

CATCH-UP

Summer 2023

FEATURING THIS SEASON'S MARKET REPORT,
OUR FISH BUYERS' PICKS AND A ROUND-UP OF
FISHY INDUSTRY NEWS

Plastic-fed insects could be viable aquafeed, study finds

Source (full article): fishfarmermagazine.com
Insects fed on plastic could be a viable part of the diet for farmed fish, a Glasgow-based study has suggested.

SalmoSim, an in-vitro gut salmon gut simulator based at the University of Glasgow, has found that waxworms fed on plastic waste are as digestible for farmed salmon as other commercially available insect meals.

Waxworms are the larvae of the wax moth *Galleria mellonella*. Evolved to eat the detritus inside beehives, including beeswax, the caterpillar larvae can even digest polyethylene, which is inedible for most other organisms. They are able to do this with help from the bacteria in their gut. Waxworms are currently used as feed for pet reptiles, amphibians and birds.

Hopes have already been raised that waxworms could help tackle the global plastic pollution crisis. SalmoSim's findings go a step further, suggesting that protein sources for farmed fish could be derived from insects which have been used to digest plastic waste, thus contributing to the wider circular economy.



Eating wild caught fish better for environment than meat or crops

Source (full article): fishfocus.co.uk
Eating wild caught fish is better for the environment and biodiversity than consuming meat or crops, says leading international marine scientist Professor Ray Hilborn.

Fish is the perfect protein, he told a Deepwater Group fisheries symposium in Wellington.

Hilborn, professor of aquatic and fishery science at the University of Washington in the US, said fish is a healthy, animal-sourced protein that can be enjoyed without polluting the air and water, without drying up our rivers, without draining the life from soil, without causing our planet to warm even more and without adversely impacting on diabetes, heart disease and cancer rates.

"Fish can be caught with almost no water use, no herbicides or pesticides, no antibiotics and no soil erosion," he said.



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BUYER RECOMMENDS...

Good picks this season include:

- **Swordfish**
- **Hand Line Caught Mackerel from the South West**
- **Megrin Sole**
- **Plaice**
- **Coley**

SOCIAL CATCH-UP...

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World's first octopus farm proposals alarm scientists

Source (full article): bbc.co.uk

A plan to build the world's first octopus farm has raised deep concerns among scientists over the welfare of the famously intelligent creatures.

The farm in Spain's Canary Islands would raise about a million octopuses annually for food, according to confidential documents seen by the BBC.

They have never been intensively farmed and some scientists call the proposed icy water slaughtering method "cruel."



FISH MARKET REPORT Summer 2023

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the summer 2023 newsletter, which aims to cover the June to August period for the supply of fresh and frozen fish and seafood. At the time of writing, we are still waiting for spring to truly bloom! It has certainly been a damp one punctuated with the occasional pleasant day. Hopefully we will all enjoy some long and warm summer days with al fresco dining to make up for the wet spring.

In fishy news, the Marine Conservation Society have released their new ratings with a few interesting changes. Thanks to our director of sustainability – Laky Zervudachi – for his summary of the key movements below:

IMPROVEMENTS

- Line caught and seine netted Atlantic Bluefin tuna have recovered enough, due to a number of years of good management, for the MCS to move them up from a 4 rating to a 3. This means that, for the first time in many years, we will be able to sell Bluefin tuna. Please do consider, however, that accurate sourcing will be all-important to ensure best practice. Please also remember that farmed (ranch) tuna will remain on the red list.
- There have been a number of ray wing species that have improved slightly, but the main species to seek out will be Thornback ray fished off the North Devon Coast where the North Devon coast fishermen's association have implemented management measures to help conserve stocks. It will be very important to ensure that you select the correct species of Ray, as most other skates and ray are still either red or orange rated. This can be very difficult to be sure of due to the skin almost always being removed.
- Both species of monkfish - black bellied and white bellied - caught in the South West have improved slightly, with otter trawled having moved into the 'fish to eat category'. Unfortunately, both species remain 4 rated in the Scottish fisheries, so it will be very important to source correctly.
- Dover sole from the South West has been well rated for some time now whilst South Coast dover sole from the east have had a poor rating of 4. This review sees their score improve to a 3. Though there is no specific management plan in place there have been some measures introduced to make the fishery more sustainable such as effort and mesh size restrictions, and this has helped reduce fishing mortality for the first time in a while.
- Global GAP farmed bass and bream have both been upgraded from a 3 to a 2 rating mainly due to the new standard that Global GAP published at the end of 2022. This new standard has an important section on fish feed and on animal welfare meaning that fish with this certification will be raised to an even higher standard than before. Great news for all as a core menu item for many of you!

