

## U.S. Seafood Exports in 1988 Set Record; Fish Consumption Down

The United States exported \$2.2 billion worth of seafood in 1988, making it the best year ever, and beating the 1987 record export figure by 37 percent, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced in March. U.S. seafood imports, always higher than exports, fell for the first time in 14 years, as Americans bought \$5.3 billion worth of edible fishery products from abroad, 5 percent below the 1987 total. Most of these purchases were high-value products like cod, shrimp, tuna, and lobster.

The bulk of the U.S. exports went to Japan, traditionally the United States' best customer. In 1988 Japan purchased almost \$1.6 billion worth of seafood, up 49 percent from 1987. Seventy-three percent of the value of all U.S. seafood exports went to Japan last year, NOAA said.

"The strong yen, Japan's high per capita income, and its vigorous economy have combined to make it our biggest market," said Terry Ellington, an economist with NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service. In addition, Ellington said, Japan's access to other countries' fishing zones has been drastically curtailed recently. In the early 1980's, for example, Japan was harvesting well over a million tons of fish each year from U.S. waters. Last year its fishing allocation in the U.S. zone was reduced to zero.

Canada was the United States' second biggest seafood buyer, with \$156 million in purchases, down 1 percent from 1987. Following were the United Kingdom (\$80.5 million), France (\$71.7 million), and South Korea (\$43.8 million). Only the United Kingdom showed any appreciable change—up 17 percent—from the

1987 figures. Salmon, in one form or another, made up the bulk of American fish sold abroad, accounting for 44 percent of the total value of U.S.-exported seafood.

### Fish Product Exports

In 1988, Pacific Northwest and Alaska exports of edible fishery products scored an impressive 31 percent increase in quantity from 1987 to 795.7 million pounds or 360,944 metric tons (t); the value of these fishery exports increased by 38 percent to \$1.7 billion. Northwest and Alaska exports comprised 78.6 percent of total U.S. edible fishery exports, up slightly from 78.1 percent in 1987. A substantial rise in exports of whole or dressed salmon, other finfish, and snow crab contributed to the increase. In 1988, Pacific Northwest and Alaska exports were shipped to 33 countries. The top six countries accounted for over 96 percent of the total.

Increased trade with Japan accounted for most of the gain, as exports to Japan totaled \$1.4 billion or 82 percent of the total, up from \$936.7 million and 76 percent in 1987. Canada was a distant second with \$90.4 million or 5.3 percent of the total, down from \$92.5 million and 7.5 percent in 1987. Pacific Northwest and Alaska exports to the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea registered increases to \$66 million or 3.9 percent, and \$35.9 million or 2.1 percent, respectively. Exports to France fell drastically, with lower sales of whole or dressed salmon contributing to the decrease.

Over-the-side deliveries by U.S. fishing vessels to foreign processing vessels, commonly called joint ventures sales, off the Pacific Coast

amounted to 3.15 billion pounds or 1.43 million t, with an estimated value of \$220 million. These sales are not included in U.S. trade statistics; if they were included, Pacific Northwest and Alaska exports of edible fishery products would equal \$1.9 billion and comprise 80 percent of U.S. fishery exports.

### Kodiak, Alaska, Sets Fish Landings Record

Fish landed at Kodiak, Alaska, in 1988 were worth more than \$166 million, establishing a new record for the value of landings in the United States and making it the nation's number one port, a position it has not held since 1981, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has announced. The Massachusetts port of New Bedford was second, with fish landings valued at \$141 million, NOAA said. In 1987 Kodiak's fish landings were worth \$144 million.

Cameron, La., was first in volume in 1988, with 439 million pounds of fish landed, mostly low-value menhaden, used for livestock feed and industrial oil. Cameron has been the largest volume U.S. port for more than a decade, but last year's landings were the lowest since 1977. In 1987, 672 million pounds of fish were landed at Cameron.

