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the support it needs to thrive.



Mackerel in the UK: trade, retail, and GB foodservice trends.

Discover key trends in mackerel sales and
consumer demand across trade, retail, and
foodservice in 2024.

07/04/2025



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Report overview

This report is tailored for businesses in the seafood industry, including seafood producers, retailers, and foodservice providers. It provides data and insights into market trends and consumer preferences for the mackerel market in the UK and GB during 2024.

This publication provides data-driven insights into key factors such as market performance, consumer demographics, and competitive positioning, across the retail, foodservice, and trade markets.

Top takeaways

Mackerel remains a popular species in the UK, purchased by consumers in and out of home. It is the top landed species into the UK, the ninth most popular seafood species by volume sales in UK retail and is 2% of all the seafood servings in GB foodservice.

UK trade and supply

Mackerel is the top landed species into the UK by both volume and value. Mackerel supply to the UK increased in 2024 as more mackerel was landed into the UK by the catching sector despite a decrease in mackerel imports.

More of the UK's mackerel supply is destined for the export market than for the domestic market. It is the top exported wild-caught species, second only to salmon. The EU and Norway are the top destinations for UK mackerel sold internationally. The market share to the EU, Vietnam and China increased in 2024 as total sales of mackerel abroad was in full growth.

UK retail

4% of the total seafood volume sales in retail are to mackerel, equating to 15,922 tonnes sold. It is the ninth most purchased species in terms of volume worth £152.6 million. Although this growth is predominately price driven up 6% volume sales have grown 2% showing a rise in mackerel consumption compared to the previous year. Over half of all sales are from the ambient sector, with over two fifths being from the prepared segment.

GB foodservice

Two percent of all seafood servings consumed outside the home are mackerel, totalling 2,380 tonnes. Mackerel servings increased by 66% compared to the previous year, indicating a rise in out-of-home consumption. Available across five out-of-home channels, Quick Service Restaurants are the most popular for mackerel consumption. It is most frequently served as a snack, with Wednesday being the most popular day for mackerel servings.



UK trade and supply

In this section

- UK landed mackerel
- UK imports of mackerel
- UK exports of mackerel

Mackerel in UK trade and supply

This section details UK mackerel landings, imports, and exports based on data up to December 2024.

The total mackerel supply in 2024, including UK port landings, imported products, and mackerel caught by UK vessels abroad, was 247,744 tonnes, as shown in chart 1.

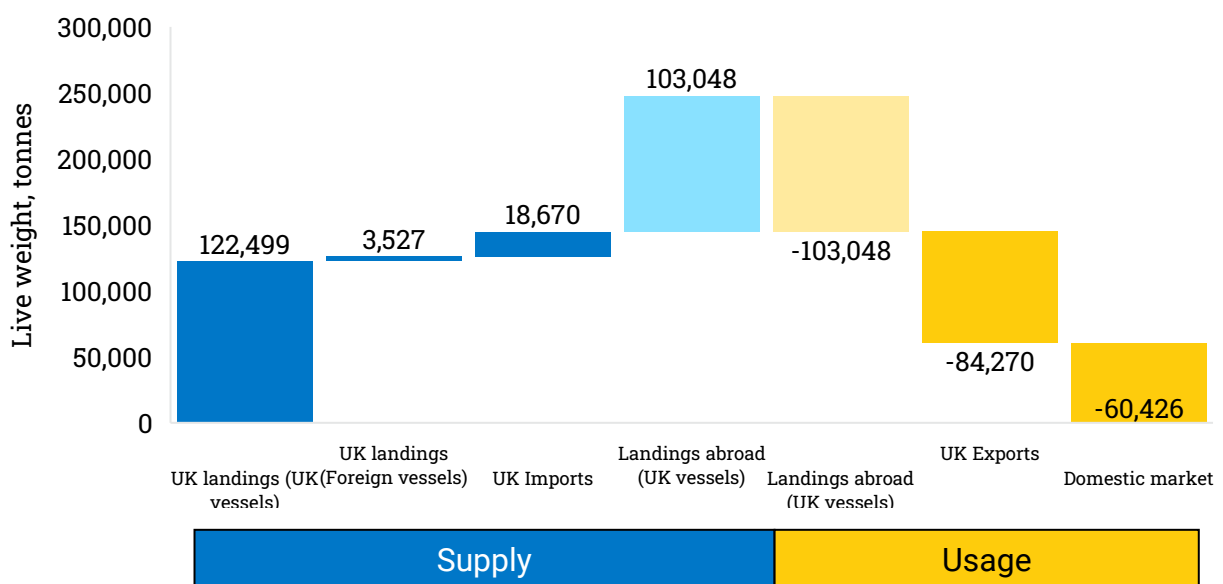
Total mackerel supply is either destined for the domestic market, 24% of the total supply, or the international market, 76% of the total supply. Mackerel comes into the UK in two ways, imports and landings into UK ports.

