Here to give the UK seafood sector
the support it needs to thrive.

Frozen Seafood in Multiple Retail (2023)

A market insight analysis (20m read)

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Frozen Seafood in Multiple Retail (2023 Update)

Understanding the changing landscape of seafood retail sales and consumer preferences is key to running a successful seafood business. This factsheet covers the top level, frozen seafood trends at sector, segment and species level, along with changing shopper trends, key point indicators (KPI's) and demographics in multiple retail to October 2023.

Key Facts/Executive summary:

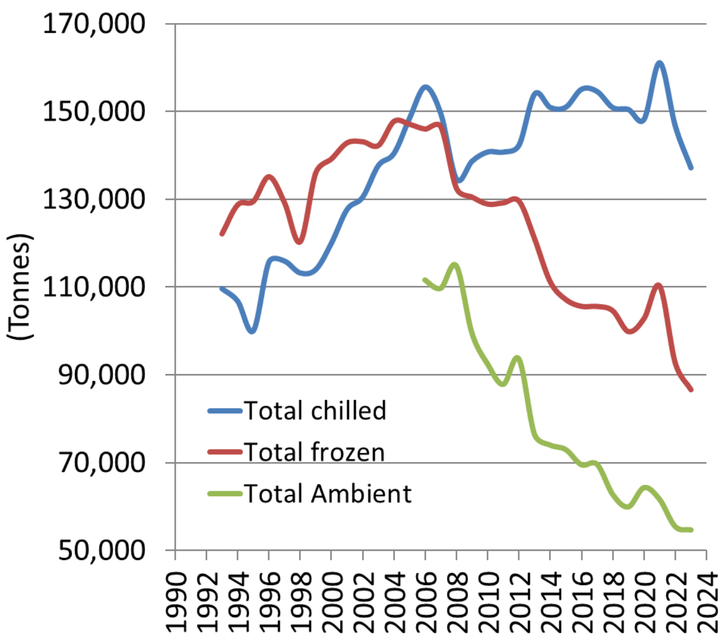
- Historically a sector in long term consumption decline, demand for frozen seafood grew this year, pushing frozen seafood into growth in Q3, driven by demand for cheaper seafood products as shoppers turn to frozen fingers.
- In the 52 wks. to 7th October 2023, frozen seafood sales were worth £1,063m (+6.3%), with a volume of 132,739 tonnes (+1.8%) and an average price of £8.01/kg (+4.4%) (Nielsen Scantrack). Frozen retained its 25% (+0.6pp) value share of the £4.2bn seafood category increasing value share 35.1% (+2.0%) taking mainly from chilled.
- All frozen segments were in consumption decline with the exception of frozen fingers and sauce in full growth. Frozen fingers saw a dramatic increase in volume sales of +24%, probably as a result of the low average price £4.95 which is half the price of frozen natural and the total seafood average
- Overall, fewer shoppers bought frozen seafood more often with a larger basket size. On average, frozen shoppers bought 0.57kg of frozen fish per trip spending £4.49; buying frozen seafood 10.5 times per year, spending a total of £47.28, equating to 6.0kg over the year.
- This year, as the financial crisis intensifies it's the cheapest frozen species showing the highest volume growth. 'Other' seafood which is unnamed on pack with an average price of £2.83/kg compared to the £8.01 frozen seafood average grew volume sales by 118%. Frozen mackerel also performed well due to an average price of £1.33/kg. Frozen mixed seafood continues to grow volume despite a relatively high price £9.67/kg, popular due to its convenience and versatility in ethnic dishes, along with frozen seabass £8.23/kg up 120% as shoppers dined in to save money.
- Compared to 2016, this year frozen seafood has gained significantly more affluent buyers and buyers from larger households as seafood shoppers trade down from chilled. Frozen seafood has become an older purchase, and where children are present, there is a move to older children in the age group of 11 to 15 years.
- In 2023, Aldi, Lidl and the CO-OP are the only retailers to increase share of frozen seafood . Aldi share of frozen seafood is growing fast, and this year replaced Tesco as the largest frozen seafood retailer. Aldi has seen the highest long term total seafood growth from a 1.5% share in 2008 to 25% in 2023.

