

Global capture fisheries production - Metadata

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01) Title

Global capture fisheries production - Metadata

02) Data source information

Compiling Organization

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Data source

[Global capture production](#)

03) Contact

Contact organization

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Contact organization unit

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04) Update date

Metadata last posted

28/03/2026

Metadata last update

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05) Statistical presentation

Data description

This dataset covers annual series of the volume of total capture fisheries production from 1950 by country or area, species and FAO major fishing area. Data cover aquatic animals (fish, crustaceans, molluscs, etc.), aquatic plants (seaweed and other algae) and aquatic products (shells, corals, pearls and sponges) harvested

through capture fisheries activities, taken for commercial, industrial, recreational and subsistence purposes from inland waters, brackish and marine areas. Data include all quantities caught and landed for both food and feed purposes, but exclude discards and live escapements or losses prior to landings.

Coverage

The dataset provides a comprehensive coverage of the global capture fisheries production, including approximately 3 900 species items, 26 major fishing areas and 249 countries or areas. FAO strives to provide data for all countries and territories covering fisheries production at the most detailed level of species items.

Sector coverage

Capture fisheries

Statistical concepts and definitions

Capture fisheries refers to the hunting, collecting and gathering activities directed at removing or collecting live wild aquatic organisms. Data relate to nominal landings, converted into a live weight basis (wet weight for algae), of fish, crustaceans, molluscs, aquatic mammals, other aquatic animals, products (corals, pearls and sponges) and aquatic plants (seaweed and other algae) taken for commercial, industrial, recreational and subsistence purposes from inland waters, brackish and marine areas, including inshore, offshore and high seas marine fishing areas. Data include all quantities caught and landed for both food and feed purposes but exclude discards, live escapements or losses prior to landings. The flag of the fishing vessel performing the essential part of the fishing operation is used to assign nationality to catches, unless the wording of chartering and joint operation contracts indicates otherwise.

Fish, crustaceans, molluscs and all other aquatic organisms included in the dataset have been classified according to approximately 3 900 commercial species items, further arranged within the 50 groups of species constituting the nine divisions of the FAO International Standard Statistical Classification of Aquatic Animals and Plants (ISSCAAP) on the basis of their taxonomic, ecological and economic characteristics. The taxonomic code descriptors are taken from the “ASFIS list of species for fishery statistics purposes” (version 2026), which will be disseminated during summer 2026. Please note that the list of species disseminated in these datasets might not adhere entirely to ASFIS (version 2026) due to differing publication schedules. More information about the ASFIS list and the ISSCAAP classification is available at <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/collection/asfis>.

Capture production is also classified according to the inland water or marine area where the catches took place. These are divided into eight FAO major inland fishing areas and 19 FAO major marine [fishing areas](#), internationally established for fishery statistical purposes.

Statistical concepts and standards related to fisheries and aquaculture statistics are available in the [Handbook of Fishery Statistics of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics \(CWP\)](#).

Reference area

The list of countries and the geographical classification are primarily based on the UN “[Standard country or area codes for statistical use](#)”. Additional country classifications available in the released workspace of this dataset available in FishStatJ or online query panel are based on a variety of sources. Here below the main ones:

- [Least Developed Countries \(LDC\) \(version 2024\)](#)
- [Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries \(LIFDCs\) \(2026 revision\)](#)
- [Landlocked Developing Countries \(LLDCs\)](#)
- [Small Island Developing States \(SIDS\)](#)
- [Net Food-Importing Developing Countries \(NFIDC\) \(2024 revision\)](#)

- [The classification of the World Bank by income \(2026 revision\)](#)

The term “country” or “country or area” as used in the dataset also covers territories, cities and land areas, as well as provinces, districts, enclaves and other parts of territories or combinations of countries or areas such as economic or customs unions. Country or area names and designations are subject to nationally announced changes. Name changes announced recently may not have been incorporated in this dataset release but will be reflected in future ones. The designations employed and the presentation of material in this dataset do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Specific notes on geographical coverage:

- 1) Information provided by Ukraine excludes statistical data concerning the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. The information is presented without prejudice to relevant UN General Assembly and UN Security Council resolutions, which reaffirm the territorial integrity of Ukraine.
- 2) Information provided by the Russian Federation includes statistical data for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation.
- 3) Data for countries that belonged to the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (former USSR) are available as a single aggregate until 1991.
- 4) For statistical purposes, the data for China do not include China, Hong Kong SAR, China, Macao SAR and Taiwan Province of China, which are presented separately. Therefore, “China” refers to China’s mainland only.
- 5) Detailed country or area notes are available inside the global fisheries and aquaculture production workspace in FishStatJ.

Time coverage

From 1950 to 2024

Base period

Not applicable

06) Unit of measure

Production of fish, crustaceans and molluscs are expressed in live weight, that is the nominal weight of the aquatic organisms at the time of harvest. Production of aquatic plants is given in wet weight. Data are expressed in tonnes (=1000 kg), except those for whales, seals and crocodiles, which are given in numbers.