Several other Alaska ports experienced large increases in either the value or volume of their landings in 1988. Landings at the twin port of Dutch Harbor-Unalaska went from 128 million pounds in 1987 to 377 million pounds last year. Ketchikan's landings virtually doubled in value from \$23 million in 1987 to \$44 million in 1988. And leading-port Kodiak's landings rose from 204 million pounds in 1987 to 305 million pounds last year. In all, six Alaskan ports were among the ten top money makers last year, and two were among the top ten volume ports. The ten leading U.S. ports in volume of fish and shellfish landed in 1988 (in millions of pounds), with 1987 figures for comparison:

**Table 1.—Preliminary landings and values of fish and shellfish in New England on a state-by-state basis in 1987 and 1988.**

State	1987		1988	
	Million pounds	Million dollars	Million pounds	Million dollars
Mass.	258.1	278.9	286.5	274.0
Maine	170.1	132.4	155.9	123.6
R.I.	100.2	77.4	106.3	69.4
N.H.	8.3	7.7	10.8	8.8
Conn.	8.6	16.0	9.1	17.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>545.2</b>	<b>512.4</b>	<b>568.6</b>	<b>493.2</b>

Note: Landings of fish, lobster, and crab in live weight; landings of other shellfish in meat weight.

Port	1987	1988
Cameron, La.	672.4	438.9
Dutch Harbor-Unalaska, Alaska	128.2	377.3
Kodiak, Alaska	204.1	304.6
Empire-Venice, La.	357.4	297.2
Pascagoula-Moss Point, Miss.	391.6	292.0
Dulac-Chauvin, La.	331.7	244.1
Los Angeles, Calif.	203.1	232.0
Intercoastal City, La.	314.3	209.7
Beaufort-Morehead City, N.C.	85.7	110.0
Gloucester, Mass.	93.0	107.4

The ten leading U.S. ports in value of fish and shellfish landed in 1988 (in millions of dollars), with 1987 figures for comparison:

Port	1987	1988
Kodiak, Alaska	132.1	166.3
New Bedford, Mass.	143.7	140.9
Dutch Harbor-Unalaska, Alaska	62.7	100.9
Kenai, Alaska	n/a	99.3
Empire-Venice, La.	60.1	67.7
Petersburg, Alaska	36.9	58.5
Dulac-Chauvin, La.	65.6	56.5
Cordova, Alaska	41.9	46.4
Aransas Pass-Rockport, Tex.	36.4	45.6
Ketchikan, Alaska	22.8	43.5

### New England Harvest Up in Weight

Preliminary figures for commercial landings of New England fish and shellfish during 1988 were 568.6 mil-

**Table 2.—Preliminary landings and values of fish and shellfish in New England on a port-by-port basis in 1987 and 1988.**

Port	1987		1988	
	Million pounds	Million dollars	Million pounds	Million dollars
Gloucester, MA	93.0	34.0	107.4	30.8
New Bedford, MA	78.7	143.7	90.3	141.0
Pt. Judith, RI	46.6	27.4	49.7	25.5
Portland, ME	43.8	35.8	43.9	30.4
Rockland, ME	38.7	8.1	40.6	6.7
Provincetown/Chatham, MA	25.3	12.7	25.2	11.1
Boston, MA	23.0	16.9	20.8	14.5
Newport, RI	11.8	12.4	12.8	11.6

Note: Landings of fish, lobster, and crab in live weight; landings of other shellfish in meat weight.

lion pounds, valued at \$493.2 million. These 1988 figures are up 23.4 million pounds, but down \$19.2 million, from the 1987 figures, according to Allen E. Peterson, Jr., Science and Research Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service's Northeast Region.

This marks the first time since 1984 that the value of New England landings has failed to increase. In the past, decreases in the value of New England landings have generally been attributed to increases in the imports of less expensive Canadian fishery products. However, imports of cod and other finfish from Canada to New England dropped from 1.08 billion pounds in 1987 to 0.95 billion pounds in 1988, indicating that there are probably other market factors affecting prices. Tables 1-3 compare the landings and values of New England fish and shellfish in 1987 and 1988 on a state, port, and species basis. Table 4 has also been included on landings and values of lobsters in each of the New England states.