This factsheet provides a summary of the performance of frozen seafood in multiple retail to 7th October 2023

Historic retail seafood sector trends

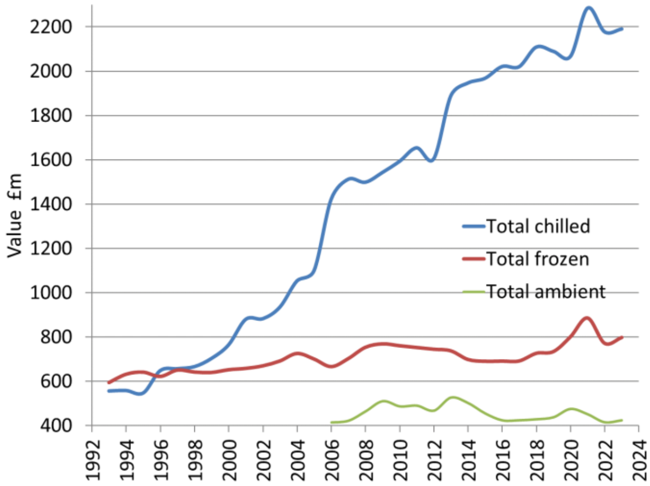
Over the long term, the seafood category has been in price driven growth, as inflation drives average price and consumption declines. Unlike the chilled sector, frozen seafood consumption has been in general decline since 2008. Frozen seafood volume sales briefly rallied in 2012 and 2018 in line with lower disposable household income. But in 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic triggered panic buying, working from home and school closures had the effect of boosting all sectors, but particularly coated and natural frozen seafood which briefly pushed weekly volume sales +74% higher than the previous year. By mid-2021 the demand for frozen had slowed with chilled once more driving the category. In 2022, concern around inflation, the Ukraine crisis and pressure on personal finances pushed shoppers once more to strongly prioritising saving money. This had the effect of seafood shoppers trading down and out of chilled and frozen seafood into the cheapest sector, ambient. In 2023, sustained pressure on finances returned all sectors to price driven growth, but by late 2023, shoppers interest in value pushed frozen back into full growth.

Long Term GB Seafood Sector Volume Trends



Nielsen GB Scantrack/TNS

Long Term GB Seafood Sector Value Trends

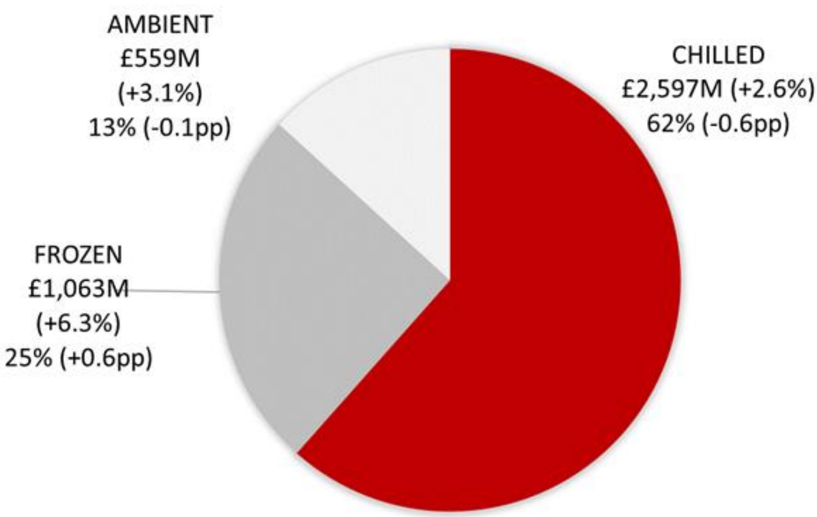


Nielsen GB Scantrack/TNS

Frozen seafood performance

Historically a sector in long term consumption decline, demand for frozen seafood grew this year, pushing frozen into growth in Q3, driven by demand for cheaper products, as shoppers traded down to frozen fingers. In the 52 wks. to 7th October 2023, frozen seafood sales were worth £1,063m (+6.3%), with a volume of 132,739 tonnes (+1.8%) and an average price of £8.01/kg (+4.4%) (Nielsen Scantrack).

UK seafood sector share by value 2023



Nielsen Scantrack YE 07.10.23

Frozen increased its 25% (+0.6pp) value and volume share of the £4.2bn seafood category, taking share mainly from chilled sales.

Over the long term (10 years to 7th October 2023), frozen seafood remained in price driven growth with value up +8.6% and volume down by -30.9%. Frozen average price per kg grew by +57.3%, compared to chilled and ambient where inflation was between 17-36%.