A total of 144,696 live weight tonnes of mackerel entered the UK in 2024, either landed by the catching sector (87%) or imported (13%).

There is strong demand internationally for the Atlantic mackerel caught by the UK fleet. Much of the mackerel entering the UK is destined for export to international markets. More mackerel was landed directly abroad by the UK fleet than was landed into the UK in 2024.

A total of 187,318 tonnes of mackerel went to the international market in 2024 made up of UK fleet landings abroad (55%) and UK exports (45%). This left a total of 60,426 live weight tonnes of mackerel for the domestic market in 2024.

Chart 1: Total Mackerel supply and market destination by live weight.

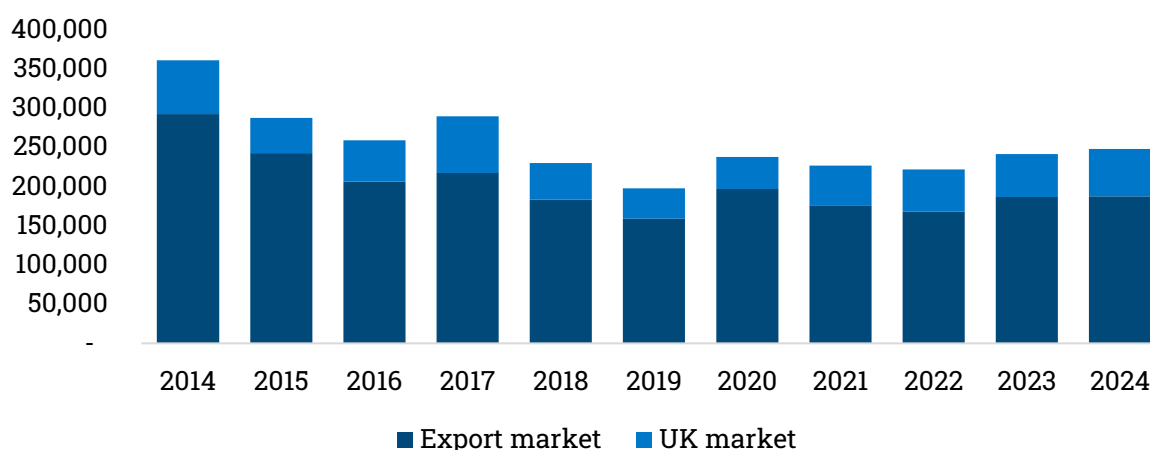


The volume of internationally traded goods is typically reported by net weight. For seafood, to compare catch volumes with traded volumes and to assess available supply of a species for consumption, the live weight equivalent is used. This relates to the weight of live fish required to produce the final product of that species.

Ten-year trends in mackerel supply and markets

In 2024 total mackerel supply increased by 2.8% to 247,744 tonnes live weight. Compared to 2014, total mackerel supply had fallen by 112,630 tonnes (-31.3%). The share of mackerel supply for the export market has fallen from 81% to 76% and the share for the domestic market has increased from 19% to 24%.

Chart 2: Total mackerel supply live weight in tonnes by market destination



UK Mackerel Supply (Landings to the UK and Imports)

UK landed mackerel

In 2024 a total of 126,026 tonnes of mackerel was landed into the UK by both UK vessels (97%) and by foreign vessels (3%). There were an additional 103,048 tonnes of mackerel landed directly abroad by the UK fleet in 2024. In total the UK fleet landed 229,074 tonnes of mackerel in 2024 with 54% to the UK and 46% abroad.

Sales performance of UK landed mackerel into UK ports

126,026 tonnes* of mackerel, worth £176.4 million was landed into the UK in 2024. Sales rose by +29.8%, driven by a +14.7% increase in price per kg to an average of £1.40. Volume also grew by +13.1%, showing a rise in mackerel demand compared to the previous year.