DOWNGRADES

- Unfortunately, the yellowfin tuna stock in the Indian Ocean has been seriously overfished despite the existence of certain management measures that have not been properly monitored and enforced. There have been a number of Fishery improvement Projects in place in the Indian ocean, but due to the lack of progress in addressing some of the key negative aspects of this fishery it is not possible for them to improve enough within their stated timescale. Therefore, the FIP is no longer viewed as credible and has now been downgraded to a 5 rating and the MCS recommends avoiding fish from this source.
- Most of the U5 frozen squid that Direct Seafoods sell is Japanese Flying squid (trawled). This species has now, unfortunately, been downgraded to a 5 rating. Though this is a resilient species there is concern that the fishing pressure is too high - especially as there are virtually no management plans in place in the Chinese sector other than a short seasonal ban on fishing during the summer months for spawning, which tends to be followed by a mad dash to fish resulting in intense exploitation of the marine environment. At one point there was a FIP in place, but this now appears to be inactive so the MCS no longer considers this fishery to be an improver. Bad news.
- Though mackerel in the Northeast Atlantic is still abundant, and management plans are in place, the stock has consistently been over fished and landings have been way above recommended scientific advice. This is mainly due to the number of different countries involved in this fishery not agreeing at political level to stick to total allowable catches. This is now causing the stock to decline and the MCS have now downgraded the fishery to a 3 rating. The hand line fishery in the South West of the UK is still considered a sustainable fishery and has kept its 2 rating.
- Ideally, customers should refrain from putting sardines on the menu when UK caught MSC sardines are out of season as the French and Spanish fisheries in the Bay of Biscay have now been downgraded to a 5 rating due to poor management and concerns over low stock levels and high fishing effort. The local UK caught MSC certified Sardines have maintained their 2 rating and will start to be available from June/July onwards

Therefore, a real mixed bag of good and bad news. However, for those of you who are keen users of farmed bass and bream, an assessment of your volume usage with the new 2 rating will see your overall sustainability credentials improve enormously. Squid remains a real challenge in terms of finding products with better credentials. Rest assured that we are continually seeking out alternative products to satisfy the endless demand for this much-loved species.

So onto a brief overview of the summer months. We are looking forward to the arrival of native lobsters to UK shores. As the Canadian season also reaches full swing, we are hopeful of reductions in the price of both species. Mussels will be out of season until September, and other bivalve molluscs tend to get weaker in the summer months so these are not a great choice. Native oysters are now out of season, but rock oysters will remain okay to use. MSC certified sardines will present from June / July onwards as detailed above. A great summer choice alongside South West caught mackerel – another fantastic summer fish. It is a great time of year for day boat caught native fish, so please keep in touch with your account managers for some superb specials to offer your customers.

Natalie Hudd, Director of Sales, Direct Seafoods.

FARMED FISH

Species	Comments
Sea Bass & Gilthead Bream	Both species should provide a sound choice throughout the summer months as the warmer water sees fish growing faster. If biomass improves, and there are no negative currency fluctuations, then prices may reduce. The recent MCS rating improvement to 2 for Global GAP certified fish (which all our sea bass and gilthead bream are) means that both species become recommended fish to eat and you can promote with confidence. As always, gilthead bream is the better value for money. Either fish can be spiced with garlic chilli, lemon and thyme before being wrapped in foil and baked in the oven.
Salmon	Industry intel suggests that salmon prices may start to reduce in June, although to what extent we are unsure. Analysts are suggesting that a lack of supply growth in coming years is likely to see prices remaining high until 2025. We fully expect that the second half of 2023 will see an easing of price in line with historical trends and this will be much welcomed by all. However, remain cautious as prices looked to be dropping in April but took a strong rebound. We have a similar scenario with Loch Duart salmon now. The farm have been monitoring their stocks through the winter hoping for very cold weather to get sea temperatures back to normal to improve stock levels. This has not been the case and they have been forced to slow down their harvesting schedules and volumes and increase prices significantly from the 1st of June. Whilst we remain so reliant on the salmon species, we can continue to suffer heavily as a result of these extreme price fluctuations. Salmon and smoked salmon typically comprise 22-24% of what we sell. Until such a time that we can change consumer habits and encourage diversification into other species, we are left in the difficult position of having to ask for mid term increases when the price escalates beyond what we can absorb. Sadly, there is a real lack of alternatives to fit the flavour and aesthetic profile of salmon. Freshwater and sea reared trout stocks are typically exhausted too quickly when volume requirement transfers over to these species. As such, the only solution is to introduce more fish variety on the menu to reduce reliance on the Atlantic salmon species – be that UK shellfish, day boat specials, or lesser-used species such as megrim soles.

