

FISHERY COUNTRY PROFILEFood and Agriculture
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PROFIL DE LA PÊCHE PAR PAYSOrganisation 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**SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES****GENERAL ECONOMIC DATA**

Land area:	345 sq. km
Coastal Shelf Area:	7 800 km ²
Length of coastline:	84 km
Population (1999):	113 000
Gross Domestic Product (Factor Cost, 1999):	US\$ 249 million
Fishing contribution to GDP (1999):	2 per cent
GDP per caput (1999):	US\$ 2 158

FISHERIES DATA**Commodity balance (1999):**

	Production	Import	Export	Total supply	Per capita supply
	Ton liveweight				Kg/year
Fish for direct human consumption	15 573	1 102	163	1 711	15.1
Fish for animal feed and other purposes	14 800	-	-	-	-

Estimated employment (1999):	
(i) Primary sector:	1 550 registered fishers. Approximately 2 500 full-time and part-time fishers
(ii) Secondary sector:	ca. 500 fish vendors, traders, gutters and handlers
Gross value of Fisheries Output (1999):	US\$ 14 200 000
Trade :	
Value of imports (2000)	US\$ 1 149 000
Value of exports (2000)	US\$ 961 000

STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INDUSTRY

Fleet structure

The fleet consists of approximately 600 vessels operating from thirty landing sites. The majority of these vessels are open and powered by outboard engines of 14 to 200 hp, and exploit both oceanic and inshore pelagic species, as well as the shelf and deep slope demersals. Recent statistics indicate that 59 of these vessels are less than 12 foot; 274 are between 12 and 20 foot; 175 are between 20 and 30 foot; 10 between 30 and 40 foot; and 8 between 40 and 66 foot. Pirogues, Bow and Stern and Double-Enders, constructed mainly from wood or fibreglass, dominate the fishing fleet.

A significant number of traditional gears are utilized in St Vincent and the Grenadines. These include trolling lines, bottom handlines and beach seines. In many cases, the trolling line, as well as the bottom lines and in some cases *palangs*, are gear types utilized by a single fishing unit. Many artisanal vessels fish for demersals during the low or off season of the small offshore pelagics.

Aquaculture

At present there is no commercial-scale aquaculture in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Utilization of the catch

Most of the catch is sold fresh or chilled on ice. The large pelagic species are usually gutted before they are taken to the market. The larger fishing vessels, with insulated fish holds, process their catch at sea and may keep their catch on board until it is sold. Demersals are generally not processed and are sold whole to consumers. A small quantity of lobster and conch is sold live to hotels and restaurants for storage in corrals until required for use.

A small proportion of the catch is salted and dried, mainly from unsold catch and in the Grenadines. Blackfish meat is cut into strips and dried on bamboo, while the blubber is boiled to a crisp in vats to extract the oil. The crisps remain of the blubber is sold as "blackfish crisps". Fish is often filleted or sliced, tray packed, and sold in supermarkets. Small quantities of fish are filleted, dipped in brine, lightly smoked and vacuum packed for

sale to restaurants and for export.

State of the industry

The fishing industry in St Vincent and the Grenadines is predominantly small scale and artisanal, employing traditional gear, methods and vessels. Most fishers are daily operators, going out to sea in the morning and returning to land in the late afternoon or evening.

There are approximately 2 500 full-time and part-time fishers, and 1 550 have been registered in the Licensing and Registration System (LRS) so far. Plans are currently in place to have all fishers registered by the end of 2002.

Fish landings in St Vincent and the Grenadines are an estimated 2.5 million pounds [1 120 t] of fish annually, generating an estimated \$EC 7 million. The small inshore pelagics, which include primarily robin [Japanese scad] (*Decapturus macarellus*), jack [bigeye scad] (*Selar crumenophthalmus*), dodger [round scad] (*Decapturus punctatus*) and spratt [scaled sardine] (*Harengula pensacola*), accounted for approximately 45% of the total landings, together with off-shore pelagics (25%), demersals (20%), shellfish (5%) and others (5%).

