

FISHERY COUNTRY PROFILE**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United
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2004****PROFIL DE LA PÊCHE PAR PAYS****Organisation des Nations Unies
pour l'alimentation et
l'agriculture****RESUMEN INFORMATIVO
SOBRE
LA PESCA POR PAISES****Organización de las Naciones
Unidas para la Agricultura y la
Alimentación****THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA****STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INDUSTRY****Marine fisheries**

The sea bottom of Albania varies from north to south. In the north, the shelf is larger and the slope less steep to the 200 m isobath and so more easy to trawl. In the south, where the water depth rapidly reaches 200 m, it is uneven and covered with rocks and thus difficult for trawling. The marine fish fauna of commercial interest comprises several species and groups of demersals, small and large pelagic fishes, crustaceans and molluscs.

Table 1. Most important species

10-50 m	<i>Eledone moschata, Octopus vulgaris, Mullus barbatus, Raja clavata, Merluccius merluccius</i>
50-100 m	<i>Merluccius merluccius, Lophius budegassa, Trachurus trachurus, Mullus barbatus, Eledone moschata</i>
100-200 m	<i>Merluccius merluccius, Mullus barbatus, Eledone cirrhosa, Zeus faber, Trachurus trachurus</i>
200-500 m	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris, Eledone cirrhosa, Merluccius merluccius, Loligo vulgaris, Nephrops norvegicus</i>
500-800 m	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris, Aristaeomorpha foliacea, Lophius piscatorius, Merluccius merluccius, Phycis blennoides</i>

Table 2. Catches (tonnes) in 2001 and 2002

Category	2001	2002
Marine catch, of which	1 466	1 956
trawl	1 190	1 721
pelagic	120	80
purse seiners	156	155
Coastal line fisheries	116	90
Coastal lagoon fisheries	240	235
Inland waters	1 588	1 373
Aquaculture	35	108
Molluscs	150	350
Total catch	3 595	4 112

Fleet

The Albanian fleet consists of 158 licensed vessels. This data does not completely reflect the real size of the fishing fleet as some boats holding licences (especially large steel-hulled vessels) are active on an intermittent or seasonal basis and there are small vessels that fish without licences.

Most vessels are based in Durres (65 vessels; 41% of the registered fleet), then Vlora, Shengjin and Saranda, with 39, 28 and 26 vessels, respectively. The registered fleet mostly consists of vessels built in neighbouring countries and sold to Albanian shipowners. Two-thirds of Shengjin vessels are trawlers, while over half the registered vessels in Sarande are small-scale fishing boats.

2 400 persons are employed in marine fisheries.

Marine demersal fisheries

Trawlers and smaller vessels using long-lines and gill nets currently exploit the marine demersal resources. In general, the vessels are old and their condition is poor. Fish caught by larger vessels are boxed and iced at sea. Few vessels are equipped with modern aides to fishing, such as echo sounders or global position recorders.

Fishing trawlers use nets with cod ends of a mesh size of 14–18 mm; other countries of the region use 24 mm minimum.

Small pelagic fishes

In the past, Albanian vessels caught sardines, and to a lesser extent anchovy using small purse seines. Currently this fishery is largely underexploited and modernizing the fleet is a priority.

Shell fisheries

The commercial fishery for bivalve molluscs, principally clam, was closed by MoAF in June 1991 because of severe depletion of the resources and closure of the main export markets as the product failed to satisfy EU sanitary requirements.

Castal lagoon fisheries

Along the Albanian coast there are some coastal lagoons, with a total surface area of about 10 000 ha. These coastal lagoons are: Velipoja (600 ha); Merxhan (300 ha); Ceka (800 ha); Patoku (250 ha); Karavasta (3800 ha); Narta (2800 ha); Orikum (150 ha); Kune-Vain (250 ha), Vilun (250 ha) and Butrinti (1600 ha). Depths average 1 m, with a maximum of 5 m.

The main species found in this lagoons are mullets (*Mugil* spp., *Liza* spp. and *Chelon* spp.), sea bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), sea bream, *Sprattus aurata*, sand smelt (*Atherina hepsetus*), etc.

In the coastal lagoons fish barriers are commonly used which are fixed fishing gear based on the principle of V-shaped traps and made of plastic pipe in the main channel. Small boats operating in coastal lagoons use gillnets, hooks and other selective gear. About 100 boats are equipped with engines.

Fisheries in inland waters

Fishing is performed in rivers, lakes and agricultural reservoirs by small groups of fishermen. Over 2 000 persons find employment in this activity.

The main rivers are the Buna (44 km); Drini (285 km); Erzeni (108 km); Mati (144 km); Semani (281 km); Shkumbini (181 km); and Vjose (272 km).

