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**Global Analysis Report**

# Inside Thailand

## The Fish and Seafood Trade

**June 2015**

## TRADE SUMMARY*

Thailand is the fifth-largest importer of fish and seafood in Asia. In 2013, Thailand imported US$3.2 billion worth of fish and seafood, an increase of only 1.5% from 2012. Thailand imports fish and seafood from 118 countries and the top suppliers in 2013 were the United States with a 10.4% share, followed by Taiwan (9.9%), China (9.4%), Indonesia (7.6%), and Japan (6.7%).

Thailand's primary fish and seafood imports in 2013 included frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes (US$1.2 billion), frozen cuttlefish and squid (US$280.8 million), frozen yellowfin tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes (US$244.1 million), frozen fish (US$236.2 million), and not minced prepared/preserved tuna/skipjack/bonito (US$124.8 million).

Thailand exported US$7.0 billion in fish and seafood in 2013, a decrease of 13.4% from the previous year. In 2013, Thailand's principal exports were not minced prepared/preserved tuna/skipjack/bonito (US$2.6 billion), prepared/preserved shrimp and prawns, not in airtight containers (US$1.1 billion), frozen shrimp and prawns (US$895.9 million), frozen cuttlefish and squid (US$314.1 million), and not minced prepared/preserved sardines/sardinella/brisling (US$234.5 million). Top export destinations were the United States with a 22.8% share, Japan with 20.4%, Australia with 5.4%, Canada with 4.4%, and the United Kingdom with 3.9%.

Countries that have no Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Thailand are subjected to a Most Favoured Nation (MFN) tariff of 5% on imported fish and seafood. For countries that have a FTA with Thailand, such as New Zealand and Australia, their fish and seafood imports are not subjected to any tariffs (Canadian Trade Commissioner Services in Thailand, 2014).

*numbers in the trade summary section came from Global Trade Atlas, 2014 unless otherwise specified

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## CANADIAN PERFORMANCE

Canada was the 28th-largest supplier of fish and seafood to Thailand, with sales of US$19.4 million in 2013 (based on Thai import data). This represents a decrease of 41.7% from 2012. Part of this decrease was due to the significant reduction in imports of Canadian cold-water shrimp and prawns, frozen crab, and frozen sardines. In 2013, the leading products imported from Canada included frozen cold-water shrimp and prawns (US$5.9 million), frozen crab (US$3.9 million), frozen molluscs (US$3.0 million), fresh lobster (US$1.9 million), and frozen Pacific salmon (US$1.7 million) (GTA, 2014).

Thailand was Canada's 18th-most important destination for fish and seafood, and received US$16.6 million or 0.4% of Canada's seafood exports in 2013. Overall, fish and seafood was Canada's third-most significant export sector to Thailand, and represented 12.7% of all Canadian products exported to Thailand in 2013 (GTA, 2014).

## BY THE NUMBERS

**Top Ten Suppliers of Fish and Seafood to Thailand and Top Imported Products in 2013 (Based on Thai Import Data)**

| Rank | Country | Total Import Value (US$) | Top Import Supplied | Top Import Value (US$) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | World | 3,240,044,731 | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | 1,194,453,078 |
| 1 | United States | 335,628,682 | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | 207,806,726 |
| 2 | Taiwan | 319,911,271 | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | 237,604,829 |
| 3 | China | 304,473,848 | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | 56,687,864 |
| 4 | Indonesia | 246,105,755 | Frozen Fish, NESOI | 97,784,287 |
| 5 | Japan | 218,137,730 | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | 57,412,852 |
| 6 | South Korea | 215,435,332 | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | 138,131,963 |
| 7 | Vanuatu | 187,835,151 | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | 150,492,618 |
| 8 | Vietnam | 145,500,249 | Frozen cuttlefish and squid | 38,073,462 |
| 9 | India | 130,330,418 | Frozen cuttlefish and squid | 52,940,829 |
| 10 | Norway | 119,767,489 | Frozen Atlantic and Danube salmon | 32,095,908 |

