing) is a fishing method in which cormorant fishing masters manipulate cormorants to catch fish, and it has a history of over 1,300 years. During the Sengoku period, Oda Nobunaga, who was based in Gifu, is said to have used cormorant fishing as a form of entertainment for guests and granted the title of Usho (cormorant fishing master) to the fishermen, thereby protecting the practice. Additionally, Tokugawa leyasu is known to have enjoyed observing ukai and had ayu (sweetfish) sushi regularly transported from Gifu to Edo (present-day Tokyo), which contributed to the careful preservation of the ukai tradition throughout the ages.



cormorant fishing master

Japan Heritage

Announcement

from Gifu City

There are six usho of the Nagara River, all of whom have been appointed as 'Cormorant Fishing Masters of the Imperial Household Agency Board of Ceremonies.' In addition to handling up to twelve cormorants at a time, they also control the ubune (cormorant fishing boats), and torches, requiring advanced skills that are passed down from parent to child. Moreover, their attire has remained largely unchanged since the Edo period, preserving the tradition to this day.



Nationally Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property Designated as "Nagara River Cormorant Fishing Techniques"

Recognized as "An Ancient Castle Town with the Spirit of Nobunaga's Hospitality - Gifu"

with the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems

Recognized as "Ayu of the Nagara River System, Japan"

Designated as "A Complete Set of 122 Tools Used for Cormorant Fishing on the Nagara River"

Nationally Important Tangible Folk Cultural Property

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Mr. Mill

Nationally Important Cultural Landscape Selected as "C in the Middle I

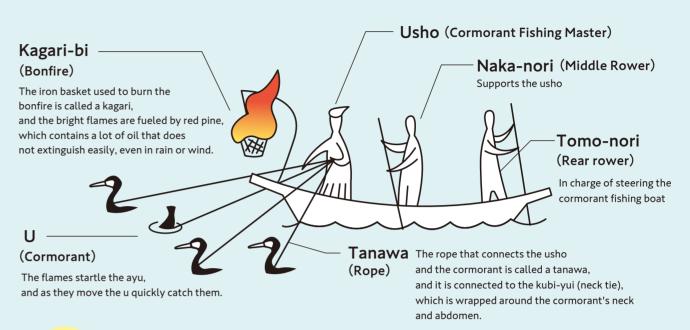
Selected as "Cultural Landscape of Gifu in the Middle Basin of Nagara River"

Srd Gifu Nagara River Fireworks Festival
Date: Saturday, August 9, 2025 Back-up date: August 23, 2025

Fireworks Cheering Seat Tickets Hometown Tax Return Gift Handling Period: Until June 30

Gifu City Resident Priority Lottery Sales: May 17 - June 13

An Evening of Traditional Culture: Nagaragawa Takigi Noh Date: Saturday, September 6, 2025, 18:00 - 20:00



The fishing boat that the usho rides is a double-ended riverboat approximately 13

meters in length. It is made of about 70 water-resistant planks of kouyamaki (Japanese umbrella pine wood) connected with about 1,250 nails. In addition to the usho, there

are two other boatmen called tomo-nori and naka-nori on board, and the three of

Ubun

Cormorant fishing boat



Usho live alongside their cormorants, T training them for 2-3 years to become raskilled birds. The cormorants that live the with them tend to have longer tas lifespans than their wild counterparts, h sometimes reaching up to 20 years. Least the neck tying technique is an important skill for the usho, as it determines k the day's catch. a

them go down the river catching ayu.

The ayu caught by the cormorants are instantly squeezed by their beaks, which helps maintain their freshness, making them highly regarded for their excellent taste. Ayu that have marks from the cormorant's beak are known as uayu and are treated as a high-quality product.

Ayu

## Gifu City Museum of History Exhibition information The Archaeology of Harvest Planned Until Sunday, May 25th Exhibition The Beginnings of Agriculture in the Mino Region The Edo Book World June 7 (Saturdav) -Planned Exhibition July 27 (Sunday) The Publishing Culture That Blossomed in Gifu August 8th (Friday) -Special Exhibition Gifu Castle and Oda Nobunag October 13th (Monday, Considering the Appearance of Gifu Castle through Excavation Findings National Holiday) Tools June 28 (Saturday) -Featured Exhibition Everyday Life in the Showa Era Through the Eyes of Children October 22 (Wednesday)