Frozen seafood KPIs

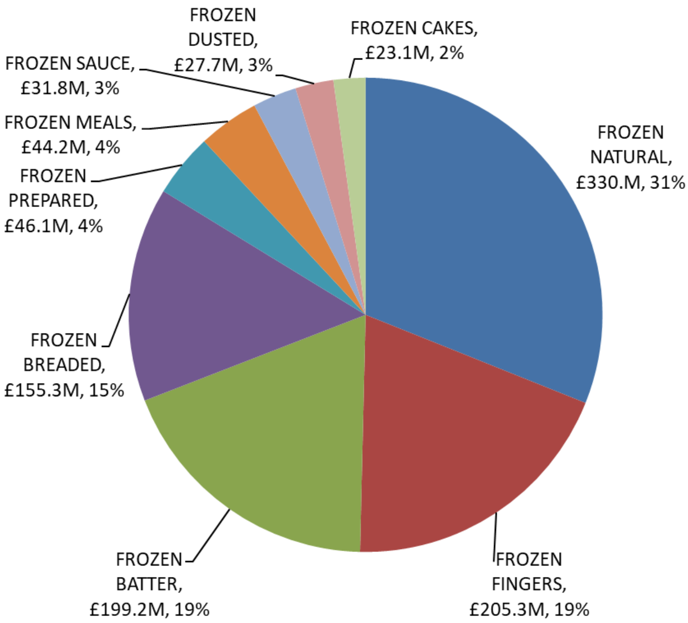
In the 52 wks. to October 2023, fewer shoppers bought frozen seafood. Penetration remained higher than that of chilled or ambient seafood, with 83,6% of shoppers buying frozen seafood. Compared with the previous year, shoppers bought frozen seafood more often with a larger basket size. On average, frozen shoppers bought 0.57kg of frozen fish per trip spending £4.49; buying frozen seafood 10.5 times per year, spending a total of £47.28, equating to 6.0kg over the year.

Frozen seafood KPIs 2023

		Pen %	Freq	AWOP (Kg) 52w	Avg Spend (£) 52w	Trip Spend (£)	Price per Kg	Avg Trip Kg
TOTAL SEAFOOD	08 OCT 2022	95.6	29.10	14.70	£140.88	£4.85	£9.57	0.51
	07 OCT 2023	95.0	29.00	14.50	£147.75	£5.09	£10.17	0.50
	% Change	-0.6	-0.1	-1.4	5.0	5.0	6.3	-1.3
CHILLED SEAFOOD	08 OCT 2022	80.9	19.50	7.70	£98.65	£5.06	£12.79	0.40
	07 OCT 2023	80.2	19.10	7.40	£102.38	£5.35	£13.90	0.38
	% Change	-0.9	-1.8	-4.5	4.0	5.7	8.7	-2.7
FROZEN SEAFOOD	08 OCT 2022	84.3	10.50	5.70	£43.44	£4.14	£7.57	0.55
	07 OCT 2023	83.6	10.50	6.00	£47.28	£4.49	£7.85	0.57
	% Change	-0.9	0.5	4.9	9.0	8.3	3.7	4.4
AMBIENT SEAFOOD	08 OCT 2022	75.6	9.00	4.00	£24.06	£2.66	£6.09	0.44
	07 OCT 2023	74.3	9.30	3.90	£25.20	£2.71	£6.55	0.41
	% Change	-1.7	2.9	-2.5	5.0	1.8	7.5	-5.3

Nielsen Homescan YE 07.10.23

Segment value share of UK frozen seafood 2023 (£m)



