

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Taiwan Seafood Market Update 2024

Country: Taiwan

Post: Taipei ATO

Report Category: Fishery Products

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Report Highlights:

Taiwan's overall seafood imports declined to US\$1.9 billion in 2023, down 11 percent from 2022. Seafood exports from the United States, however, grew by 40 percent, and amounted to nearly US\$45 million. Among the top ten foreign suppliers, the United States is the only one that expanded exports. This significant increase was driven by higher demand for frozen seafood in the foodservice sector, exacerbated by a worsening labor shortage. Major U.S. seafood exports to Taiwan include Alaska pollock, frozen livers and gonads, live, fresh, or chilled lobsters (*Homarus spp.*), and cooked or frozen lobsters (*Homarus spp.*), as well as cooked or frozen rock lobster.

SECTION I: TAWAN SEAFOOD MARKET OVERVIEW

1. PRODUCTION

The Taiwan Fisheries Agency has reported that Taiwan's domestic seafood production fell by 10 percent from the previous year – to 874,696¹ metric tons. The decline is attributed to overfishing and the adverse impacts of climate change on ocean resources. Far sea fishery production, which constitutes approximately 55 percent of the total, has been variable. The top five species contributing to this production include Skipjack tuna, Argentine shortfin squid, Tilapia, Hard clam/Common orient clam, and Yellowfin tuna, which collectively represent around 45 percent of the total seafood production. (Appendix: Table 1)

2. CONSUMPTION

In 2022, Taiwan's per capita seafood consumption remained stable at 27 kg (59.5 lbs), which is still 26 percent higher than the global average of 20 kg². As the population ages, the seafood industry has been promoting its products as a source of high-quality, easy-to-digest protein. In terms of consumption volume, the most consumed seafood products in Taiwan are fish, shellfish, cephalopods, and shrimp and crab. In high-end restaurants, lobsters, oysters, and crabs are considered luxury items. The Seafood Consumer Insight report reveals that over 80 percent of Taiwanese consumers eat seafood at least once a week, with more than 40 percent consuming it more than three times a week. Consumers prioritize quality and traceability when selecting seafood.

SECTION II: TRADE, TARIFFS/REGULATIONS, COMPETITORS AND MARKETING

1. TRADE

- 1) World Trade (Chart 1): In 2023, Taiwan's overall seafood imports declined to US\$1.9 billion, an 11 percent decrease from 2022, due to high inventory that retailers were clearing and sluggish demand from the foodservice sector. Additionally, declining exports caused by China's ongoing political boycott resulted in Taiwan running a seafood trade deficit of US\$319 million (Table 2). To address this issue, Taiwan has intensified its efforts to promote its seafood at international trade shows.

¹ The most recent data is based on 2022 production.

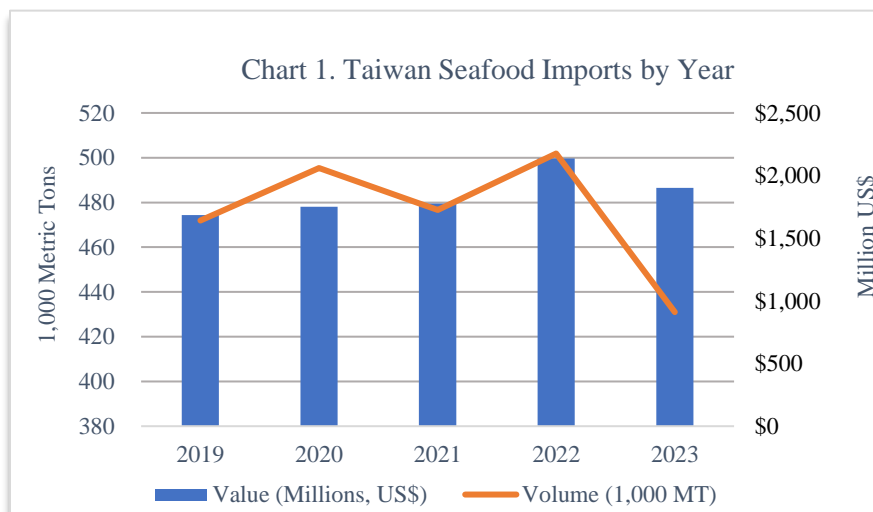
² Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

The top five seafood categories imported by value were frozen shrimp and prawns, fresh or chilled Atlantic salmon, frozen squid and cuttlefish, frozen scallops, and frozen halibut and Greenland turbot.