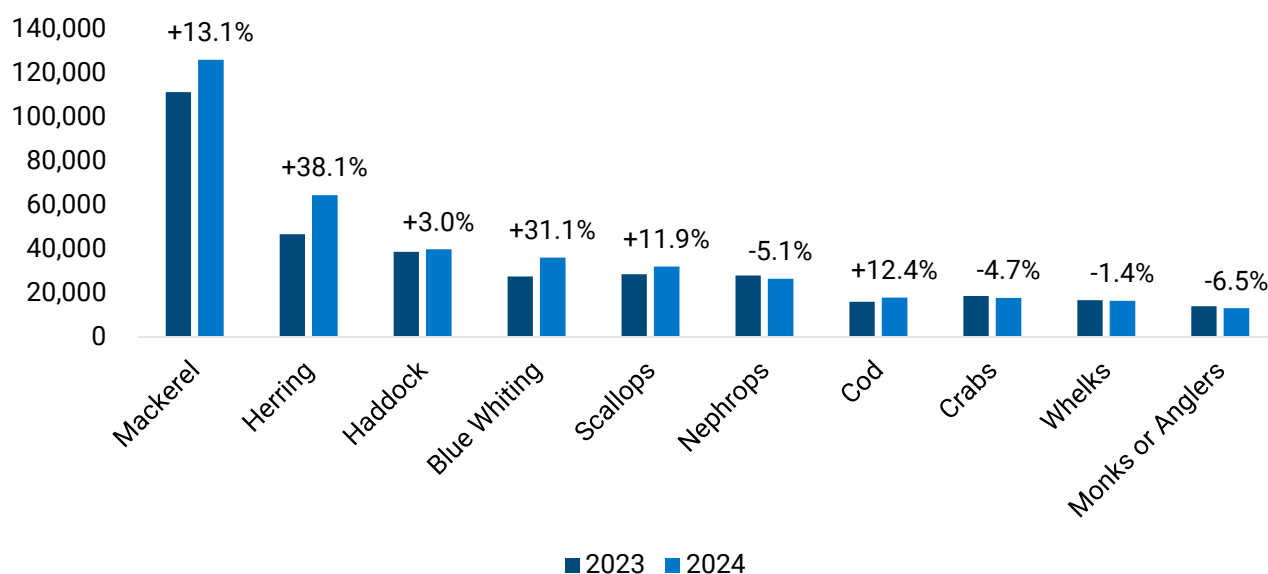
Table 1: Sales performance of total mackerel landings in the UK-by-UK and foreign vessels, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.

Species	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Mackerel	£176.4 (+29.8%)	126,026 (+1.8%)	£1.40 (+14.7%)

Mackerel was the top landed species into the UK by value and volume, making up 26% of total volume sales and 21% of total value sales of seafood landings. The top ten landed species combined, account for 81% of all the seafood species landed into

UK ports by UK and foreign vessels. Chart 3 below shows the top ten seafood species landed into the UK by volume, along with annual growth.

Chart 3: Volume sales (live weight tonnes) of the top ten species landed into UK ports by UK vessels, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.



At £1.40 per kg, mackerel is the sixth cheapest among the top ten seafood species landed into the UK. In 2024, it was priced 24% below the average total seafood price of £1.83 per kg. However, it has seen the highest price increase, with above-average inflation, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Sales performance of total seafood, and the top ten selling species landed into the UK-by-UK vessels, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.

Species	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Total seafood	£828.1 (+2.6%)	481,241 (+7.5%)	£1.83 (-5.2%)
Mackerel	£176.4 (+29.8%)	126,026 (+13.1%)	£1.40 (+14.7%)
Herring	£37.3 (+29.2%)	64,523 (+38.1%)	£0.58 (-6.4%)
Haddock	£46.6 (+8.5%)	39,929 (+3.0%)	£1.32 (+5.5%)
Blue Whiting	£8.6 (+26.9)	36,036 (+31.1%)	£0.24 (-3.2%)
Scallops	£60.5 (+0.7%)	32,005 (+11.9%)	£1.89 (-10.2%)
Nephrops	£100.8 (-7.6%)	26,537 (-5.1%)	£6.10 (-2.0%)
Cod	£61.5 (+13.6%)	17,973 (+12.4%)	£4.54 (-0.3%)
Crabs	£38.0 (-18.6%)	17,742 (-4.7%)	£2.14 (-14.7%)
Whelks	£22.9 (+5.2%)	16,480 (-1.4%)	£1.39 (+6.8%)
Monks or Anglers	£45.2 (+2.4%)	13,098 (-6.5%)	£5.10 (+13.9%)

UK imports of mackerel

The UK imports mackerel from various countries of origin.