Nielsen Scantrack YE 08.10.22

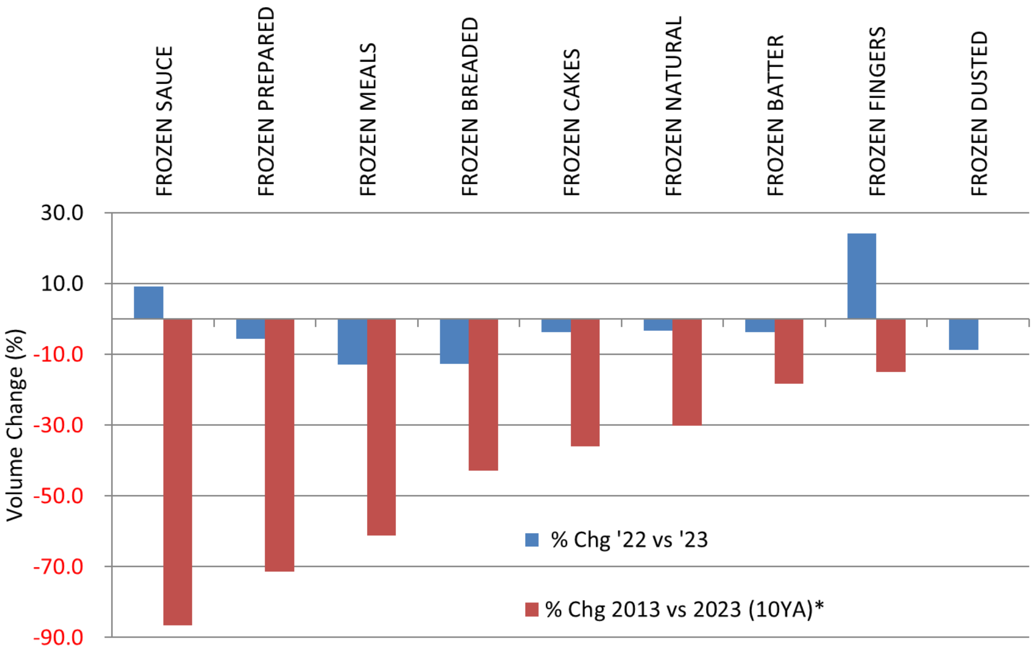
Frozen seafood segment performance

The frozen natural segment (i.e., includes no additional ingredients) continued to lose share (-1.2pp), but remains the largest frozen segment by value; worth £330.0m (+3.2%), with 32,776 (-3.4%) tonnes and an average price of £10.07/kg (+6.0%). Frozen natural used to have the highest average price of all the frozen segments but is now cheaper than frozen dusted and prepared. Frozen fingers take the second largest value share, increasing to 19%, (+0.9pp) followed by batter with the largest share increase at 19%, (+1.1pp) and breaded 15% (-1.0pp). For the first time, frozen fingers displaced natural taking the highest volume share of frozen at 31% (+ 5.6pp) followed by natural at 25% (-1.3pp) with fingers taking share from frozen natural and breaded.

In the 52wks to 7th October 2023, all frozen segments were in price driven growth with the exception of frozen fingers and sauce being in full growth. Frozen fingers saw a dramatic increase in volume sales of +24%, probably as a result of the low average price £4.95 which is half the price of frozen natural and the total seafood average. Growth in frozen sauce being driven by basa, seabass and salmon products. Frozen breaded and meals saw the largest consumption decline both with volume down -13%.

Over the 10 years to 7th October 2023, none of the frozen segments were in full growth; even the boost from COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis has not been sufficient to overcome the long term volume decline in all segments. Frozen fingers lost the least volume; whilst frozen sauce was the hardest hit, losing up to -87% volume in the past 10 years.

Long & short-term frozen segment volume trends to 2023



(Data: Nielsen Scantrack – 10yrs/52wks to 07.10.23)

UK frozen seafood segment performance to 2023

	Value Sales £ ('000)					Volume Sales (tonnes)					Price per Kg		
	2021 52wks to 07.10.21	2022 52wks to 07.10.22	2023 52wks to 07.10.23	% Chg '22 vs '23	% Chg 2013 vs 2023 (10YA)*	2021 52wks to 07.10.21	2022 52wks to 07.10.22	2023 52wks to 07.10.23	% Chg '22 vs '23	% Chg 2013 vs 2023 (10YA)*	Avg Price 2023	% Chg '22 vs '23	% Chg 2013 vs 2023 (10YA)*
FISH	4,247,258	4,073,559	4,218,974	3.6	11.4	422,495	394,917	378,450	-4.2	-22.2	£11.15	8.1	43.0
CHILLED	2,634,796	2,531,272	2,597,221	2.6	20.7	195,341	180,624	166,217	-8.0	-11.1	£15.63	11.5	35.6
FROZEN	1,065,946	999,942	1,062,742	6.3	8.6	144,638	130,439	132,729	1.8	-30.9	£8.01	4.4	57.3
AMBIENT	546,517	542,345	559,011	3.1	-17.5	82,515	83,854	79,505	-5.2	-29.9	£7.03	8.7	17.6
FROZEN NATURAL	357,531	322,517	330,032	2.3	1.8	39,060	33,945	32,776	-3.4	-30.1	£10.07	6.0	45.7
FROZEN FINGERS	189,843	184,062	205,325	11.6	31.2	34,854	33,358	41,414	24.2	-15.0	£4.96	-10.1	54.3
FROZEN BATTER	184,745	175,959	199,161	13.2	44.2	24,704	21,903	21,101	-3.7	-18.4	£9.44	17.5	76.6
FROZEN BREADED	169,418	155,686	155,344	-0.2	-10.2	20,849	18,091	15,775	-12.8	-42.8	£9.85	14.4	57.2
FROZEN PREPARED	41,111	44,891	46,070	2.6	-46.1	4,749	4,652	4,390	-5.6	-71.4	£10.49	8.7	88.4
FROZEN MEALS	40,342	40,766	44,168	8.3	-32.3	9,295	8,656	7,534	-13.0	-61.2	£5.86	24.5	74.7
FROZEN SAUCE	31,169	28,478	31,809	11.7	-70.2	3,564	3,101	3,387	9.2	-86.5	£9.39	2.3	121.2
FROZEN DUSTED	28,429	25,411	27,709	9.0	#N/A	2,929	2,544	2,320	-8.8	#N/A	£11.94	19.5	#N/A
FROZEN CAKES	23,357	22,173	23,125	4.3	2.5	4,635	4,190	4,032	-3.8	-35.9	£5.74	8.4	60.1