Table 2. Taiwan Seafood Trade Data by Year

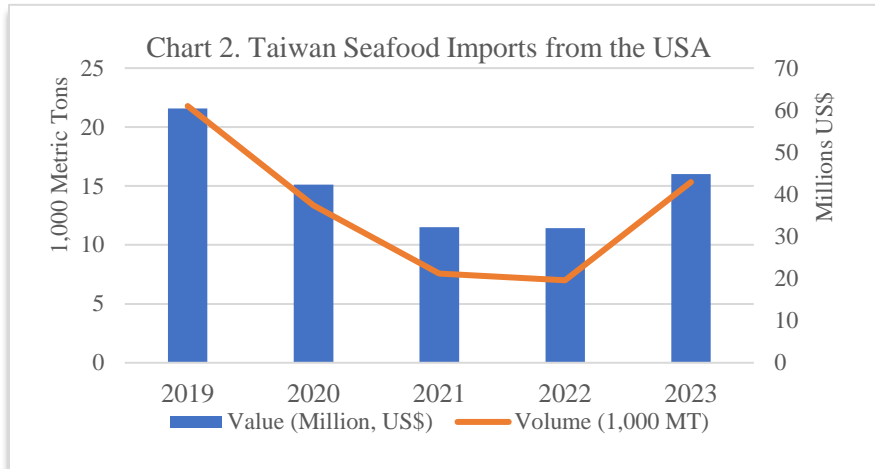
Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Export	1,879,880,645	1,500,359,630	1,711,540,476	1,673,766,560	1,584,434,159
Import	1,685,767,398	1,750,794,677	1,776,365,705	2,137,775,281	190,3951,255
Balance	194,113,247	(250,435,047)	(64,825,229)	(464,008,721)	(319,517,096)

Source: Trade Data Monitor, Product: BICO-Seafood



Source: Trade Data Monitor, Product: BICO-Seafood

- 2) **U.S. Imports (Chart 2):** In 2023, the United States ranked as the tenth largest seafood supplier to Taiwan, holding 2.4 percent of the market. Taiwan's imports of U.S. seafood surged by 40 percent from 2022, reaching nearly US\$45 million. This significant increase was driven by higher demand for frozen seafood in the foodservice sector, exacerbated by a worsening labor shortage.



Source: Trade Data Monitor, Product: BICO-Seafood

The top five U.S. seafood imports by value were Alaska pollock, frozen livers and gonads, live, fresh, or chilled lobsters (*Homarus spp.*), cooked or frozen lobsters (*Homarus spp.*), and cooked or frozen rock lobster and other sea crawfish. These categories made up 60 percent of Taiwan’s total U.S. seafood imports.

2. TARIFFS

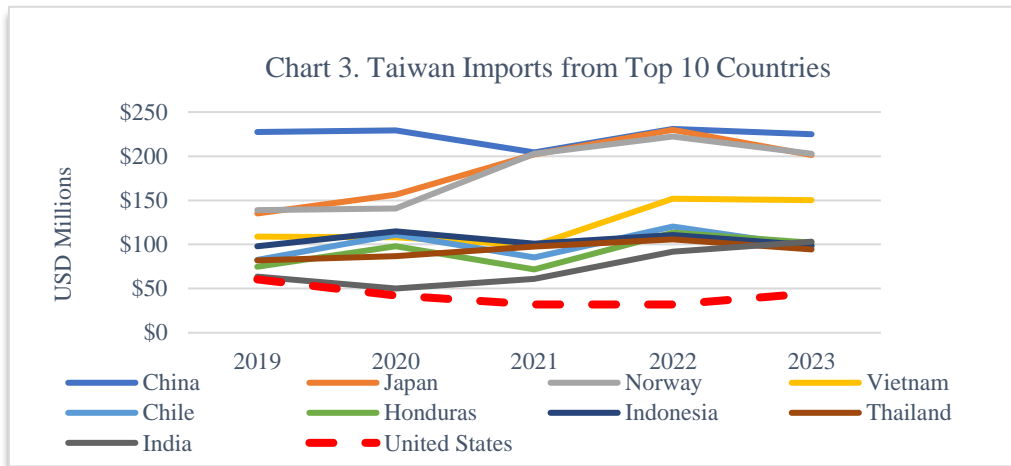
There are no Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ) on seafood. However, countries that signed free trade agreements with Taiwan benefit from zero percent tariffs for a wide variety of agricultural products, including seafood. The tariffs for popular imported U.S. seafood products are listed in Appendix: Table 4.