Sales performance of UK imported mackerel

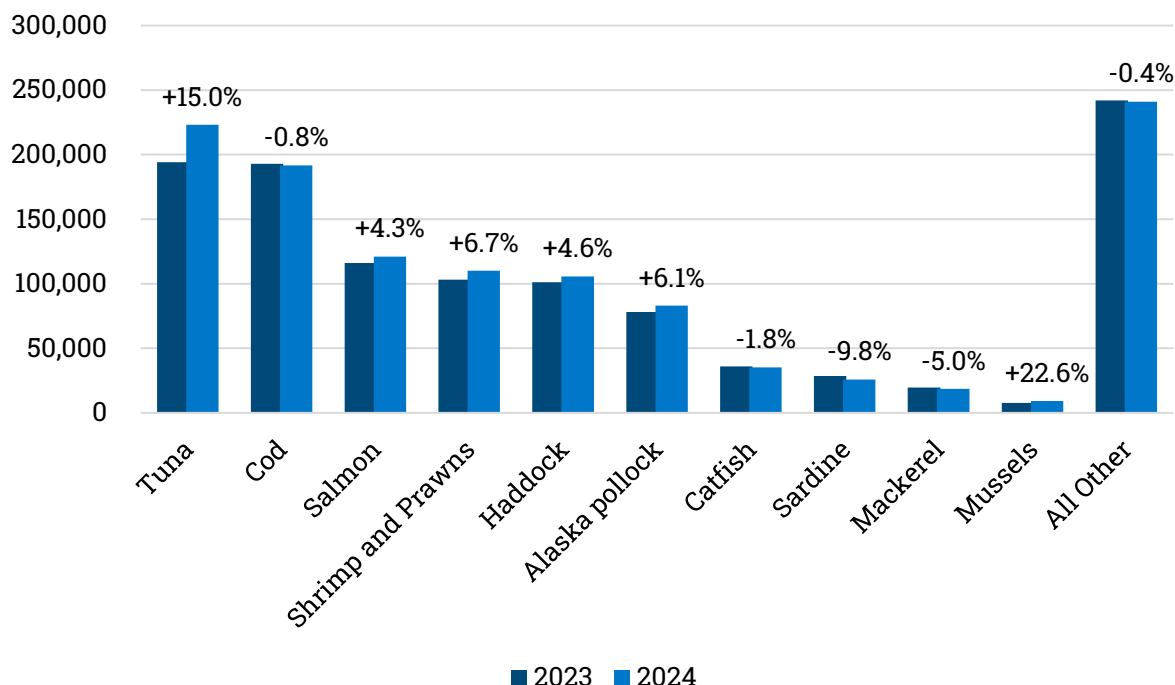
In 2024 the UK imported 11,874 tonnes of mackerel products, the equivalent of 18,670 live weight tonnes of mackerel. Sales declined by -1.4% to £44.7 million, despite a +1.6% increase in price per kg to £3.77. Volume also grew declined by -5.0%, showing a drop in mackerel demand compared to the previous year.

Table 3: Sales performance of total mackerel imports into the UK, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.

Species	Value million	Volume tonnes*=-	Price per KG
Mackerel	£44.7 (-1.4%)	18,670 (-5.0%)	£3.77 (+1.6%)

Mackerel was the eleventh most imported species into the UK by volume and value, making up 1.6% of total volume sales and 1.2% of total value sales of seafood imports. Chart 4 below highlights the top eleven seafood species imported into the UK by volume, along with annual growth.

Chart 4: Volume sales (live weight tonnes) of the top eleven species imported into the UK, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.



At £3.77 per kg, mackerel is the sixth cheapest among the top eleven seafood species. Priced 13% below the average of £4.86 per kg, it experienced one of the highest price increases, with above-average inflation, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Sales performance of total seafood, and the top eleven species imported into the UK, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.

Species	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Total seafood	£3.8B (+1.6%)	1,164,876 (+4.1%)	£4.86 (-4.3%)
Tuna	£464.1 (+12.0%)	223,176 (+15.0%)	£4.34 (-2.7%)
Cod	£485.6 (-7.0%)	191,553 (-0.8%)	£6.31 (-5.6%)
Salmon	£740.7 (-1.5%)	121,004 (+4.3%)	£7.84 (-5.4%)
Shrimp & Prawns	£579.5 (+1.7%)	110,139 (+6.7%)	£7.42 (-5.0%)
Haddock	£195.8 (-1.2%)	105,747 (+4.6%)	£3.62 (-0.9%)
Alaska Pollock	£75.7 (-12.7%)	83,031 (+6.1%)	£2.46 (-19.3%)
Catfish	£45.8 (-10.0%)	35,342 (-1.8%)	£2.86 (-7.9%)
Sardine	£44.5 (-9.1%)	25,820 (-9.8%)	£3.55 (+0.6%)
Mackerel	£44.7 (-1.4%)	18,670 (-5.0%)	£3.77 (+1.6%)
Mussels	£12.0 (+18.0%)	9,326 (+22.6%)	£3.99 (+1.8%)

Mackerel imports by consignment country

The EU supplied 84% of UK's mackerel import volume in 2024, down from 87% in 2023. The share of UK mackerel imports increased from China (+1.8 percentage points) and Iceland (+2.3 percentage points).