*Nielsen Scantrack YE 07.10.23 (*10yr GB)*

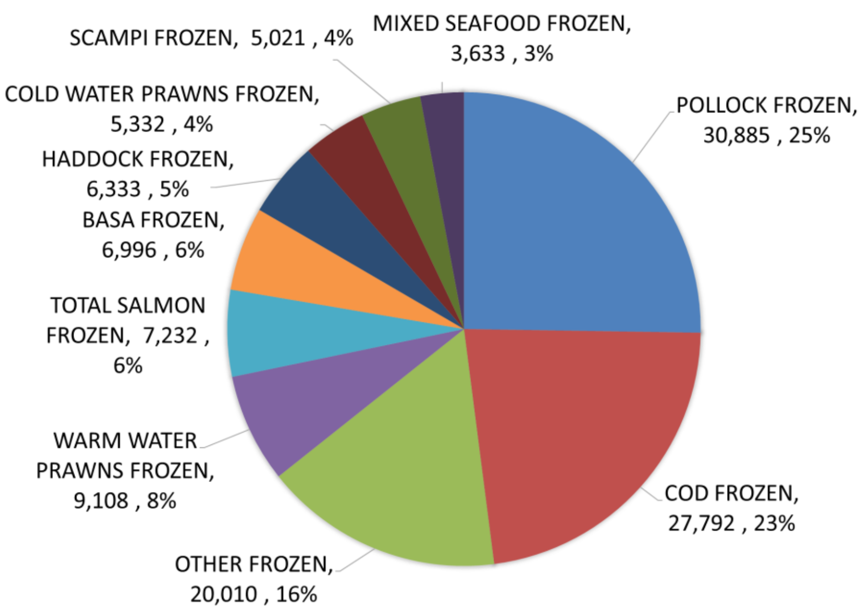
Frozen Seafood Species

In 2023, cod continues to dominate the frozen seafood sector, but continues to lose value and volume share of top the 10 frozen species, as seafood shoppers trade down into the cheapest species.

This year, as the financial crisis intensifies it's the cheapest frozen species showing the highest volume growth. 'Other' seafood which is unnamed on pack (often Alaska pollock) with an average price of £2.83/kg compared to the £8.0/kg frozen seafood average grew volume sales by 118%. Pollock (+7.4%) and frozen mackerel also performed well due to an average price of £1.33/kg. Mixed seafood continues to grow volume despite a relatively high price £9.67/kg, popular due to its convenience and versatility in ethnic dishes, along with frozen seabass £8.23/kg up +120% as shoppers dine in to save money. Haddock tuna and plaice showed the highest volume declines of over 20%.

