

How cats might save one Japanese island

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Those cute little cats are like the hope of the entire island.

For hundreds of years, residents on this island made their living from fishing. And, a good catch is believed to be the cats' blessings.

Tsuneo Endo, Local Fisherman, said, "The cats here have always been something like a lucky charm for us who bring good catch. We enshrine them because they are important to us."

For the cats, free meals are not the only thing that makes this place feel like heaven.

Dogs have been banned on this island for hundreds of years.

Within the past fifty years, the human population on the island has declined sharply.

It had one thousand people in the 1950s, but today there are less than a hundred. And most of them are above 70.



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Tashiro Abe, Local Fisherman, said, "If we don't have new comers settling here, within the next ten years this island will be deserted. We will practically die out."

The locals hope the cats can bring them what they've always lacked, more people.

Keiichi Kusaka, Hotel Owner, said, "Most visitors wouldn't come back for the second time only for the scenery. But cats are living creatures and if tourists take a liking to a specific cat or are cat lovers in general, they would certainly want to come back again. Tourists repeat their visits because of them."

Internet blogs help the island catch the attention of Japanese media, and quickly, the island rose to nationwide fame as a destination for cat lovers.

Fumio Taguchi, Tourist From Tokyo, said, "Recently we saw a TV program on the island and many cats live here. My mother really loves cats, so we decided to take the trip."

Whether the feline driven tourism industry can actually bring new residents to the island and save it from becoming deserted remains to be seen. The residents can only hope the island's survival is one of the many blessings of the cats.



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You read it at CatOddities.com



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Editor: Zhang Pengfei | **Source:** CCTV.com