79% of imported mackerel is consigned from the top five supplying countries shown below in table 5. Netherlands supplied a fifth of the UK's imported mackerel, making it the top supplying country.

Table 5: Sales performance of mackerel in the top five consignment countries, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.

Country	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Netherlands	£10.8 (-16.2%)	3,744 (-22.5%)	£5.29 (+13.0%)
Belgium	£9.6 (-4.1%)	3,511 (-4.0%)	£5.09 (0.0%)
Irish Republic	£4.9 (+22.2%)	3,079 (+11.1%)	£1.61 (+2.3%)
Denmark	£9.1 (-0.4%)	2,730 (-7.1%)	£6.22 (+7.2%)
China	£1.5 (+23.8%)	1,589 (+20.5%)	£1.65 (-2.3%)

Mackerel imports by format

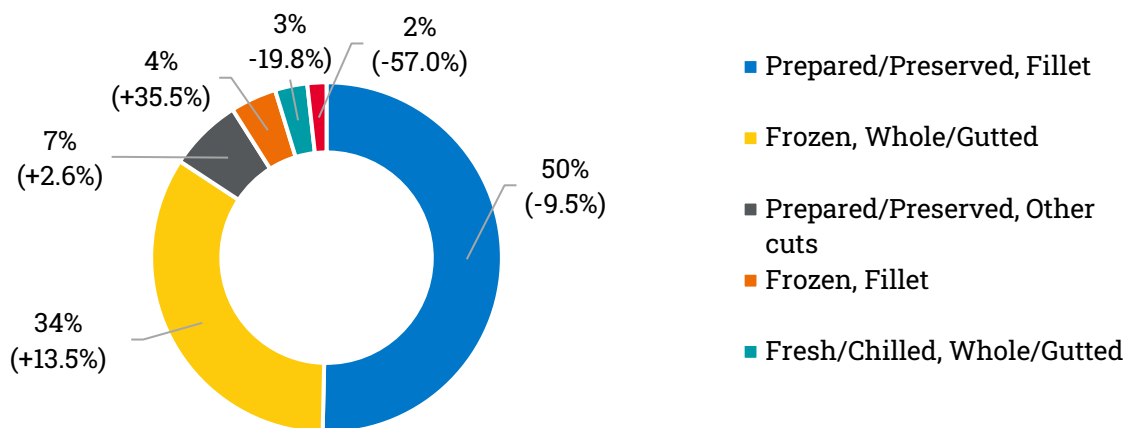
Mackerel is imported to the UK in six formats: prepared/preserved, fillets; frozen, whole/gutted; prepared/preserved, other cuts; frozen, fillet; smoked, unspecified; fresh/chilled, whole/gutted.

To compare the supply of a species available for consumption and to compare trade volumes to landings volumes, product weights are converted to the live weight equivalent. However, when focusing on specific products, the reported weight provides an accurate picture of imported volumes of those products.

Of these six formats, over half of the mackerel products imported to the UK were in the format of prepared/preserved, fillets. Volumes declined by 9.5% to 5,975 tonnes

totalling £33.2m, down -6.1%. Chart 5 shows the reported weight volume share of each format of mackerel product imported to the UK.

Chart 5: Mackerel import volume by preservation and presentation format as a proportion of total mackerel imports, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.



International Mackerel supply: UK exports and landings abroad

In 2024, mackerel sold internationally totalled 187,318 tonnes worth £300.4m. UK mackerel for the global market came from landings abroad (55%) and exports (45%). Exports were valued at £162.5m (54%), while landings abroad were valued at £137.9m (46%). It was the first-year exports surpassed landings in value. See charts 6 and 7 for more details.

Chart 6: Total international market supply of mackerel from the UK by live weight tonnes 2022-2024 combining exported products with landings abroad by the UK fleet.

