

# Canada



UK seafood industry imports from Canada 2018*		
Fish type	Value, £	Weight, tonnes
Prepared and preserved shrimps and prawns	39,902,015	4,884.8
Cod	5,009,292	1,512.3
Lobster	21,172,592	1,499,940
Salmon	13,862,439	1,429.0
Scallops	4,509,408	250.3
Other fish	3,187,201	193.4
Hake	156,307	121.2
Cold water shrimps and prawns	574,528	107.6
Offal	395,619	82.8
Haddock	292,354	69.1
Redfish	123,971	59.5
Warm water shrimps and prawns	180,873	45.4
Other shellfish	117,301	20.4
Crabs	162,573	8.1
Herring	21,633	6.6
Caviar	177,506	4.6
Aquatics invertebrates	171,176	1.9
Octopus	1,915	0.1
Other flatfish	890	0.0
Clams, cockles and arkshells	1,358	0.0

\*Source: Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

## Introduction

This report is part of a series of country risk profiles that are designed to provide an understanding of the social risks associated with source countries that play a key role in the UK's seafood industry. Each report covers risks related to the production and processing of wild catch and aquaculture seafood products.

This report covers issues such as forced and child labour, working conditions, and impacts of the industry on local communities; and the mitigation efforts and regulatory frameworks put in place to address these issues.

This country risk profile has been compiled by Verisk Maplecroft on behalf of Seafish. Information on issues has been collated from publicly available sources, varying from international rankings and ratings, research by academics and other organisations, through to media articles. It has been prepared for general information only. You should not rely solely on its contents; always verify information from your own suppliers in your own supply chain. References for all information sources are provided.

## Overview

Canada's diverse and export-oriented seafood sector provides an estimated 80,000 jobs across the country, with operations occurring around the country's extensive coastline and on inland lakes. According to Canadian Government sources in 2018, Canada exported 7.8 million tonnes of seafood (valued at over GBP 56.3 million) to the UK, which accounted for around 1.38% of the country's total seafood exports.<sup>1</sup> The country's top seafood exports globally were lobster, crab and salmon in 2017, while the top five products imported by the UK were shrimp, lobster, salmon, cod and scallops.<sup>2</sup>

Depending on the fisheries, production is undertaken across the country by a combination of smallholder fishers or farmers, and larger, consolidated operations. Farmed salmon production in British Columbia (BC), for example, has undergone considerable consolidation and is dominated by a handful of large companies and some minor companies; 80% of output is generated by only three farms, which have close ties to Norwegian companies. Conversely, wild catch salmon is undertaken by both commercial fleets, using purse seine, gill net and trolling gear, and First Nation fishers using traditional nets, weirs and gaffs. Around 4,000 fishers are employed in BC's local wild catch salmon industry.

Commercial fishing activities are limited across Canada's Arctic and in Hudson Bay. The Fisheries Plan, which regulates fishing across over 800,000 km<sup>2</sup> of the Beaufort Sea, precludes larger, commercial operations in favour of smallholder, community fishing activities.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the 2015 international fisheries declaration signed by Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the US bans fishing in the central Arctic Ocean until regulations are introduced to support sustainable fishing practices. Some fisheries including for sea cucumber, haddock and herring are present in the Labrador Sea, though overfishing of cod led to a moratorium in 1992 that has not been lifted since. In Hudson Bay, commercial fishing activities are limited in favour of small-scale fisheries around the Bay's coastal rivers and estuaries.

## Social risks

**Canada is a low risk sourcing jurisdiction, and limited evidence of social issues associated with the country's wider fisheries sector have been identified by governmental or civil society actors with oversight of the industry.** The fisheries sector – encompassing both fresh capture and aquaculture methods of production – is well regulated by the Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Fisheries Act. Moreover, fisheries stocks are also closely monitored to avoid overfishing, a lesson learned following the decimation of the Atlantic cod fisheries between the 1950s and the 1990s.