3. REGULATIONS

- 1) Effective January 1, 2024, Taiwan’s Food and Drug Administration (TFDA) reduced the number of U.S. seafood products eligible for export to Taiwan. The change reduces the number of eligible seafood HS codes from 65 to 55. The ten product codes removed had no exports recorded since at least January 2023. (Appendix: Table 5) (GAIN Report: [Taiwan Reduces Market Access for US Seafood Products Taipei Taiwan TW2024-0001](#))
- 2) For shellfish products, each shipment should be accompanied with a health certificate issued by the official competent authority:
<https://www.fda.gov.tw/ENG/lawContent.aspx?cid=16&id=3095>

4. COMPETITORS

Taiwan imports seafood from 120 countries, with the top 10 countries accounting for nearly 70% of the total import value (see Appendix: Table 3). While U.S. seafood is viewed as high quality, factors like cost, stable supply, regional proximity, and geopolitical influence drive Taiwan's seafood imports.



Source: Trade Data Monitor, Product: BICO-Seafood

- 1) China, currently the largest supplier of foreign seafood to Taiwan with 12 percent of the market, is expected to lose some share due to ongoing political tensions across the strait. Since the main seafood products China exports to Taiwan are frozen squids and cuttlefish, this decline presents an opportunity for Indonesia, which already holds 30% of the market in this category.
- 2) Norway, with 11 percent of the market, leads in salmon consumption trends. Most of the Norwegian salmon, which is chilled, is supplied to restaurants and hotel buffets.
- 3) Japanese seafood exports fell by 12 percent following Japan's announcement to release treated and diluted radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station into the Pacific Ocean starting in August 2023. Despite this decline, Japan still holds a dominant market share of over 80 percent in frozen scallops, with exports valued at US\$63 million in 2023.
- 4) India and Vietnam are the main suppliers of surimi products and have a cost advantage that allows them to increase their market share over the United States. Although many surimi products are made in Vietnam, they often use U.S. pollock as the raw material. These products also benefit from tax reductions when exported to Taiwan.
- 5) Nicaragua and Honduras have cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan, resulting in their favorable tariffs phased out in 2022 and 2023. The industry is shifting to other markets such as Thailand and Vietnam for sourcing frozen shrimp.

- 6) Thailand, a rapidly growing supplier, has seen significant increases in the export of frozen shrimps and prawns for its quality. In 2023, Thailand became the second largest supplier of these products, with imports valued at over US\$51 million.

5. Marketing

- 1) *Crustaceans represent the category with the highest growth and market share among imported goods.* Shrimps and prawns already enjoy popularity, and lobsters are increasingly favored as well. However, there is a lack of consumer awareness about the differences between spiny lobsters and clawed lobsters. This confusion is exacerbated because both types are referred to by the same name in Chinese. Additionally, there is no requirement to display the country of origin, which could help differentiate the two.
- 2) *High-end hotels and restaurants are critical end-users pulling the industry.* Chefs typically initiate orders, prompting importers to source the requested items. After reviewing quotes and conducting trials, chefs influence the popularity of certain seafood by featuring them in their menus frequently. Beyond the hotel, restaurant, and institutional (HRI) sector, e-commerce has gained traction among consumers looking for novelty. These online platforms use a low-margin strategy, drawing customers with real-time online auctions.
- 3) *Successful seafood promotions highlight freshness, uniqueness, and luxury.* Imported seafood is especially valued as a high-status and premium choice. As consumers in Taiwan prioritize luxury and are ready to spend on high-quality culinary experiences, promoting premium seafood can be particularly effective. (ATO Taipei Director Scott's Interview with Sea to Sky Chef Jackson: [Seafood Prospects for USA](#))

SECTION III: SUGGESTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Suggestions

- 1) *Tap into growing frozen processed food demand.* The rising demand for convenience during the COVID-19 pandemic has led food manufacturers to expand their frozen processed food offerings. The HRI sector is now more receptive to sourcing high-quality frozen seafood to mitigate the cost and supply variations associated with fresh seafood. Suppliers can capitalize on this trend by leveraging advanced processing technologies and emphasizing the high quality of their products.
- 2) *Capitalize on the "Products of USA" branding opportunity.* By participating in U.S.-themed promotions, U.S. seafood can enhance its image, tagging along with other already recognized U.S. ingredients, such as beef. It's recommended for suppliers to exhibit at the Taipei International Food Show in June. The show features a USA Pavilion, coordinated by ATO

Taipei, promoting a range of American food and beverage products to importers, retailers, and the HRI sector.

- 3) *Participate in USDA-supported export initiatives.* The USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) collaborates with U.S. agricultural producers' organizations, known as Cooperators, to promote U.S. food and beverage products abroad. These Cooperators design diverse marketing programs including trade shows, educational seminars, and buyer missions to introduce U.S. commodities to targeted export markets. Joining a Cooperator provides a supported entry into new markets. Seafood-related Cooperators with federal funding include: [Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute](#), [Food Export Northeast](#), [Western United States Agricultural Trade Association](#), and [Southern United States Trade Association](#).