Average annual fish exports amounts to an estimated 390 000 pounds [175 t], realizing approximately \$EC 2 million dollars. Tuna and lobster account for more than 75% of fish exports.

Over the past six years or so, there has been significant infrastructural development at various landing sites. The construction of these centres was part of a Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines plan to improve the distribution and marketing system of fish, as well as to improve the quality and quantity of fish supplies. The industry was further enhanced by the introduction of longline vessels; the provision of relevant training of fisherfolk in the utilization of new gear and methods; improved fish processing; and the granting of concessions, incentives and subsidies to fishers and fishing enterprises.

Economic role of the fishing industry

The fisheries subsector contributes approximately 2% to GDP of St Vincent and the Grenadines. Approximately 7% of the total labour force is engaged directly or indirectly in the fishing industry, with most of them depending solely on fishing for their livelihood.

Demand

With an increasing population and a developing tourism sector, as well as a move towards a healthier life style, the demand for fish is increasing rapidly. Fish caught locally provides about 70% of the per capita consumption of fish and fish products. The other 30% is imported as canned or otherwise processed fish, amounting to an estimated US \$ 2.7 million annually.

DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines is currently implementing strategies to aid in the development of the fishing industry, with three main aims:

- To improve processing and handling of fish and fish products to meet international standards. The first step towards this venture was the improvement of the handling and marketing facilities and to promote the use of ice on vending stalls during the sale of fish. New and improved vessels with ice holds and other navigational

equipment were also introduced. Members of the Fisheries Division have been trained in quality assurance and product development through Japanese and European Union assistance. The division has received through Japanese and European Union assistance equipment for monitoring bacteria, degradation of protein and heavy metals in seafood, as well as for product development.

- To manage traditionally utilized species and to start targeting the un- or under-utilized species (e.g. the Warsaw grouper) so as to enhance on a sustainable basis the potential of the living marine resources to meet human nutritional needs, as well as social, cultural, economic and development goals.
- To introduce new and improve gear technology to promote increased production, and in particular from under-utilized species.

RESEARCH AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Fisheries Division has a Biology and Research Unit, which also functions as the Division's Research and Resource Management Unit. A number of programmes are being coordinated by the unit, including: assessment of all species of commercial importance; research on cetaceans and on the Warsaw grouper; establishment and refinement of the licensing and registration system; liaising with competent regional and international fisheries management organizations; drafting and revising fisheries management plans; and maintenance, storage and use of relevant research equipment. There are some financial limitations, human resources and technical constraints impeding the effective implementation of some of these programmes. The Division is equipped with laboratory facilities, but is limited in the volume of work that can be done due to lack of equipment and personnel.

AID

Since the mid-1980s, St Vincent and the Grenadines has developed and maintained a good relationship with Japan. Prior to the mid-1980s, Canada provided assistance, while more recently both Canada and the United Kingdom have made useful contributions in terms of fisheries aid. Some Fisheries Division staff, fishers and others have benefited from training offered by these countries. Japan has offered technical expertise in the fields of fishing gear technology; outboard and inboard engine repair and maintenance; food technology, product development and quality assurance; and biological research. St Vincent and the Grenadines has benefited from a number of programmes initiated by CARICOM Fisheries Resource Assessment and Management Programme (CFRAMP) that are jointly funded by CARICOM member states and the Government of Canada. St Vincent and the Grenadines has supported and benefited from organizations with fisheries mandates, such as the former Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Fisheries Desk – now the Natural Resources Management Unit (NRMU), CARICOM (CFRAMP), Organization of American States (OAS), Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC), and FAO.

INTERNET LINKS

The Fisheries Division has a web site (<http://www.vincy.com/fisheries>) and an e-mail address (fishdiv@caribsurf.com).