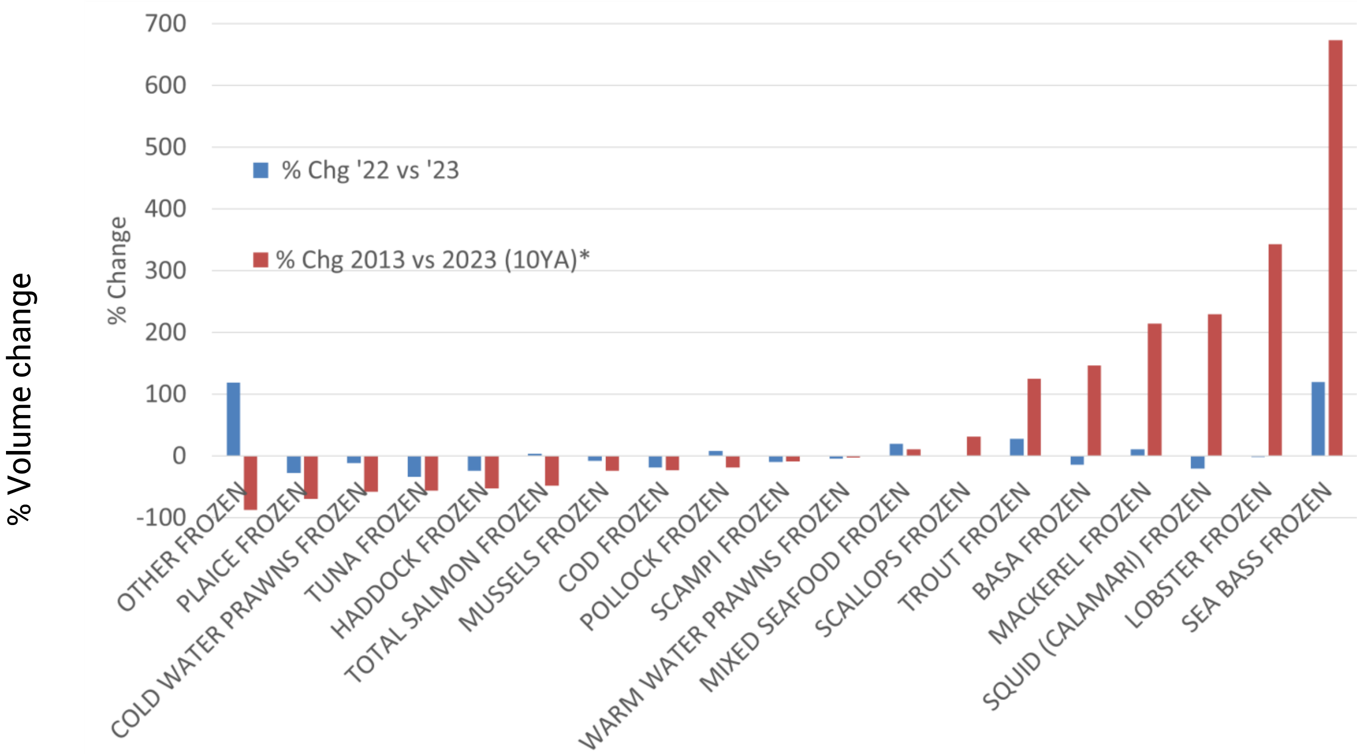
Over the 10 years to 7th October 2023, frozen basa, seabass, squid, lobster, and mackerel were the top performing species, with volume growth of up to 700%. Over the same 10-year period, frozen species in full decline included, haddock, cold water prawns, salmon, and the cheaper 'other' unnamed seafood which until the recent financial crisis was in steady decline. Already popular chilled species like seabass, warm water prawns and mixed seafood have seen frozen average price fall compared to 10 years ago, this will only help cement their popularity. However, if pressure on finances continues, 'Other' seafood currently the third most popular by volume, could displace both cod and pollock to become the most popular frozen seafood product by volume within 12 months, at the current rate of growth.

Top frozen species volume (tonnes) share UK 2023



Nielsen Scantrack YE 07.10.23

Frozen seafood species volume performance 2023



Nielsen Scantrack – 10yrs (GB) /52wks UK to 07.10.23)

Frozen seafood species performance to 2023

	Value Sales £ ('000)					Volume Sales (tonnes)					Price per Kg		
	2021 52wks to 07.10.21	2022 52wks to 07.10.22	2023 52wks to 07.10.23	% Chg '22 vs '23	% Chg 2013 vs 2023 (10YA)*	2021 52wks to 07.10.21	2022 52wks to 07.10.22	2023 52wks to 07.10.23	% Chg '22 vs '23	% Chg 2013 vs 2023 (10YA)*	Avg Price 2023	% Chg '22 vs '23	% Chg 2013 vs 2023 (10YA)*
COD FROZEN	275,915	253,661	249,790	-1.5	21.7	39,242	34,520	27,792	-19.5	-23.5	£8.99	22.3	59.2
POLLOCK FROZEN	163,279	159,922	190,400	19.1	22.1	31,313	28,760	30,885	7.4	-19.0	£6.16	10.9	50.6
WARM WATER PRAWNS FROZEN	133,352	123,035	130,547	6.1	-11.0	10,396	9,575	9,108	-4.9	-3.1	£14.33	11.6	-8.2
TOTAL SALMON FROZEN	64,945	65,611	73,589	12.2	-22.0	7,638	7,007	7,232	3.2	-48.3	£10.18	8.7	50.8
COLD WATER PRAWNS FROZEN	77,522	69,057	67,970	-1.6	-15.4	7,204	6,080	5,332	-12.3	-58.1	£12.75	12.2	102.0
HADDOCK FROZEN	77,929	71,480	66,467	-7.0	-25.0	9,933	8,384	6,333	-24.5	-53.3	£10.50	23.1	60.7
SCAMPI FROZEN	65,317	58,348	59,445	1.9	14.3	6,416	5,590	5,021	-10.2	-9.3	£11.84	13.4	26.1
OTHER FROZEN	37,294	38,108	56,684	48.8	-72.7	9,295	9,176	20,010	118.1	-88.2	£2.83	-31.8	131.7
BASA FROZEN	61,255	58,926	55,615	-5.6	173.7	8,497	8,184	6,996	-14.5	145.7	£7.95	10.4	11.3
MIXED SEAFOOD FROZEN	31,229	27,607	35,136	27.3	2.0	3,752	3,039	3,633	19.5	10.5	£9.67	6.5	-7.7
SQUID (CALAMARI) FROZEN	13,441	13,997	13,925	-0.5	311.1	1,447	1,580	1,250	-20.9	229.3	£11.14	25.8	24.9
SOLE FROZEN	5,607	5,259	9,469	80.1	N/A	512	462	772	67.1	N/A	£12.26	7.8	N/A
SEA BASS FROZEN	5,019	5,732	8,893	55.2	318.3	395	492	1,081	119.5	672.6	£8.23	-29.3	-45.9
LOBSTER FROZEN	4,049	6,198	6,345	2.4	522.8	179	234	228	-2.4	342.7	£27.79	4.9	40.7
SCALLOPS FROZEN	8,148	5,796	5,895	1.7	77.1	347	235	234	-0.5	30.8	£25.24	2.2	35.4
MACKEREL FROZEN	5,310	4,788	5,390	12.6	231.0	4,144	3,677	4,064	10.5	214.3	£1.33	1.9	5.3
TUNA FROZEN	7,931	7,165	5,165	-27.9	5.2	930	855	565	-33.9	-56.6	£9.14	9.0	142.4
SHRIMPS FROZEN	8,416	7,584	5,139	-32.2	N/A	547	529	407	-23.1	N/A	£12.62	-11.9	-77.5
PLAICE FROZEN	4,509	4,076	3,197	-21.6	-57.8	485	409	294	-28.1	-70.1	£10.87	9.1	41.0
MUSSELS FROZEN	2,763	2,559	2,730	6.7	18.7	402	352	324	-8.1	-24.8	£8.44	16.1	57.9
TROUT FROZEN	957	960	1,265	31.7	53.4	107	107	136	27.2	124.6	£9.32	3.6	-31.7