2. Contact Information

For Trade Policy/Market Access Issues contact Agricultural Affairs Office at:

Office Hours: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Telephone: (011-886-2)2162-2238
Fax: (011-886-2)2162-2316
Email-FAS: agtaipei@usda.gov

For Market Development Assistance contact the Agricultural Trade Office at:

Office Hours: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Telephone: (011-886-2)2705-6536
Fax: (011-886-2)2754-4031
Email-FAS: atotaipei@usda.gov



APPENDIX

Table 1. Taiwan Seafood Production by Waters (unit: MT)

<u>Year</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>Change % 2022 vs. 2021</u>
Far Sea	531,972	475,111	-11%
Offshore	148,374	115,325	-22%
Coastal	20,701	19,863	-4%
Inland Fishing	143	126	-12%
Marine Culture	20,833	19,168	-8%
Inland Culture	253,977	245,103	-3%
Total	976,000	874,696	-10%

Source: Taiwan Fisheries Agency.

Table 3. Taiwan Seafood Imports (unit: USD)

<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Ranking</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>Changed % 2023 vs. 2022</u>	<u>Market Share (2023)</u>
China	1	230,899,521	224,878,071	-2.6%	11.8%
Norway	2	222,276,851	202,633,946	-8.8%	10.6%
Japan	3	229,784,025	201,248,029	-12.4%	10.6%
Vietnam	4	151,826,398	150,036,050	-1.2%	7.9%
India	5	91,741,012	103,178,300	12.5%	5.4%
Honduras	6	113,370,776	101,849,717	-10.2%	5.3%
Indonesia	7	110,542,439	98,930,589	-10.5%	5.2%
Chile	8	120,298,622	97,352,441	-19.1%	5.1%
Thailand	9	105,757,236	94,398,492	-10.7%	5.0%
United States	10	31,994,841	44,856,424	40.2%	2.4%
World		2,137,775,281	1,903,951,255	-10.9%	100.0%

Source: Trade Data Monitor, Product: BICO-Seafood

Table 4. Tariffs Applied to Seafood Species

<u>Tariff Code</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Tariff*</u>	<u>Zero Tariff Only Applicable to Countries**</u>
03049410	Alaska Pollack, minced (surimi), frozen	10%	PA,GT,SV,NZ,SG
03049420	Alaska Pollack meat (whether or not minced), frozen	24%	PA,GT,SV,NZ,SG
030632	Lobster, live	NT\$33.7/kg, or 15%; impose the higher result	PA,GT,SV,NZ,SG,BZ
03061211004	Smoked lobster, frozen	20%	PA,GT,SV,NZ,SG,BZ
03061212003	Lobster, not smoked, frozen	NT\$33.7/kg, or 15%; impose the higher result	PA,GT,SV,NZ,SG,BZ
030722	Scallops, frozen, but not smoked	8%	PA,GT,SV,NZ,SG
03039110002	Livers of fish, frozen	25%	PA,GT,SV,NZ,SG
03039120108	Roes and milt, sturgeon (acipenseriformes spp.), frozen	11%	PA,GT,SV,NZ,SG
160557	Abalones, including Haliotis diversicolor, prepared or preserved, frozen	9%	PA,GT,SV,NZ,SG

*Source: [Taiwan Tariff Database Search System](#)

**Panama (PA), Guatemala (GT), El Salvador (SV), New Zealand (NZ), Singapore (SG), Belize (BZ)

Table 5. The List of Codes Deleted by TFDA

TFDA annually reviews import records from trading partners that have not completed a system equivalence application for seafood products and at its discretion can delete inactive HS codes.

HS Code	Description
0302.89.89.92.2	Other seawater fish, fresh or chilled
0303.59.90.20.1	Marlins, sailfishes, spearfish, frozen
0303.63.00.00.8	Cod, frozen
0303.66.00.00.5	Hake, frozen
0305.20.20.90.5	Other roes and milt, dried, smoked, salted or in brine
0306.39.90.90.8	Other crustaceans, live
1604.14.10.20.6	Tunas, whole or in pieces, but not minced, prepared or preserved, canned
1604.20.30.90.9	Other prepared or preserved surimi
1605.51.90.10.4	oysters, prepared or preserved, frozen
1605.56.90.20.7	Other clams, cockles and arkshells, prepared or preserved, canned

*Source: The complete announcement from TFDA can be [found here](#) (Chinese only).

Attachments:

No Attachments.