FARMED FISH

Species	Comments
Trout	ChalkStream® trout have had another fish feed price increase, so this will equate to a small increase in the fish price during the summer months. Smaller rainbow trout are expected to remain stable after the biomass issues from last year have corrected. Sea reared trout prices are expected to reduce for the summer on the back of an improvement in biomass levels. As such, trout is likely to offer a viable alternative to salmon throughout the summer. As always, any significant surge in demand for trout may see availability reduce so keep in regular contact with your account manager for updates.
Halibut	Farmed halibut is expected to be stable in June and July. There may be some availability issues heading into August where a number of farms traditionally close down for maintenance. If you have any forthcoming late summer events where you are planning to use halibut, please do chat with your account manager about availability in advance. This will enable us to source the volume to fulfil your requirement in the event that any of the farms have closed.
Other Farmed Species	Good biomass levels mean that meagre should be a good choice for the summer. Fish are typically 2-3kg or 3-4kg in weight. We can fillet these for you or cut them into chunky supremes. It has a lovely texture and flavour and can be used in a variety of ways including as ceviche. Farmed turbot prices look set to increase over the summer due to lower biomass levels. Already an expensive fish which can be tricky to yield, this might be one to avoid. As wild Dover soles increase in price over the summer months, this could be time to look at farmed king sole as a replacement. Talk to your account manager for more information.

WILD FISH

Species	Comments
Flat Fish	Summer is a good time for most flat fish. Better weather and the resulting increased fishing effort means that we are anticipating reductions on plaice. Yields are also continuing to improve after their spawning season so this will be a good choice for the summer months. Lemon sole prices are currently holding firm, partially due to a buoyant export market. Quality should be superb however. Dover soles are now one to avoid as they move offshore, become more scarce, and the price rises. Unaffordable for most sadly. We continue to champion the Cornish sole (megrim sole) as an underutilised species. Most origins and catch methods are rated a 3, with bottom trawled fish from the North Sea rated a 2. These fish are prime quality right now. Both wild brill and turbot continue to fetch extortionate prices at auction so are potentially for specials only.
White Fish	Fishing restrictions are over in Iceland and Norway so a slight increase in landings of cod and haddock is likely for June. This is aided by improved weather and fishing conditions. However, the Icelandic quota is due to finish in July and this will see a reduction in fishing effort as boats tie up and holidays are taken until the new quota starts in September. As such, you can expect some initial downward pricing movement in June, followed by a challenging supply period in late July and throughout August. Coley is likely to remain stable in price throughout the summer period and should be a good reliable choice – particularly now that the MCS rating has improved to a 3 following the recent review. Hake prices have been unexpectedly firm in May and this is being sustained by healthy export demand. Hake are predominantly gill netted on the south coast, and one week out of every month fishing is always less due to bigger tides, which cause higher prices (gill nets cannot be used during these weeks). We are hopeful that prices may reduce later in the summer, as hake remains a great sustainable choice.
Round Fish	Monkfish prices have firmed up on the back of export demand, although we do not expect increases to be unreasonable. Always a very versatile “non-fishy” fish for any menu. The mackerel season is getting underway now. Be cautious in the level of usage given the recent downgrade in MCS rating, but do seek out hand line caught fish from the South West which are rated a 2. You cannot beat mackerel in a summer dish – chargrilled or pan fried and served with a salad. Local UK caught MSC certified Sardines have maintained their 2 rating and will start to appear from June/July onwards so speak to your account manager regarding availability. Gurnard are a winter fish. In addition to poor MCS ratings, they spawn in the summer so one to avoid for now.
Cephalopods	Only hook and line caught squid from the Celtic sea are rated a 4. All other origins and catch methods of UK squid are rated a 5 so one to avoid. All octopus continues to be rated 4 or 5 with the Marine Conservation asking to “avoid all octopus caught in British waters. There is not enough information on populations here and no real controls on fishing to protect them”. Cuttlefish has a similarly poor outlook with pot caught from the Celtic sea rated a 4, and all other fisheries rated 5 – to avoid. Still no positive news for our beloved native cephalopods.
Exotics	As the European summer gets into full swing, tuna prices tend to rise quite a bit. There are no major holidays in June in the prime fishing region for tuna and sword, but a combination of high demand and less fish due to changeable weather and fishing bans is likely to create upward price pressure. Swordfish will be less affected with supplies bolstered by fish from the Chilean season that runs until October. Swordfish is always a lovely summer option – be that on the barbecue or grilled and topped with citrus.
Shellfish	Native lobsters should be coming into season now but it may be some time until we see a reduction in costs. Although the Canadian season usually peaks between April and June, this has had no effect on prices thus far. The reason for this is because the pounded stock of Canadian lobster was very low (nearing empty) at the end of March before the season began. As a result, the newly landed lobster have been going straight out for export and prices have remained high. If Canadian prices remain high, natives will match this as they start to come into season. We are hopeful to see some deals later in the summer. Mussels will be out of season until September. If you choose to keep mussels on the menu, please be aware that shelf life may be reduced, as many bivalve molluscs are weaker when the water warms up. Clams may also be affected. Native oysters are now out of season, but rock oysters will still be running. We are not anticipating any increase in the price of USA scallops, so these should be a stable choice over the summer. Crab meat prices should also remain steady over the summer. We have a broad range of gradings and value added products to satisfy various price points so talk to your account manager about the options available.

