

# **Boat that washed up on North Coast confirmed as Japan tsunami debris**

**Mary Callahan, Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 4-26-13**

Japanese officials have confirmed that a small boat that washed ashore April 7 near Crescent City had been swept away from a coastal town in Japan during the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami there.

The 21-foot vessel is thus the first verified piece of tsunami debris to reach the California coast since a 9.0 magnitude quake and tidal wave devastated the island of Honshu, especially its northwestern coast, where the boat originated.

The small panga had been linked by markings on its hull to Takata High School in Rikuzentakata, a town of what was once about 24,000 in Iwate Prefecture.

More than 1,700 citizens of Rikuzentakata were among the almost 16,000 killed in the March 11, 2011, disaster that loosed an estimated 5 million tons of debris into the Pacific.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which is monitoring the arrival of tsunami debris in the United State, has received 1,691 reports of potential tsunami debris, most of it in Hawaii and Alaska. Only 27 items - including the skiff found in Crescent City - had the kinds of distinctive markings that permitted authentication, NOAA representatives said.