***Source:*** *Global Trade Atlas, 2014.*

**Top Ten Thai Fish and Seafood Imports from the World in 2013**

| Rank | Top Imports | Import Value (US$) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | 1,194,453,078 |
| 2 | Frozen cuttle fish and squid | 280,799,637 |
| 3 | Frozen yellowfin tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | 244,108,022 |
| 4 | Frozen fish, NESIO | 236,240,575 |
| 5 | Not minced prepared/preserved tuna/skipjack/bonito, whole or in pieces | 124,778,583 |
| 6 | Frozen albacore or longfinned tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | 121,831,104 |
| 7 | Frozen sardines ore sardinella | 112,606,862 |
| 8 | Frozen shrimp and prawns | 91,450,875 |
| 9 | Frozen trout | 78,036,955 |
| 10 | Frozen Pacific salmon | 71,208,273 |

***Source:*** *Global Trade Atlas, 2014.*

## Fresh

Thai consumption of fresh fish and seafood has been increasing slowly over the last few years. In 2013, retail volume sales of fresh fish and seafood rose to 1.6 million tonnes, up 87,300 tonnes from the year before. Euromonitor International is forecasting that this increase will continue thorough to 2018, where retail volumes sales will reach over 2.1 million tonnes.

**Historic Fresh Fish and Seafood Retail Volume Sales in Thailand in ’000 Tonnes**

| Category | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | CAGR* 2008-2013 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fish and Seafood | 1,497.3 | 1,515.1 | 1,530.6 | 1,542.7 | 1,559.6 | 1,646.9 | 1.9% |

**Forecast Fresh Fish and Seafood Retail Volume Sales in Thailand in ’000 Tonnes**

| Category | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | CAGR* 2013-2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fish and Seafood | 1,646.9 | 1,741.9 | 1,845.3 | 1,958.3 | 2,072.1 | 2,188.2 | 5.8% |

***Source for both:*** *Euromonitor International, 2014.* ****CAGR*** *= compound annual growth rate*
***Please note:*** *Volume sales for the fresh fish and seafood market include both foodservice and retail sales.*

## TOP TEN FISH AND SEAFOOD SUPPLIERS TO THAILAND 2013

The figures listed below are in United States dollars.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Imports from the United States** | | **2 Imports from Taiwan** | |
| Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $207.8M | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $237.6M |
| Frozen Pacific salmon, NESOI | $44.9M | Frozen yellowfin tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $39.5M |
| Frozen yellowfin tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $22.4M | Frozen albacore/longfinned tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $21.3M |
| Products of fish or crustaceans, molluscs or other aquatic invertebrates, not fit for human consumption | $10.5M | Frozen bigeye tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $6.6M |
| Frozen sardines or sardinella | $9.4M | Frozen fish, NESOI | $1.1M |
| **3. Imports from China** | | **4. Imports from Indonesia** | |
| Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $56.7M | Frozen fish, NESIO | $97.8M |
| Frozen cuttlefish and squid | $52.7M | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $58.9M |
| Not minced prepared/preserved tuna/skipjack/bonito, whole or in pieces | $28.6M | Not minced prepared/preserved tuna/skipjack/bonito, whole or in pieces | $43.2M |
| Frozen sardines or sardinella | $28.4M | Frozen yellowfin tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $24.0M |
| Frozen fish, NESOI | $15.1M | Frozen albacore/longfinned tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $5.6M |
| **5. Imports from Japan** | | **6. Imports from South Korea** | |
| Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $57.4M | Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $138.1M |
| Frozen sardines or sardinella | $38.5M | Frozen yellowfin tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $27.5M |
| Frozen albacore/longfinned tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $27.5M | Seaweed and other algae, fit for human consumption | $18.7M |
| Frozen mackerel | $26.3M | Seaweed and other algae, not fit for human consumption | $11.5M |
| Frozen Pacific salmon, NESIO | $14.8M | Frozen fish, NESOI | $3.9M |
| **7. Imports from Vanuatu** | | **8. Imports from Vietnam** | |
| Frozen tuna/skipjack/bonito, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $150.5M | Frozen cuttlefish and squid | $38.1M |
| Frozen yellowfin tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $23.3M | Frozen fish meat, excluding steaks and fillets, NESOI | $30.1M |
| Frozen albacore/longfinned tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $10.9M | Frozen catfish fillets | $28.7M |
| Frozen bigeye tuna, excluding fillets, livers and roes | $3.1M | Not minced prepared/preserved tuna/skipjack/bonito, whole or in pieces | $20.3M |
| Frozen fish, NESOI | $0.02M | Flours, meals and pellets of fish, crustaceans, molluscs or other aquatic invertebrates, not fit for human consumption | $3.3M |
| **9. Imports from India** | | **10. Imports from Norway** | |
| Frozen cuttlefish and squid | $52.9M | Frozen Atlantic and Danube salmon | $32.1M |
| Frozen shrimp and prawns | $44.6M | Frozen trout | $21.4M |
| Frozen fish, NESOI | $23.6M | Frozen mackerel | $17.2M |
| Frozen fish meat, excluding steaks and fillets, NESIO | $1.5M | Fresh/chilled Atlantic and Danube salmon | $16.5M |
| Fish fats and oils and their fractions, not modified | $1.0M | Frozen Pacific, Atlantic and Danube salmon fillets | $11.5M |