*Nielsen Scantrack YE 07.10.23 (*10yr GB)*

Frozen seafood shopper

In 2023, Nielsen demographics define the frozen seafood shopper as younger and less affluent than the typical seafood shopper. Frozen seafood has a higher proportion of C2/D/E (skilled manual, unskilled manual occupations and unemployed) shoppers, in larger households and are more likely to have children present. Where children are present, they are typically aged 5-10 yrs.

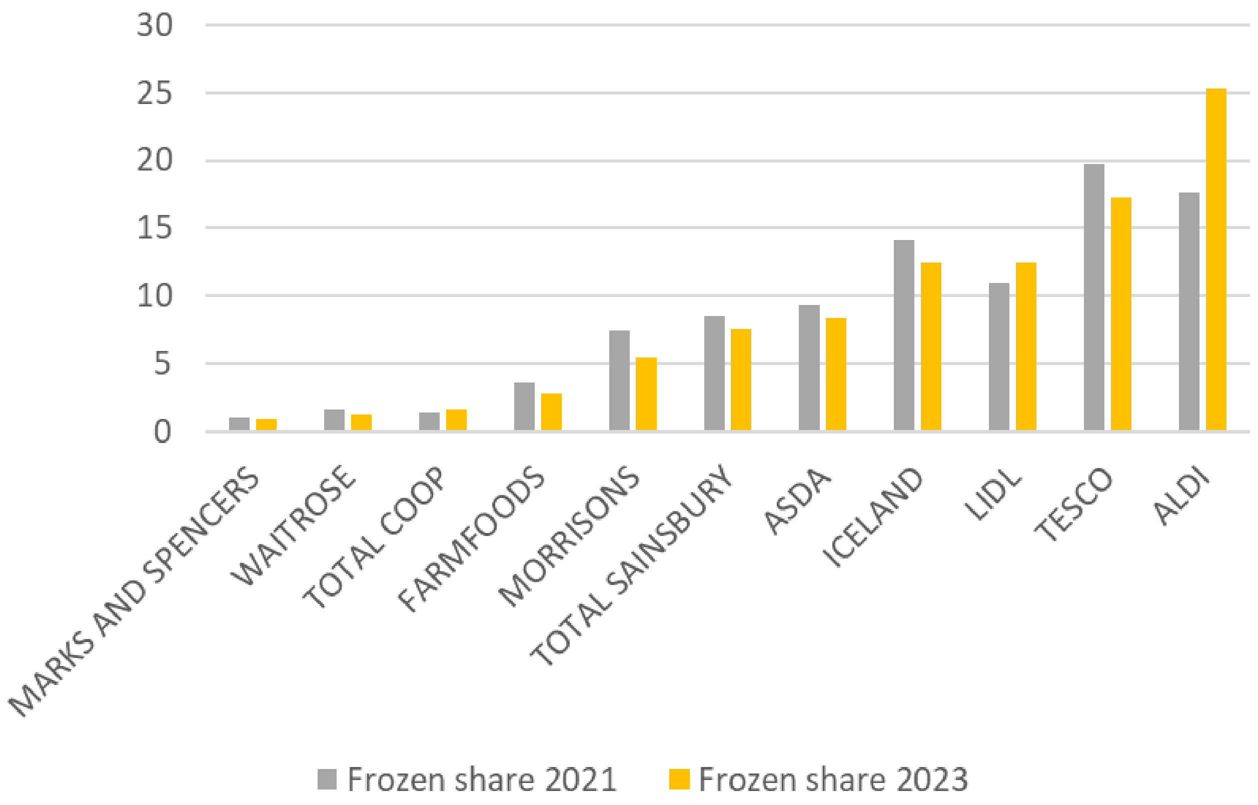
Change in chilled seafood Demographic (volume) 2023 vs 2016 (%)

