NOAA FISHERIES

Fisheries of the United States, 2015

A Statistical Snapshot of 2015 Fish Landings

NOAA Fisheries releases its annual summary report on U.S. recreational and commercial fishery landings.

U.S. Fisheries Facts

- U.S. commercial fishermen landed 9.7 billion pounds of seafood valued at $5.2 billion.
- Dutch Harbor, Alaska and New Bedford, Massachusetts remain the top commercial fishing ports.
- Recreational anglers took nearly 61 million trips and caught more than 351 million fish, 57% of which were released.

About the Report

Each year NOAA Fisheries compiles key fisheries statistics from the previous year into an annual snapshot documenting fishing's importance to the nation. The 2015 report provides landings totals for both domestic recreational and commercial fisheries by species and allows us to track important indicators such as annual seafood consumption and the productivity of top fishing ports. These statistics provide valuable insights, but to fully understand the overall condition of our fisheries, they must be looked at in combination with other biological, social, and economic factors of ecosystem and ocean health.

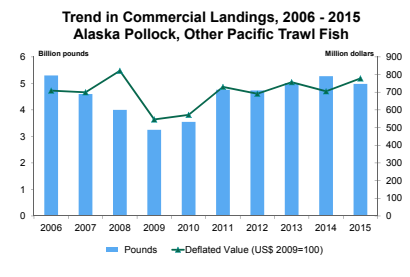
Sustainable Fisheries, Jobs, and the Economy

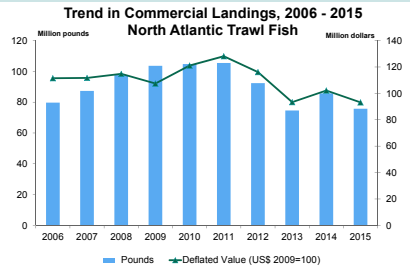
Fisheries, whether for commerce or recreation, play an enormous role in the U.S. economy. In 2015, U.S. commercial fishermen landed 9.7 billion pounds of seafood valued at $5.2 billion. Anglers made nearly 61 million marine recreational fishing trips and landed 351 million fish. Fish processors, icehouses, restaurants, grocery stores, bait and tackle shops, fuel stations, and a multitude of other businesses benefit from healthy commercial and recreational fishing.

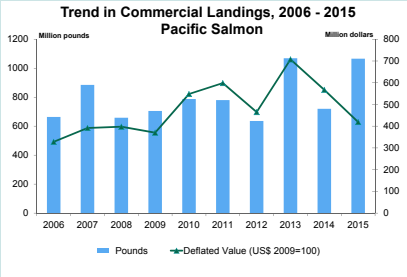
Healthy Stocks Mean Healthy Economies

Continuing to maintain high commercial fish landings and values is good news for fishermen, fishing communities, and for the Americans who want sustainable, healthy U.S. seafood. We are seeing that responsible management is helping us "turn the corner" toward more sustainable and profitable commercial fisheries.

Trends Among Commercially Important Species



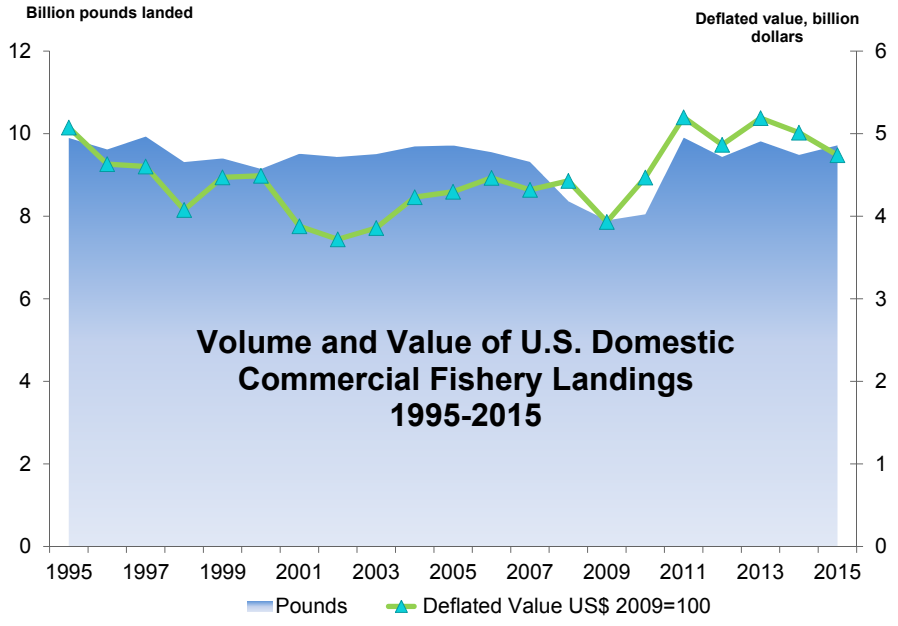




By the Numbers

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES LANDINGS

U.S. commercial fishermen landed 9.7 billion pounds of seafood in 2015, valued at $5.2 billion. These figures represent a small increase in pounds (2.4 percent) and a decrease in value (4.5 percent) over 2014. Volume and value remain similar to recent years.



REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Alaska led all states in both volume and value of landings, increasing 6% in volume and 3% in value. In the Mid-Atlantic, volume increased by 7% and value increased by 9%. In the Gulf of Mexico region, landings increased 27%, while value decreased by 17%.

TOP 5 STATES

By volume of landings:

1. Alaska (6.0 billion pounds)
2. Louisiana (1.1 billion pounds)
3. Virginia (410.3 million pounds)
4. Washington (363.0 million pounds)
5. Mississippi (304.1 million pounds)

By value of landings:

1. Alaska ($1.8 billion)
2. Maine ($588.3 million)
3. Massachusetts ($524.9 million)
4. Louisiana ($339.8 million)
5. Washington ($274.1 million)

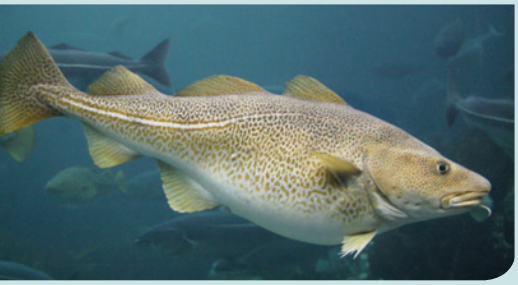
RECREATIONAL FISHERIES LANDINGS

Recreational anglers took 61 million trips and caught 351 million fish in 2015. Of the total number of fish caught, 57% fish were released alive. The estimated total weight of landed catch (151 million fish) was 188 million pounds. Striped bass remains the top catch among saltwater anglers, with more than 17.1 million pounds (1.3 million fish) caught in 2015.

What's behind some of the changes?

Landings of some species went up and some went down. For example, menhaden showed a strong increase, up 29% from 2014 to 1.6 billion pounds, after several years of lower catch. Alaska pollock continued to have a very strong catch increasing 4% to 3.3 billion pounds. Conversely, species such as Pacific sardine declined 84% from 2014 due to a closure of the fishery. Pacific squid (Loligo) also decreased 64% from 2014.

Overall, the total volume of landings showed a small increase (2.4% equal to 232 million pounds) from the 2014 level. However the value of the catch declined (4.5% equal to $245 million).



What about the performance of catch share programs?

The first catch share program in the U.S. was implemented in 1990. Today, there are 16 catch share programs currently in place nationwide. NOAA Fisheries developed new performance indicators to measure the economic performance of U.S. catch share programs. A full report documenting the performance of these programs was released in August 2013. To learn more, visit: https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/economics/fisheries/commercial/catch-share-program/index

Top U.S. Commercial Fishing Ports

For the 19th consecutive year, Dutch Harbor, Alaska led the nation as the port with the highest volume of seafood landed (785 million pounds valued at $212 million). Alaska pollock (walleye) made up 88% of the volume and 43% of the value. High-value snow crabs and king crabs accounted for an additional 44% of the value of Dutch Harbor landings and 4.7% of the volume. For the 16th consecutive year, New Bedford, Massachusetts had the highest valued catch, due in large part to the highly valued sea scallop fishery. Sea scallops account for 76% of the value of landings in New Bedford.

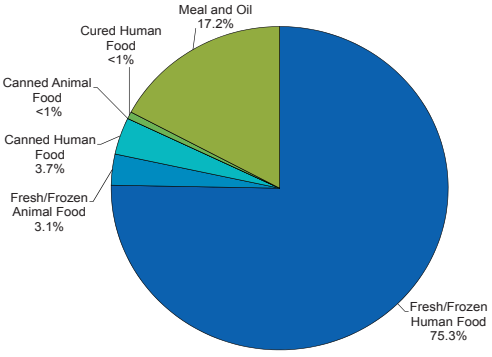
Sustainable Seafood

Americans consumed nearly 5 billion pounds of seafood in 2015. The U.S. is the World's second largest consumer of seafood after China according to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The average American ate 15.5 pounds of fish and shellfish in 2015, an increase of 0.9 pounds from 2014.