***Source:*** *Global Trade Atlas, 2014.*

## KEY DEMAND CHARACTERISTICS[1]

Thailand has three different markets for imported fish and seafood:

1. the very large market for imported fish and seafood ingredients and inputs for use by the seafood processing industry;
2. a comparatively small market for imported fish and seafood, as demanded by the foodservice industry; and,
3. a very small niche-style market involving imported fish and seafood for purchase by expatriates and upper-income Thais who have been exposed to foreign fish.

All of these markets have different demand characteristics and the whole market is highly price sensitive.

**The market for imported fish and seafood ingredients and inputs**
The manufacturing companies process and export a wide variety of products, including basic raw frozen products through to semi-processed and value-added products. The canning industry has a significant strategic focus on tuna. Mackerel and sardines are very important secondary inputs for the industry. The players in this industry produce for their own brands and under Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) contracts for foreign brand-owners. The buyers in this industry source their raw materials on a global basis and generally have a very good knowledge of the supply bases across the world, including that in Canada.

**The foodservice market for imported fish and seafood**
Thailand has a sizeable number of Japanese foodservice outlets. They include single site restaurants, restaurant chains, noodle chains and quick-service outlets. These outlets are very important for salmon and, in the case of higher end outlets, for mackerel (Saba). Many hotels have Japanese restaurants and there is also a vibrant sushi sector within the industry. Sushi is very important for the salmon market in Thailand. There are also some sizeable and developing Japanese restaurant chains like Fuji and Yayoi. In addition to these restaurants, there are also Korean restaurants that have demand for mackerel (Saba). Imported crabs and lobster have their biggest demand bases in Chinese restaurants (seasonal peak being around Chinese New Year) and in high-end hotels. Other products that are exotic to Thailand also have the bulk of their demand from the foodservice industry, e.g. halibut, capelin and mussels.

**The retail market for imported fish and seafood**
Most fresh fish and seafood in Thailand's retail channels are local products, with the portfolio of offerings being highly fragmented in terms of species. The mainstream supermarkets and hypermarkets and some of the specialty retailers have separate display areas for live and fresh/chilled fish and seafood and frozen fish and seafood.

## NEW PRODUCT LAUNCHES

According to the Mintel Global New Products Database (GNPD) there were 389 new processed fish products launched on the Thai market between August 2011 and August 2014. Of those products, the most popular storage type was frozen, followed closely by chilled. The majority (83%) of the new launches were branded products. The hala claim led all claims over the review period with 171 items. The Union Frozen Product company had the most product introductions with 31, followed by Tesco Lotus with 18.