SMOKED, DELI & FROZEN FISH

Species	Comments
Smoked Fish	If we see a reduction in fresh salmon over the forthcoming months, then smoked salmon prices should follow. This would be much welcomed over the summer season with smoked salmon so popular in al fresco dining. Particularly with all the different cures we can now offer that pair so well with a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic cold beverages. Orange and tarragon cures are a great summer favourite paired with sourdough toast. For a value added smoked option, try hot smoked salmon flakes in a salad or in a pasta with pine nuts. Smoked haddock prices look set to lower in June, but may rise with the fresh as the Icelandic quota finishes.
Deli	We have seen some increased availability of raw material for crayfish and prawns in brine. This means that there have been reductions on one of the brands we sell. Speak to your account manager for more details. There is nothing like a prawn & crayfish cocktail in the summer months! Prices seem to have stabilised on other deli lines such as roes, caviars and marinated lines. As long life lines, these offer a low wastage option for your summer menus.

SMOKED, DELI & FROZEN FISH

Species

Frozen Fish and Seafood

We have seen some good reductions on frozen pollock lines after some hefty increases over the last few years. This is due to increased supply and reduced demand. Frozen pollock has recently overtaken cod in retail sales due to the prevalence of the species in value added breaded and battered products. Consider using frozen pollock as an alternative to fresh cod and haddock when the Icelandic quota finishes in July. Coldwater prawns are also reducing in price as we have contracted pricing at a fortuitous time where there is global over-stocking and reduced demand. Frozen squid prices are stable at the moment, but reports of poor illex landings (one of the main species) along with concerns over sustainability of the *todarodes pacificus* species (the other key species) means that we may see prices increase in the medium to long term. One to be aware of. On the whole, frozen prices are finally looking steady / reducing due to lower demand. This may change later in the year, but for now, there is some much longed for stability.

Comments

Rapid uptick in unregulated squid fishing raises overexploitation concerns

Source (full article): seafoodsource.com
Global squid fisheries increased their collective fishing effort by 68 percent over the past three years, and 86 percent of that effort has taken place in unregulated areas of the high seas, according to new research.

The rapid increase has many global fisheries experts concerned about overexploitation of squid stocks, the potential for the expansion of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the fate of small-scale fishers reliant on squid catches to make ends meet.



Fried shark species back on the menu for UK fish and chip shops

Source (full article): thecaterer.com
A locally caught shark species could return to menus at fish and chip shops and restaurants across the UK following a change in government rules.

On 1 April, commercial fishermen were given permission to catch north-east Atlantic spurdog in UK waters.

The species, also known as rock salmon or spiny dogfish, had been on the prohibited list in UK and EU waters for around five years, but was removed after the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES) advised that stock is recovering in the region.

Why are highly protected marine areas so controversial

Source (full article): bbc.co.uk

The Scottish government is facing calls to scrap its controversial plans for Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs).

The proposals to restrict fishing and other human activities in some coastal areas are designed to protect wildlife and the environment.

But members of the fishing industry, Highland and island communities and even some SNP MSPs have raised concerns about the scheme.

A Scottish Tory motion considered by MSPs on Wednesday called for the scheme to be "fundamentally reconsidered".



Recipe Corner

Looking for some seasonal menu inspiration? Take a look at these delicious recipes, which utilise one of our buyers picks for summer.

Cured & smoked mackerel, with rye toast
View the full recipe at directseafoods.co.uk

Butter steamed plaice, warm tartare butter sauce
View the full recipe at directseafoods.co.uk

Crispy battered coley
View the full recipe at directseafoods.co.uk



We are passionate about responsible sourcing. Learn more about sustainability and download our easy to use, sustainable seafood posters on our website. Speak to your account manager to find out more.

Please contact us with any seafood queries, and for information on daily landings, new products or assistance with menu planning.
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