The main natural lakes of Albania are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Main natural lakes

Name	Maximum depth (m)	Surface (km ²)	Area within Albania (km ²)
Ohrid	295	362.6	114.1
Shkodra	44	368	149
Prespa e Madhe	54	285	43.8
Prespa e Vogel	8	43.9	4.9

In addition there is a significant number of artificial waterbodies created since 1950, such as the important hydropower lakes on the river Drini cascade, and about 570 agricultural reservoirs countrywide.

Recreational sub-sector

This is insignificant, and the recreational fishing does not require a licence.

Aquaculture sub-sector

Aquaculture in Albania started at the end of the 1960s, originally based on common carp. Then Chinese carps were introduced at the beginning of the 1970s. Cold water salmonids (*Salmo letnica* and *Oncorhynchus mykiss*) are another important group in aquaculture production in Albania. Mollusc culture (especially *Mytilus galloprovincialis*) began more recently, and average annual production has reached about 2 000 tonne.

Fish utilization

Fish trade in Albania is mainly concentrated in areas near the four main harbours. The main species traded are hake, mullet, cuttlefish, squid, sea bream and sea bass. The distribution of fish products has undergone rapid change in the last five years in Albania. The pattern of trading is quite simple due to the low number of operators. Even though there is still no organized network, there have been proposals for support for the creation of a strong distribution chain, considered necessary if the internal market is to develop. The links in such a chain would comprise wholesalers and the retail and catering trade, all private companies.

The private companies at present receive, process and export fresh fish products, mainly to Italy and Greece, and it is estimated that nearly 80% of the higher-valued fish caught is

exported. Part of the fish produced is sold in the domestic market. However, fish and fish products are not traditionally a significant part of the national diet, with Albanians consuming only about 3 kg of fish *per capita* per year, equivalent to around 8% of the total animal protein intake. The domestic market also consumes some imported fish and fish products. These imports were initially destined for consumption, and have subsequently been used as raw material for processing.

Economic role of fisheries industry

In 2002, Albanian fish production was about 4 100 tonne, with a value of US\$ 18 million. Until a few years ago, nearly 80% of the higher-valued catch was exported, with limited domestic consumption. Internal consumption was based mainly on meals served in restaurants. Since then, internal consumption has increased sharply, with more catch used for internal consumption. The price of higher-valued produce stands at around lek 650/kg. Less valuable catch averages lek 300/kg.

In 2002, 2 000 tonne of fish was exported. About half of marine production goes to the European Union (EU), mainly Italy and Greece. To supply this market, there are 36 processing establishments, which also serve the internal market. These establishments meet international norms and standards and are certified for export to the EU. This sector supports 550 jobs, primarily processing and packing for export.

RESEARCH

The Fishery Research Institute, Durrës. This institute has a staff of 52 and operates five fingerling production units for restocking. The main scientific activities of the Institute are fish stock assessment, study of Albania's lagoons and their potentials, and restocking of inland water bodies with fingerlings.

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

Albania is member of and participates actively in Regional Fishery Organizations. It is a member of the General Fishery Council for the Mediterranean (GFCM), assists in intergovernmental organization of the International Organization of Fishery Development in East and Central European Countries (EUROFISH) and participates in a number of international projects in the fishery field.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND FOREIGN AID

Considering the importance of external financial resources for development within Albania, all donors involved with the fishing industry are listed and associated with the measures in the various Action Plans.

Phare – SOP

The Phare Programme is currently the main channel for EU financial and technical cooperation with countries of central and eastern Europe. In Albania, it is providing funds for a few projects, *inter alia* Technical Assistance to the Fishery Directorate, the realization of a fish market in Vlore, and the realization of two slipways. It is now going to implement the Sector Operative Programme (SOP). SOP 1999 takes into account the recommendations and conclusions of the Fisheries Sector Study funded by PHARE in 1996, SOP 1997 and SOP 1998. According to these studies, the fishery sector can benefit through the provision of infrastructure and services to the Fishery Directorate.

ADRIAMED

ADRIAMED is a project financed by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and managed by FAO. It aims to promote sustainable development of the fishery sector. In this context, the associated countries (Albania, Croatia, Italy and Slovenia) have set up a network for controlling and regulating fishing effort in the area.

INTERREG II

INTERREG is an EU programme. The objective of the new phase of INTERREG is to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the EU by promoting cross-border, trans-national and interregional cooperation and balanced development of the EU area. Particular attention will be given to cooperation development across the Adriatic and the Southern Balkans, promoting the preservation of the environment and good management of natural resources, in particular water resources.

World Bank Fisheries Development Project

The main objectives of the proposed project are to achieve sustainable use of marine resources and increase the household incomes of fishing communities. The project would support the Government of Albania's initiatives to strengthen its capacity in essential public functions, such as research, training and regulation in the fishery sector.

The main objectives of the project are: (i) develop regional and national fishermen's associations; (ii) provide policy and institutional support; and (iii) promote aquaculture development.

The value of the project is US\$ 6.7 million.