



## 1 Article : Sea Otter 'Riro' Dunks the Ball in Support of Japan National Team at the Basketball World Cup

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

The sea otter accomplished the feat with nifty underwater footwork, demonstrating that humans aren't the only special species who can dunk a basketball.

"Riro," a male sea otter at Marine World Uminonakamichi, a seaside park in the city of Fukuoka, western Japan, tried his hand at basketball on September 1. He dunked the ball and successfully accomplished the feat with a spectacular display of footwork from underwater. This was the day before the Akatsuki Japan national team's final match at the FIBA Basketball World Cup against Cape Verde in Okinawa City.

Around noon on September 1, Riro picked up a small basketball floating on the surface of the aquarium's sea otter pool. After taking a run-up, he used his front paws to jump out of the water. Visitors crowding in front of the sea otter tank cheered the cute marine mammal, shouting, "Do your best!" Everyone [applauded](#) when Riro dunked.

### Fans in the Crowd Chime In

Suzu Kitahara, 7, an elementary school second grader from Kurume City, Fukuoka, was there with her family to see Riro. She exclaimed, "It was amazing! I'm so glad he made it."

Chinatsu Nakajima, 47, is the trainer in charge of Riro. She explained that Riro performed [in order to](#) send cheers to Japan's national basketball team. "Everyone from Fukuoka, including Riro, is cheering for the Japanese team," she [declared](#).

Nakajima's sentiments extend [beyond](#) the Basketball World Cup, since Japan earned a spot in the 2024 Paris Olympics berth by beating Cape Verde 80-71. Nakajima then added, "I strongly wish to see the Japan team members fully demonstrate their abilities."



## 2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

### 1. applaud 拍手を送る、称賛する

The audience began to **applaud** when the movie ended.

### 2. in order to ~ ~するために

They woke up early **in order to** catch the first train.

### 3. declare

力説する、言明する、(～を) 宣言する・布告する・言い渡す、証拠で明らかにする、公表する、示す、申告する

The speaker **declared** the need for environmental conservation in his speech.

### 4. beyond

～を超えて、～の向こう側に、～を過ぎて、～の域を越えて、～の理解が及ばない、かなたに、非常に

Her kindness goes **beyond** what is expected of a friend.

## 3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What did the sea otter named Riro do to support the Japan national basketball team?
2. What was the significant outcome for the Japan national team after their victory over Cape Verde?
3. Can you recall any memorable animal performances or tricks you've seen in person or on TV?
4. How do you think unique animal performances like Riro's can help promote sports events or other causes?
5. How do you show support for your favorite sports teams or events?

## 4

## 日本語関連記事：

## ラッコの「リロ」がダンクシュート バスケW杯、日本代表応援

バスケットボール男子ワールドカップ（W杯）のカボベルデ戦を間近に控えた9月1日、日本代表を応援しようと、福岡市の水族館「マリンワールド海の中道」で雄のラッコ「リロ」がダンクシュートに挑戦し、水中からの鮮やかな「足さばき」で成功させた。

リロは同日昼ごろ、ラッコプールの水面に漂う小さなバスケットボールを前足で拾い上げ、助走をつけて水中からジャンプ。水槽前に詰めかけた入館客は「頑張れ」と応援し、ダンクシュートが決まると拍手喝采した。

福岡県久留米市から家族でリロを見に来た小学2年、北原鈴さん（7）は「すごかった。成功して良かった」と声を弾ませた。担当飼育員の中嶋千夏さん（47）は「リロを含めて、皆で福岡から日本代表を応援しているので頑張ってる」とエールを送った。