**Vulnerable groups are involved in the production and processing stages of the fisheries value chain in Canada.** In the province of Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.), domestic labour shortages have resulted in seafood processing facilities increasing the number of foreign migrant workers hired under the express-entry pilot programme; a P.E.I based processing facility reported in 2018 that the 60 workers they had hired were primarily from the Philippines and Mexico. This new immigration pilot in P.E.I. helps fill local positions with foreign workers by increasing the number of migrant workers available to employers by 120, on top of existing caps. More broadly, while no information on the specific violations was provided, audits conducted on 17 processing facilities employing migrant workers in 2014-15 in neighbouring New Brunswick found that 7 (41%) had broken employment related rules, prompting calls for more regulation of the industry.<sup>4</sup>

First Nations groups are also heavily involved in Canada's fisheries sector, with Fisheries and Oceans Canada reporting that over 4,500 indigenous persons are employed in the industry, with more than GBP 150 million in revenues generated per annum.<sup>5</sup> Notably, multiple federal initiatives exist to support the development of First Nation's fisheries in the country.<sup>6</sup>

There is some evidence to suggest that women in First Nations fishing communities face employment discrimination, receive menial jobs on fishing vessels, and less pay for equal work. Indeed, a Canadian court in 2015 ruled against Millbrook First Nation for denying a female fishing professional work as a crew member and later captain due to her gender.<sup>7</sup> There is also evidence to suggest that the commercial fishing industry is predominantly comprised of male crews and fishers, though female workers reportedly make up around a third of workers employed in the wider salmon farming sector.

**Occupational health and safety issues are pronounced in Canada's wild capture fisheries.** In 2018 (latest available data), the Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) recorded 233 shipping accidents, of which a majority (28%) impacted fishing vessels. Furthermore, all 14 of the marine fatalities recorded that year in the shipping accidents category occurred on fishing vessels. The comparatively high rate of accidents and casualties means that fishing industry safety was not removed from the TSB's watchlist of key safety issues in 2018.<sup>8</sup>

A key factor in the industry's high rate of OHS issues is the limited acceptance of personal safety, with the TSB calling out the limited use of personal flotation devices (PFD) and safety signals as two primary concerns. Indeed, when reviewing the 63 deaths reported in the marine fisheries industry between 2011 and 2017, the TSB reported that PFD use couldn't be established in 80% of the cases.<sup>9</sup>

**Potential for wages related lawsuits are present in the wild capture fisheries sector.** Employees working on fishing vessels have been hired based on verbal agreements in the past, with the expectation that they will receive a certain percentage of the total value of the vessel's catch. In April 2018, a BC company was ordered (by the BC Employment Standards Tribunal) to pay one of its crew around GBP 8,500 for work he had completed aboard a vessel despite that fact that its catch was largely confiscated by fisheries officials. Notably, the employee also alleged that he had worked up to 20-hour days aboard the vessel, which is reportedly common in the industry.<sup>10</sup> Under Canada's Maritime Labour Standards, vessel masters are required to ensure that their crew do not work over 14 hours per 24-hour period, or 72 hours per 7-day period.<sup>11</sup>

## Regulations and risk mitigation

### Canada's health and safety regulations for the seafood sector are appropriate for ensuring the safety of workers.

Regulations for the fishing sector are set out by a number of organisations including Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Transport Canada, and Work Safe. The ILO's Maritime Labour Convention provides health, welfare and social security protection to Canadian seafarers.

### Canada's Transportation Safety Board (TSB) continues to make recommendations on how to improve OHS in the fisheries sector.

In 2017, the Fishing Vessel Safety Legislation was introduced, while the board has also made multiple recommendations to the industry on safety improvements since 1992; of the 48 recommendations, 13 are reportedly still outstanding. The TSB has also called for a unified approach between federal and provincial branches of government to maintain oversight of the fisheries sector.<sup>12</sup>

WorkSafeNB – the New Brunswick arm of the Federal Workers' Compensation Service which aims to prevent workplace accidents – is also attempting to implement regulatory changes in the maritime province to address OHS concerns. Fishing vessels are not currently considered to be workplaces, which means that WorkSafe regulations do not apply to them or their crew. Potential changes to the province's Occupational Health and Safety Act could include approved PFDs for use aboard vessels.<sup>13</sup>

## International conventions and rankings

The following tables indicate which international labour conventions Canada has ratified. The ratification of these conventions is a good indicator of a source country's commitment to enforcing internationally accepted best practices in the seafood industry when combined with thorough national legislation and well-resourced enforcement mechanisms.