### Fish Consumption Down

The U.S. per capita consumption of commercially produced seafood fell to 15.0 pounds in 1988, following 5 straight years of increases, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports. The drop, from a record 15.4 pounds per person in 1987, was not unexpected, according to NOAA's National Marine

**Table 3.—Preliminary landings and values of fish and shellfish in New England on a species-by-species basis in 1987 and 1988.**

Species	1987		1988	
	Million pounds	Million dollars	Million pounds	Million dollars
Atlantic herring	84.5	4.4	89.1	5.1
Atlantic cod	58.4	43.7	75.4	42.3
Northern lobster	42.8	124.7	45.2	133.6
Pollock	44.6	17.8	32.9	11.1
Silver hake	25.9	7.3	24.9	5.3
Sea scallop	18.2	80.6	18.4	80.0
Win. flounder	18.4	22.7	16.7	20.7
Yel. flounder	16.4	18.7	10.9	13.0
White hake	11.7	5.2	10.5	3.2
Scup	7.8	5.1	7.9	5.4
Sum. flounder	8.7	14.3	7.7	11.6
N. shrimp	11.1	12.2	6.8	7.5
Haddock	6.6	8.5	6.4	7.0
Swordfish	2.5	8.6	4.1	12.0

Note: Landings of fish, lobster, and shrimp in live weight; landings of scallops in meat weight.

**Table 4.—Preliminary landings and values of lobster in New England on a state-by-state basis in 1987 and 1988.**

State	1987		1988	
	Million pounds	Million dollars	Million pounds	Million dollars
Maine	19.8	54.6	21.7	60.7
Mass.	15.0	43.8	15.5	47.3
R.I.	5.3	17.8	4.9	15.6
Conn.	1.6	5.3	2.0	6.8
N.H.	1.1	3.2	1.1	3.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>124.7</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>133.6</b>

Note: Landings in live weight.

Fisheries Service. Fisheries Service marketing experts said record-breaking seafood exports in 1988, combined with lowered imports, especially frozen blocks of fish steaks and fillets, reduced the overall amount of fish available in the United States.

Consumption of fresh and frozen fish fell from a record 10 pounds per person in 1987 to 9.6 pounds last year. Both canned and cured seafood held steady during the same period at 5.1 and 0.3 pounds per person respectively. The per capita consumption of shrimp rose to a record 2.4 pounds in 1988. The previous record was 2.3 pounds, in 1987. The per capita figures represent the consumption of

edible meat rather than the weight of the whole fish or shellfish, NOAA said.

### ***“Red Tide” Caused 1987 Dolphin Deaths***

Hundreds of bottlenose dolphins that died off the east coast of the United States during the summer of 1987 and into early 1988 were poisoned by eating fish tainted by a naturally occurring toxin from “red tide” algae, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The red tide alga, known as *Ptychodiscus brevis*, produces the powerful poison, brevetoxin, which killed some of the dolphins directly, NOAA said, and weakened others making them more

susceptible to a host of bacterial and viral infections. NOAA reported that this is the first known instance of the toxin’s being transmitted to a mammal through tainted fish.

The toxin itself was confined to the liver and other viscera of the fish. It is not present in the flesh and poses no threat to humans eating fish fillets, NOAA said. The toxin was carried up the coast by fish—possibly menhaden or Spanish mackerel that had eaten menhaden—which had consumed the algae. Red tides are normally confined to the Gulf of Mexico, although occasionally such algal blooms can be carried around Florida and swept north along the Atlantic coast by the Gulf Stream.

Dead dolphins first began washing ashore in southern New Jersey in late June 1987. In early August, NOAA

and the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission assembled an investigative team in Virginia Beach, Va., to examine stranded dolphins, collect tissue samples, and begin an analysis that would eventually involve almost 350 dolphins in thousands of separate tests. The team was headed by Joseph Geraci, a veterinarian working at the University of Guelph in Ontario, and at one point involved more than 100 volunteer scientists and others at dozens of Federal, university, and private agencies and laboratories. The brevetoxin analyses were carried out in the laboratories of Dan Baden at the University of Miami. By March of 1988, when the event ended, about 740 dolphins had washed ashore from New Jersey to Florida. NOAA estimates a substantially larger number died and were lost at sea.