07) Reference period

The annual period used is the calendar year (1 January-31 December), with the exceptions of capture data in the Antarctic fishing areas (up to 2011) and for some countries for which a split-year is used. Starting with the March 2004 release, the new fishing season (1 December-30 November) of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) has been adopted. Split-year data are shown under the calendar year in which the split-year ends.

08) Institutional mandate

Legal acts and other agreements

[Article I of the FAO Constitution](#) requires the Organization to collect, analyze, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture (FAO, 1945).

Data acquisition and data transmission

These statistics are drawn primarily from official data from countries and territories, who have primary responsibility for data collection. FAO collects data from countries annually through questionnaires specific to each dataset and each country. Data are complemented or replaced, when necessary, by data from other sources (e.g. regional fisheries management organizations and distant water fleets in exclusive economic zones) in accordance with the standards of the CWP.

09) Confidentiality

Confidentiality - policy

FAO data and statistics are produced in accordance with FAO Policy on Data Protection and the implementation modalities of FAO SDQAF Principle 4 on Data protection and Statistical Confidentiality.

Confidentiality - data treatment

If any, confidential data are not disseminated by FAO as such. Suppressed confidential data are marked in the database with SDMX flag “Q - Missing value; suppressed”.

Privacy

Not applicable

10) Release policy

Release calendar

FAO FishStat data releases follow a release calendar available publicly at the main FAO FishStat page at [<https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/fishstat>]. Global fisheries and aquaculture production data for the most recent available year are disseminated annually in March.

Release calendar access

[Release calendar](#)

User access

This data domain is disseminated according to FAO’s Open Data Licensing for Statistical Databases Policy, under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license \(CC-BY 4.0\)](#) and are subject to [FAO Statistical Database Terms of Use](<https://www.fao.org/contact-us/terms/db-terms-of-use/en/>).

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11) Frequency of dissemination

Yearly

12) Accessibility and clarity

News release

Not applicable

Publications

[FAO Fishery and Aquaculture Statistical Yearbook](#)

Online database

[Global Capture Production](#)

Micro-data access

Not applicable

Other formats

This dataset can be consulted through different [tools and formats](#)

Documentation on methodology

National reference metadata are submitted by some countries, but these are not yet disseminated by FAO. Information on the methodology followed is available in the Annex 2 “Methodological notes and glossary” of the [FAO Yearbook Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics](#).

13) Relevance

User needs

The main users are FAO analysts, other international organizations, ministries and government agencies, agro-industry, trade and professional associations, research institutes and universities, journalists and the general public. According to the 2023 FishStat database user consultation, researchers are the largest user group, accounting for almost 32 percent of total respondents, followed by students and educators (around 25 percent), while users from private companies represent a share of 15 percent. The objectives of these users vary, but fishery and aquaculture production statistics are especially useful for market management/monitoring, production forecasts and policy-making in the sector. FAO is not aware of unmet needs. Users are encouraged to contact the dataset owner for resolving more specific queries that are not addressed elsewhere in these metadata.

User satisfaction

The latest quality review is the FishStat database user consultation took place during July-December 2023. About 93 percent of returning users agreed that the FishStat database was adequate for their purpose. As for compliance of the data with the FAO SDQAF quality dimensions, the overall percentage of satisfied responses was about 81 percent, while the percentage of fully satisfied users simultaneously across all the 5 quality dimensions was 53 percent. The percentage of fully satisfied users is defined as the share of respondents who selected “agree” or “strongly agree” simultaneously across all the different 5 SDQAF dimensions.

Completeness

The availability of official data reported by countries varies widely. Whenever national offices failed to report their annual fishery and aquaculture statistics in time for the dissemination of the dataset, FAO estimated the quantities on the basis of other available information using approved methodologies in order to create a comprehensive global dataset. These estimates enable meaningful aggregates at the global, regional and national levels.

In terms of species, FAO tries to collate and disseminate data at the most detailed level available. However, several countries still report their production by large groups of species. In these circumstances the data presented by individual species items may, in some cases, be underestimated. Therefore, when examining the statistics for a particular species, it should be noted that an unknown proportion of the production for that species might have been reported by the national office under the generic, family or order name of the species, or higher levels of aggregation such as “Marine water fishes NEI” or “Freshwater fishes NEI”. Consequently, species item totals may underestimate the real production of the individual species.

14) Accuracy and reliability

Overall accuracy

The share of inputted data (“I”) is about 15 percent of the total. Quality of the data varies according to the country, in particular in reference to the granularity of the detail by species. Overall, this granularity has improved significantly from about 660 species items in the early 1950s to over 3 900 species items in 2024. On the other hand, 20 percent of the production is still not reported at species level, but in broader groups, at family or higher taxonomic level.

Model assumption error

Not applicable

Imputation indicators

Imputation rate (quantities): 15 percent in 2024.

Data revision - policy

Prefilled questionnaires are sent out with reported data for the previous seven years, which countries are asked to revise when they report data for the new production year.