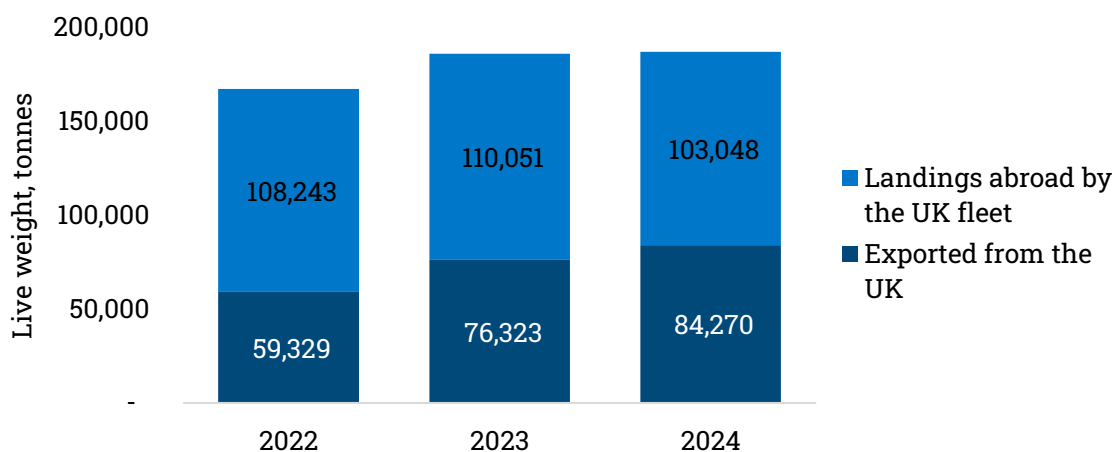
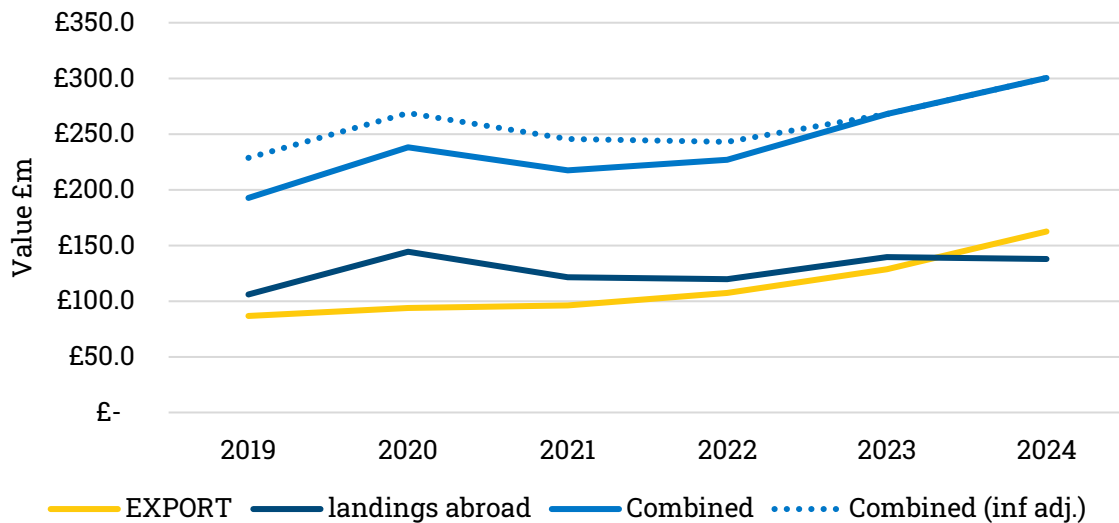
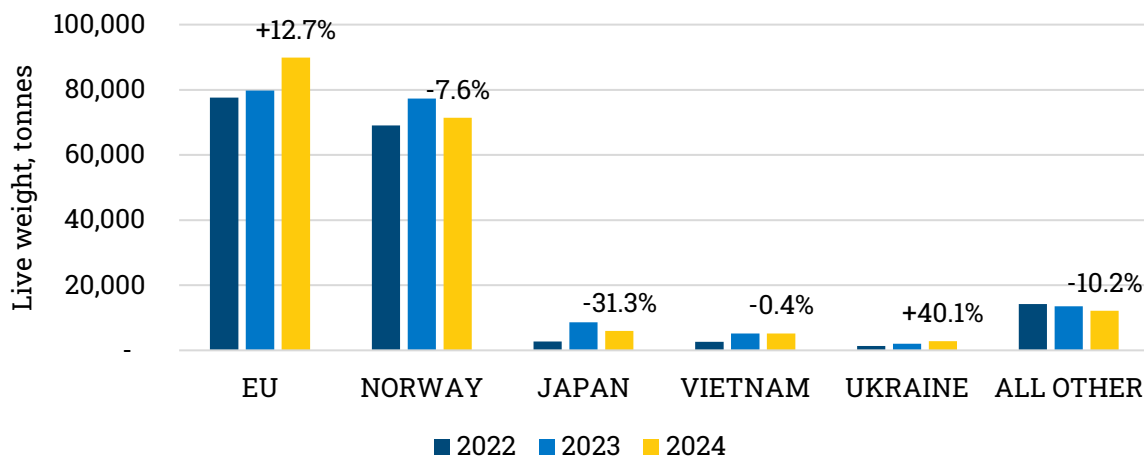