International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions	Ratification
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (No. 87)	Yes
Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining (No. 98)	Yes
Forced Labour (No. 29)	Yes
Abolition of Forced Labour (No. 105)	Yes
Equal Remuneration (No. 100)	Yes
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) (No. 111)	Yes
Minimum Age (No. 138)	Yes
Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182)	Yes
Hours of Work (Industry) (No.1)	Yes
Weekly Rest (Industry) (No.14)	Yes
Protection of Wages (No. 95)	No
Minimum Wage Fixing (No.131)	No
Occupational Safety and Health (No. 155)	No
Occupational Health Services (No. 161)	No
Labour Inspection (No. 81)	No
Private Employment Agencies (No. 181)	No
Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188)	No
Maritime Labour Convention (No. 186)	Yes

United Nations (UN) Conventions	Ratification
Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children	Yes
Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	Yes
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation and the Prostitution of Others	No
Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	No
Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery	Yes
Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery	Yes
Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air	Yes

Other Conventions	Ratification
FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing	Yes

## Rankings in global indices

### US Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report

The TIP report is released annually by the U.S. Department of State, and offers a summary of the laws and enforcement efforts of various countries with respect to human trafficking. Specifically, it ranks countries based on a '3P paradigm' of prosecuting traffickers, protecting victims and preventing crime. Scoring on these elements is then collated to give each country a ranking. The rankings range from Tier 1 which indicates governments of countries that fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Prevention Act (TVPA) minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking to Tier 3 for the governments of countries that do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, and are not making significant efforts to do so.

#### Rating: Tier 1

According to the US Department of State's 2019 Trafficking in Person's Report, Canada fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.<sup>14</sup>

### Global Slavery Index

The 2018 Global Slavery Index measures the extent of modern slavery country by country, and the steps governments are taking to respond to this issue, to objectively measure progress toward ending modern slavery.

There are two rankings:

1. Rankings of countries by prevalence of the population in modern slavery. Rankings range from 1 to 167 - with 1 the worst and 167 the best, in terms of the prevalence of slavery.
2. Rank of countries in terms of Government response to the issue. This is an indication of how governments are tackling modern slavery. This ranking ranges from AAA at the top to D at the bottom, with AAA denoting the most effective and comprehensive Government response.

#### For prevalence Canada ranking is: 166/167 (where a ranking of 1 indicates highest risk)

Overall, Canada is considered one of the lowest risk countries for modern slavery on the index. According to the special report on the fishing sector, it is also considered low risk for all categories assessed.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of Government response Canada ranks BB. This indicates government has introduced a response to modern slavery that includes short-term victim support services, a criminal justice framework that criminalises some forms of modern slavery, a body to coordinate the response, and protection for those vulnerable to modern slavery. There may be evidence that some government policies and practices may criminalise and/or cause victims to be deported and/or facilitate slavery.

**EU's Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Carding Process/Watchlist**

Under the IUU Regulation, non-EU countries identified as having inadequate measures in place to prevent and deter this activity may be issued with a formal warning (yellow card) to improve. If they fail to do so, they face having their fish banned from the EU market (red card) among other measures.

Canada does not appear on the EU's Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Watchlist.

**Endnotes**

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- 2 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, September 2018, Sector Trend Analysis – Fish and seafood trends in the United Kingdom, <http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/industry-markets-and-trade/international-agri-food-market-intelligence/reports/sector-trend-analysis-fish-and-seafood-trends-in-the-united-kingdom/?id=1535728010711>
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- 5 Newswire, 24 May 2019, Setting a new course for Indigenous and Government of Canada collaboration through the co-development, co-design, and co-delivery of fisheries programs, <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/setting-a-new-course-for-indigenous-and-government-of-canada-collaboration-through-the-co-development-co-design-and-co-delivery-of-fisheries-programs-819678134.html>
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- 7 The Star, 6 May 2015, First Nations woman wins discrimination battle over fishing captain licence, <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/05/06/first-nations-woman-wins-discrimination-battle-over-fishing-captain-licence.html>
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- 9 CBC, 29 October 2018, TSB calls out fishing industry after deadliest year in more than a decade, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/transportation-safety-board-commercial-fishing-industry-deaths-watchlist-2018-1.4882699>
- 10 CBC, 28 April 2018, B.C. fishing company ordered to pay deckhand \$15K despite confiscated catch, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/b-c-fishing-company-ordered-to-pay-deckhand-15k-despite-confiscated-catch-1.4635790>
- 11 Government of Canada Justice Laws Website, undated, Part 3: Maritime Labour Standards (continued), <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-2007-115/page-44.html>
- 12 Transportation Safety Board of Canada, 2018, Commercial Fishing Safety, <http://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/surveillance-watchlist/marine/2018/marine.html>
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- 14 US Department of State, 20 June 2019, 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report: Canada, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/canada/>
- 15 Minderoo Foundation, undated, Global Slavery Index, <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/>

For further information see the **Seafish ethics in Seafood** web page.  
Available at: <https://www.seafish.org/article/ethics-in-seafood>