



World Fish Prices Climb to Record on Demand for Salmon and Tuna

By Rudy Rutenberg - Jun 19, 2013

Global fish prices rose to a record in May on rising demand for salmon and falling supplies of tuna, according to the UN's Food & Agriculture Organization.

An index of fish prices tracked by the Rome-based United Nations agency rose to 168 points in May, advancing 6.3 percent from April and up 16 percent from a year ago, data published in the FAO's biannual Food Outlook [report](#) last week show.

Prices for farmed fish such as salmon rose faster than those from capture fisheries in the past year, the FAO data show. Aquaculture production is predicted to climb 5.6 percent in 2013, while capture of wild fish may rise 0.9 percent.

“Strong salmon demand despite rising salmon prices implies a structural shift in consumer demand, which is positive for salmon producers,” the FAO wrote in the outlook. “Despite record high prices, demand for tuna remains strong.”

Total fish production is forecast to climb 2.9 percent to 161.2 million metric tons this year from 156.7 million tons, with aquaculture output climbing to 70.2 million tons from 66.5 million tons. The value of fish exports is predicted to climb 2 percent to \$130.8 billion this year after rising 0.5 percent to \$128.2 billion in 2012.

“The lingering economic crisis in the major seafood importing markets of northern [Europe](#) and [North America](#) has contributed to generally sluggish growth in seafood imports,” the FAO wrote. “Demand for specific products has remained strong, namely salmon and tuna.”

The FAO's index of salmon prices jumped to 195 points in May from 186 in April, surging from 156 in May 2012. The gage for the cost of tuna stood at 221 points, unchanged from the previous month and up from 198 in the year-earlier period.

Canned Fish

Tuna supplies to Asian canners are down this year, lifting prices for the canned fish. [Japan](#)'s market for sashimi tuna was “firm” at the start of 2013, while the U.S. market for uncanned tuna was stable in the face of prices of \$2,000 a ton.

“Evidence shows that the record high tuna prices are not hindering import demand in the major markets,” the FAO wrote. “Canned tuna prices are expected to remain stable in the face of low supply relative to demand.”

World production of farmed salmon is expected to be little changed this year at 2.01 million tons, with output down 2.3 percent to 1.05 million tons in [Norway](#), the largest producer.

Global food consumption of fish is forecast to rise to 19.7 kilograms per capita this year from 19.2 kilograms in 2012, mainly as consumers eat more farmed fish, according to the Food Outlook report.

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