Chart 7: Total international market supply of mackerel from the UK by value 2019-2024 combining exported products with landings abroad by the UK fleet.



The UK exports mackerel to several other countries around the world. When combined, most mackerel exported from the UK or landed abroad is destined for the EU (48%) and Norway (38%). However, by value, Norway has the largest market share with 35% (£106.1m) followed by the EU with 34% (£101.2m)

Chart 8: Destination of mackerel from the UK by live weight 2022-2024 combining exported products with landings abroad by the UK fleet.



UK landed mackerel abroad

In 2024, UK vessels landed 126,026 tonnes of mackerel in the UK (97% by UK vessels, 3% by foreign vessels). Additionally, the UK fleet landed 103,048 tonnes abroad. Overall, the UK fleet landed 229,074 tonnes in 2024, with 54% in the UK and 46% abroad.

Sales performance of UK landed mackerel into ports abroad

UK vessels landed 103,048 tonnes of mackerel worth £137.9 million at foreign ports. Sales fell by 1.1%, despite a 5.6% rise in average price per kg to £1.37. Volume

dropped by 6.4%, indicating lower demand for mackerel compared to the previous year.

Table 6: Sales performance of total mackerel landings abroad by UK vessels, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.

Species	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Mackerel	£137.9 (-1.1%)	103,048 (-6.4%)	£1.37 (+5.6%)

UK exports of mackerel

The UK exports mackerel to several other countries around the world.

Sales performance of UK exported mackerel

Over the past year, the UK exported 84,270 tonnes of mackerel worth £162.5 million. Sales increased by 26.4%, driven by a 14.6% rise in price per kg to £1.97. Volume also grew by 10.4%, indicating higher international demand.

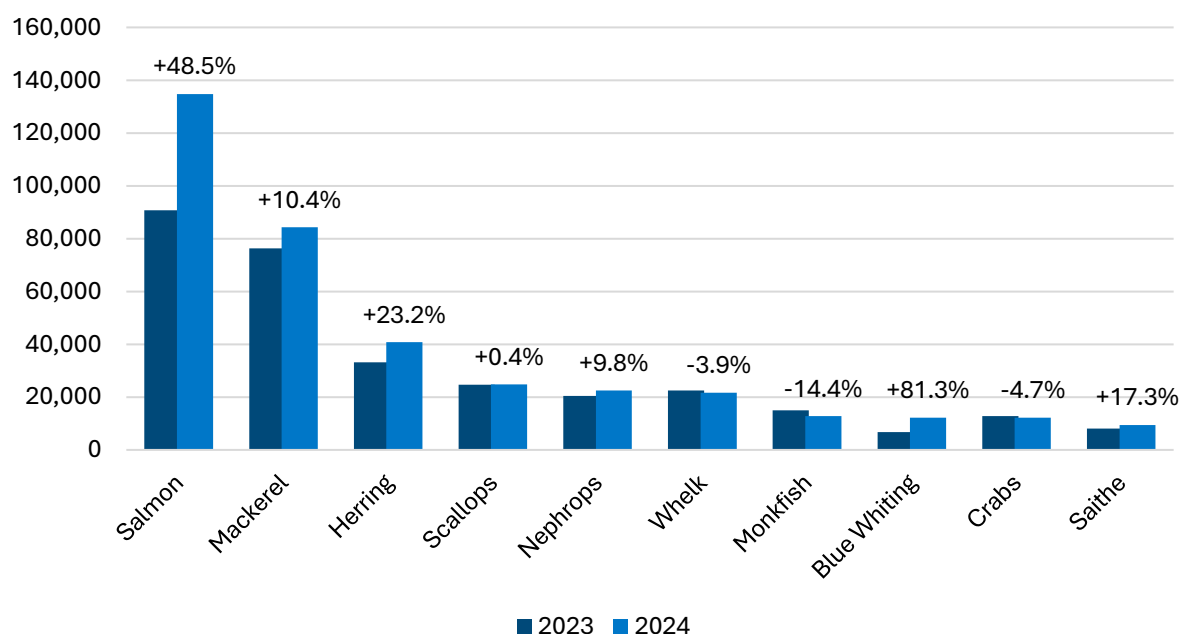
Table 7: Sales performance of total mackerel exports from the UK, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.