[1] Information provided by Canadian Trade Commissioner Services in Thailand, 2014

**New Processed Fish Products Launches in Thailand, August 2011-August 2014, by Feature**

| Feature* | Yearly Launch Counts | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 |
| Yearly Product Launches | 94 | 93 | 202 |
| **Top five claims** | | | |
| Hala | 42 | 42 | 87 |
| No Additives/Preservatives | 26 | 15 | 54 |
| Microwaveable | 12 | 15 | 49 |
| Ease of Use | 18 | 6 | 38 |
| Premium | 14 | 10 | 24 |
| **Storage** | | | |
| Frozen | 29 | 45 | 87 |
| Chilled | 31 | 24 | 82 |
| Shelf stable | 34 | 24 | 33 |
| **Top five package types** | | | |
| Skinpack | 0 | 4 | 76 |
| Flexible | 27 | 24 | 48 |
| Flexible Sachet | 29 | 37 | 34 |
| Can | 30 | 19 | 25 |
| Jar | 1 | 4 | 9 |
| **Top five companies** | | | |
| The Union Frozen Product | 3 | 2 | 26 |
| Tesco Lotus | 0 | 2 | 16 |
| Thaveevong Industry | 3 | 3 | 10 |
| Central Food Retail | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| Big C | 0 | 5 | 7 |
| **Manufacturer Type** | | | |
| Branded | 89 | 74 | 159 |
| Private Label | 5 | 19 | 43 |

***Source:*** *Mintel GNPD, September 2014.*
**Note: rankings are based on 2013-14 data*

## New Product Examples[2]


**Sea Shrimp Bomb**
**Company:** K.L. Cold Storage
**Brand:** Sam Samut
**Date published:** July 2014

**Price:** US$1.52
**Package:** Flexible
**Size:** 200g

**Description:** Sam Samut Sea Shrimp Bomb is now available. This halal-certified product can be deep fried in one minute, is free from preservatives, and retails in a 200g pack.

**Claims:** No Additives/Preservatives, Halal

**Seasoned Fish Crab Stick**
**Company:** The Union Frozen Product
**Brand:** Blue Water by Prantalay
**Date published:** June 2014

**Price:** US$5.47
**Package:** Skinpack
**Size:** 500g

**Description:** Blue Water by Prantalay Seasoned Fish Crab Stick contains no preservatives. The halal-certified product retails in a family pack of two 500g packets, featuring a Buy 1 Get 1 Free promotion.

**Claims:** No Additives/Preservatives, Halal



**Lobster Flavoured Claw**
**Company:** Thaveevong Industry
**Brand:** TVI
**Date published:** June 2014

**Price:** US$2.49
**Package:** Flexible
**Size:** 250g

**Description:** TVI Lobster Flavoured Claw is ready to eat and can be boiled, steamed, stir fried, microwaved, or used as a noodle topping, salad or sushi topping. The GMP-certified product retails in a 250g pack.

**Claims:** Microwaveable, Ease of Use

**Quality Smoked Salmon**
**Company:** Thammachart Seafood Retail
**Brand:** Just Smoked
**Date published:** July 2012

**Price:** US$18.55
**Package:** Flexible Sachet
**Size:** 100g

**Description:** Just Smoked Quality Smoked Salmon is from selected sources such as Norway, Ireland and Scotland, Chile and Canada. The premium salmon contains essential omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin A, vitamin B, calcium, copper and iron. It contains a good source of protein, is low in saturated fat and high in unsaturated oils or omega-3. The product retails in a 100g pack.

**Claims:** Premium, Low/No/Reduced Saturated Fat


[2] **Source for all examples:** Mintel GNPD, September 2014.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

International Trade Commissioners can provide Canadian industry with on-the-ground expertise regarding market potential, current conditions and local business contacts, and are an excellent point of contact for export advice.

- **Overview of Trade Commissioner Services in Thailand**
  http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/thailand-thailande/
- **Find a Trade Commissioner**
  www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/eng/find-trade-contacts.jsp

For additional intelligence on this and other markets, the complete library of Global Analysis reports can be found under *Statistics and Market Information* at the following link, arranged by sector and region of interest:

- ats-sea.agr.gc.ca

For additional information on China Fisheries and Seafood Exposition, please contact:

- Ben Berry, Deputy Director
  Trade Show Strategy and Delivery
  Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
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## RESOURCES

Canadian Trade Commissioner Services in Thailand, 2014

Euromonitor International, 2014

Global Trade Atlas, 2014

Mintel Global New Products Database, 2014

## Inside Thailand: The Fish and Seafood Trade

*Global Analysis Report*

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