	TOTAL SEAFOOD (% Share)	Total % Chg	CHILLED (% Share)	Chilled % Chg	FROZEN	Froz % chg	AMBIENT	amb % chg
CLASS AB	32.4	10.5	36.6	10.8	29.5	14.8	28.8	4.9
CLASS C1	30.3	10.3	30.4	11.2	30.2	9.6	30.3	9.8
CLASS C2	17.9	-12.5	16.3	-9.1	18.8	-17.5	19.8	-10.9
CLASS D	12.4	11.2	10.6	13.4	13.9	12.5	13.4	3.9
CLASS E	6.9	-39.9	6.0	-51.0	7.5	-34.6	7.7	-21.6
SIZE 1 MEMBER	24.4	3.3	28.0	1.0	20.3	5.4	23.9	8.8
SIZE 2 MEMBERS	38.2	-9.3	41.7	-9.3	35.8	-8.8	35.0	-9.2
SIZE 3.4 MEMBERS	30.1	7.6	25.7	13.5	34.1	3.9	32.4	3.2
SIZE > 5 MEMBERS	7.3	16.3	4.6	26.0	9.7	13.5	8.6	7.5
<35 YEARS	11.5	-0.7	9.7	5.6	13.0	0.0	12.5	-12.2
35 TO 44 YEARS	14.9	-7.6	12.6	-8.0	16.4	-7.8	17.1	-7.9
45 TO 64 YEARS	36.9	1.7	34.6	1.9	37.8	-0.7	39.9	4.5
65+ YEARS	36.8	2.0	43.0	-0.1	32.9	5.2	30.4	5.2
CHILDREN YES	23.8	5.3	18.2	14.6	28.6	-0.1	27.0	0.4
CHILDREN NO	76.2	-1.5	81.8	-2.8	71.4	0.0	73.0	-0.2
CHILD 0 TO 4 YEARS	23.6	-7.1	24.8	-4.8	23.7	-6.2	21.9	-12.2
CHILD 5 TO 10 YEARS	39.0	-2.6	37.9	-4.4	40.3	-1.1	38.1	-3.2
CHILD 11 TO 15 YEARS	37.4	8.3	37.3	8.8	36.0	5.8	40.0	12.0
PRE FAMILY	5.6	-4.2	5.7	-0.2	5.2	-4.9	6.3	-10.0
NEW FAMILY	4.3	-7.2	3.9	12.6	4.8	-15.5	4.3	-20.9
MATURING FAMILIES	12.4	2.7	8.8	8.7	15.8	0.8	13.9	-4.4
ESTABLISHED FAMILIES	9.7	16.0	7.5	15.3	11.0	10.9	12.0	23.1
POST FAMILIES	14.6	-12.1	14.3	-12.2	14.1	-11.2	15.9	-13.3
OLDER COUPLES	35.4	-1.9	38.9	-2.1	33.9	-0.8	30.7	-2.2
OLDER SINGLES	18.0	10.0	20.8	3.5	15.2	15.2	16.9	24.8

Nielsen Homescan YE 07.10.23

Compared to 2016, frozen seafood has gained significantly more affluent buyers in 2023, as buyers from larger households trade down from chilled. Frozen seafood has become an older purchase, and where children are present, there is a move to older children in the age group of 11 to 15 years.

Grocer share of seafood 2023 and 2021 (volume)



Nielsen Homescan YE 07.10.23

Where are shoppers purchasing frozen seafood from?

In 2023, Aldi and Lidl and CO-OP are the only retailers to increase share of frozen seafood from 2021. Aldi share of frozen seafood is growing fast, and this year has replaced Tesco as the largest frozen seafood retailer.

Aldi has seen the highest long term total seafood growth from a 1.5% share in 2008 to 25% in 2023 (data includes recent Nielsen adjustment to improve discounter product capture); the price, quality and British messages continuing to resonate with shoppers. Following Ukraine and the cost of living crisis, seafood shoppers have put more emphasis on price, but quality still ranks highly for the category.

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