Data revision - practice

Countries regularly revise their official statistics for past periods as well as for the latest reporting year. Estimates/imputations done by FAO might be also revised on the basis of more accurate information. When previously published data are revised, they are disseminated concurrently with the new data release. Therefore, users are advised to refrain from comparing data published in previous releases with the latest one.

15) Timeliness and punctuality

Timeliness

The deadline for submitting capture fisheries data to FAO is usually between 8 to 9 months after the end of the reference year. Data are then normally processed and disseminated within 6 months.

Punctuality

The release is according to the schedule of the calendar.

16) Coherence and comparability

Comparability - geographical

Data are mostly comparable between geographical areas, countries or regions. However it should be taken into account that the degree of comparability might be affected by the differences in methods and coverage of data collections between countries, except for regions where countries are bound by regulations mandating harmonized methods, such as European Union countries.

Comparability - over time

For shorter time periods, reasonably good comparability over time can be expected. However, as the time series might be very long, full comparability over time cannot be expected. Detailed information on data variations and methodological changes is provided in the country notes, available in FishStatJ “Global fisheries and aquaculture production” workspace, capture production dataset.

Coherence

FAO capture production statistics are the only global source of this kind and it is not possible to compare them with other data sources or statistical domains. Yet, the use of internationally recognised code lists such as the “ASFIS list of species items” and the FAO major fishing areas, help to ensure cross-domain coherence. Production, processed production and trade data have a high cross-domain coherence, as they are used as inputs in the food balance sheets, which serve as an additional validation of the data in a single supply and utilization framework.

Classification system

- [The FAO International Standard Statistical Classification for Aquatic Animals and Plants \(ISSCAAP\)](#)
- [FAO ASFIS list](#)
- [FAO Major fishing areas for statistical purposes](#)
- [UN “STANDARD COUNTRY OR AREA CODES FOR STATISTICAL USE”](#)

17) Statistical process

Source data

The main data source is official statistics from FAO member countries. The national data can originate from surveys, administrative databases and estimates based on expert observations. The type of source used by countries can significantly affect reliability and comparability of data. In nearly all cases where countries provide their official production data, these are recorded as reported. However, in the case of issues with the data received, FAO works with the countries to revise their data in order to ensure consistency of the disseminated data. Data are complemented or replaced, when necessary, by information derived from other sources (e.g. regional fisheries management organizations and distant water fleets in exclusive economic zones) in accordance with the standards of the CWP. When no official data are available, unofficial sources may be used. If neither official nor unofficial sources are available, data are imputed. In all cases, disseminated data are flagged accordingly.

Frequency of data collection and acquisition

Yearly

Data collection method

FAO data collection is carried out through collaboration with country correspondents in Member States. The data collection process relies on annual production questionnaires (FishStat-NS) sent to countries, as well as data from national publications and official country websites.

Data validation

Countries are responsible for transmitting data which have already been checked. Validation at FAO concerns any transmission errors and data consistency checks, as well as outlier detection in line with the [FAO statistical standard on data editing and validation of input data](#) and cross check with data from regional fisheries management organizations for selected species. Other validations consist in assessing consistency over the time series, regularity of totals and partial components and correspondence between variables from different data sets. In the case of issues with the data received, FAO works with the countries to revise their data in order to ensure consistency of the disseminated data.

Data compilation

FAO is responsible for compiling the data and generating aggregates.

Regional aggregation

FAO produces global, regional and sub-regional aggregates, in line with the [FAO Statistical Standard Series on Data aggregation](#).

Adjustment

The country correspondents are responsible for the quality of data. FAO validates and eventually corrects country data in consultation with them.

Imputation

Imputations are made according to the [FAO Statistical Standard Series - Imputation \(2023\)](#)

18) Quality management

Quality assurance

FAO is responsible for the quality of internal statistical processes used to compile the published datasets. The [FAO Statistics and Data Quality Assurance Framework \(SDQAF\)](#) provides the necessary principles, guidelines and tools to carry out quality assessments. FAO is performing an internal bi-annual survey (FAO Quality Assessment and Planning Survey) designed to gather information on all of FAO's statistical activities, notably to assess the extent to which quality standards are being implemented with a view to increasing compliance with the quality dimensions of SDQAF, documenting best practices and preparing quality improvement plans, where necessary. Domain-specific quality assurance activities are carried out systematically (e.g. quality reviews, self-assessments, compliance monitoring).

Quality assessment

The quality of FAO statistics is highly dependent upon the accuracy and reliability of the data collected and provided by countries. FAO strives to validate and ensure the quality of official data received by validating and cross checking them. FAO also works with countries to revise their data when appropriate to ensure consistency in the dissemination of official data. In the case of global capture fisheries production, data are complemented or replaced, when necessary, by data from other sources (e.g. regional fisheries management organizations and distant water fleets in exclusive economic zones) in accordance with the standards of the CWP.

According to the 2025 Quality Assessment and Planning Survey (QAPS) of FAO, global capture fisheries production data domain reported a quality score of 0.91. According to the QAPS a statistical output is considered of good quality when it reaches a quality score of 0.6 or above.

19) Recommended uses and limitations

Not applicable

20) Comment

Not applicable