While most fish caught in the United States is consumed as seafood, just over 20% of the 2015 catch was used for other products such as pet food, fish meal, and oil.

Disposition of U.S. Domestic Landings, 2015

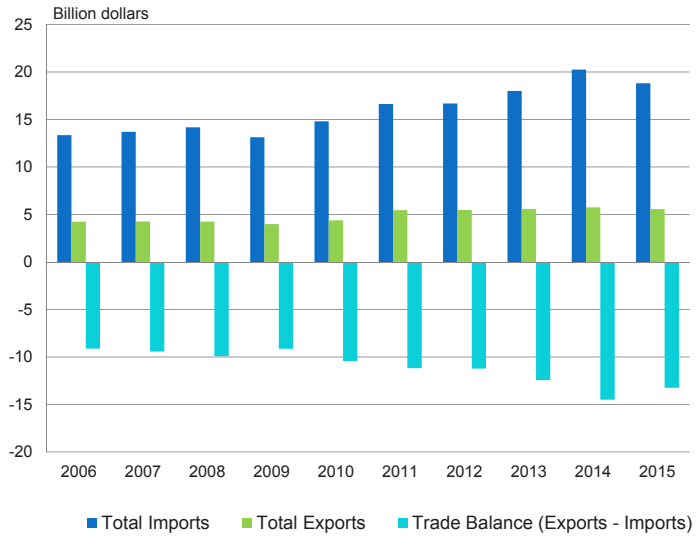


Fresh Facts, Smart Seafood

When consumers go to the market for seafood, they can be assured that if the species is harvested in the U.S., it has been caught or farmed responsibly. NOAA Fisheries provides the public with easy-to-understand, science-based facts at FishWatch.gov to help them make smart, sustainable seafood choices. FishWatch delivers regularly updated information on how U.S. seafood is harvested under regulations that keep the environment healthy, fish populations thriving, and our seafood industry on the job.

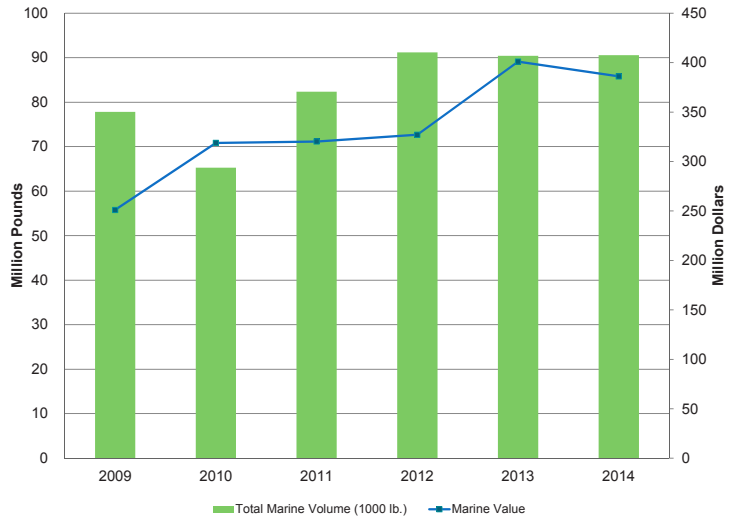
Imports and Exports

To meet consumer demand, the United States continues to be a major importer of seafood. Over 90% of the seafood consumed in the United States is imported, measured by edible weight. This measure has been rising in recent years reflecting an increase in imported seafood. However, a significant portion of this imported seafood is caught by American fishermen, exported overseas for processing, and then reimported to the United States.



Aquaculture

The U.S. aquaculture industry produced $1.3 billion worth of seafood in 2014. Marine aquaculture production has been increasing steadily in recent years, increasing at an average annual rate of about 3% from 2009 to 2013. Because aquaculture focuses on high-value food species, the value of U.S. aquaculture production equals about 20% of the value of total U.S. seafood production, while the volume equals 6% of the total production. The top U.S. marine aquaculture species are oysters ($168 million), clams ($121 million), and Atlantic salmon ($76 million).



Collecting Reliable Data

The collection and analysis of recreational and commercial catches provide scientists and managers with important information they need to make informed decisions. We use a number of different methods—including surveys, catch cards, and logbooks—to gather recreational and commercial fishing landings data. Fishermen's landings combined with other sources of fishery-independent data give us a good understanding of the health and productivity of the resource.

For more information:

Fisheries.noaa.gov