Species	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Mackerel	£162.5 (+26.4%)	84,270 (+10.4%)	£1.97 (+14.6%)

Mackerel was the second most exported species from the UK by volume and value behind salmon. It made up 17.1% of total volume sales and 8.2% of total value sales of seafood exports.

Chart 9 below highlights the top ten seafood species exported from the UK by volume, along with annual growth.

Chart 9: Volume sales (live weight tonnes) of the top ten species exported from the UK, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.



At £1.97 per kg, mackerel is the third cheapest among the top ten seafood species exported. Priced 60% below the average price for all exported seafood of £4.94 per kg, it experienced one of the highest price increases, with above-average inflation, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Sales performance of total seafood, and the top ten species exported from the UK, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.

Species	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Total seafood	£2.0B (+13.0%)	492,587 (+11.3%)	£4.94 (-2.7%)
Salmon	£946.8 (+42.0%)	134,789 (+48.5%)	£8.35 (-6.2%)
Mackerel	£162.5 (+26.4%)	84,270 (+10.4%)	£1.97 (+14.6%)
Herring	£38.5 (+28.2%)	40,817 (+23.2%)	£1.27 (-3.2%)
Scallops	£88.3 (-3.0)	24,773 (+0.4%)	£12.57 (-3.7%)
Nephrops	£123.0 (+6.8%)	22,449 (+9.8%)	£10.46 (-1.9%)
Whelk	£47.8 (+11.2%)	21,633 (-3.9%)	£6.04 (+17.2%)
Monkfish	£39.1 (-10.4%)	12,816 (-14.4%)	£9.24 (+5.2%)
Blue Whiting	£4.1 (+100.3%)	12,429 (+81.3%)	£0.39 (+21.7%)
Crabs	£65.5 (-14.9%)	10,717 (-6.0%)	£6.11 (-9.4%)
Saithe	£17.8 (+10.0%)	5,593 (+21.5%)	£3.18 (-9.5%)

Mackerel exports by destination country

66% of exported mackerel is sent to the top five destination countries as shown below in table 10. Netherlands accounted for a third of all the UK's exported mackerel, making it the top destination country.

Table 9: Sales performance of mackerel in the top five destination countries, with annual percentage change (%), in the 12 months to December 2024.

Country	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Netherlands	£57.4 (+61.1%)	30,877 (+43.6%)	£1.88 (+13.2%)
Lithuania	£19.8 (+45.4%)	9,938 (+13.8%)	£1.99 (+27.8%)
France	£16.6 (+27.0%)	7,259 (+20.9%)	£2.34 (+6.8%)
Japan	£11.2 (-25.4%)	5,910 (-31.3%)	£1.90 (+8.5%)
Vietnam	£12.5 (+44.1%)	5,127 (-0.4%)	£2.43 (+44.7%)

Mackerel exports by format

Mackerel is exported from the UK in six formats: prepared/preserved, fillets; frozen, whole/gutted; prepared/preserved, other cuts; frozen, fillet; smoked, unspecified; fresh/chilled, whole/gutted. Of these six formats, 90% of the mackerel products exported from the UK were in the frozen, whole/gutted format. Volumes were up +13.2% to 77,319 totalling £148.3m, up +32.1%.

If you are interested to learn more about seafood trade and supply, check out our [latest mid-year UK seafood trade data](#).



UK retail market

In this section

- Sales performance in the UK retail market
- Sales performance by sector
- Sales performance by segment
- The mackerel shopper profile
- Opportunities for mackerel in the UK retail market

Mackerel consumption at home

The following section explores trends in the retail sales of mackerel. Highlighting sector performance, product preferences, and shifting consumer behaviour. This is using 52 week ending data, to 28th December 2024.

Mackerel is a popular, versatile, and affordable seafood in the UK. It ranks ninth of all species sold by volume in UK retail. Despite rising prices, demand remains has increased in the chilled sector, remaining stable in ambient, and declined in frozen. Its adaptability in cooking makes it a popular option amongst shoppers, with recipes like fried rice, risotto, and fishcakes, being particularly well-rated by home cooks.

Sales performance in the UK retail market

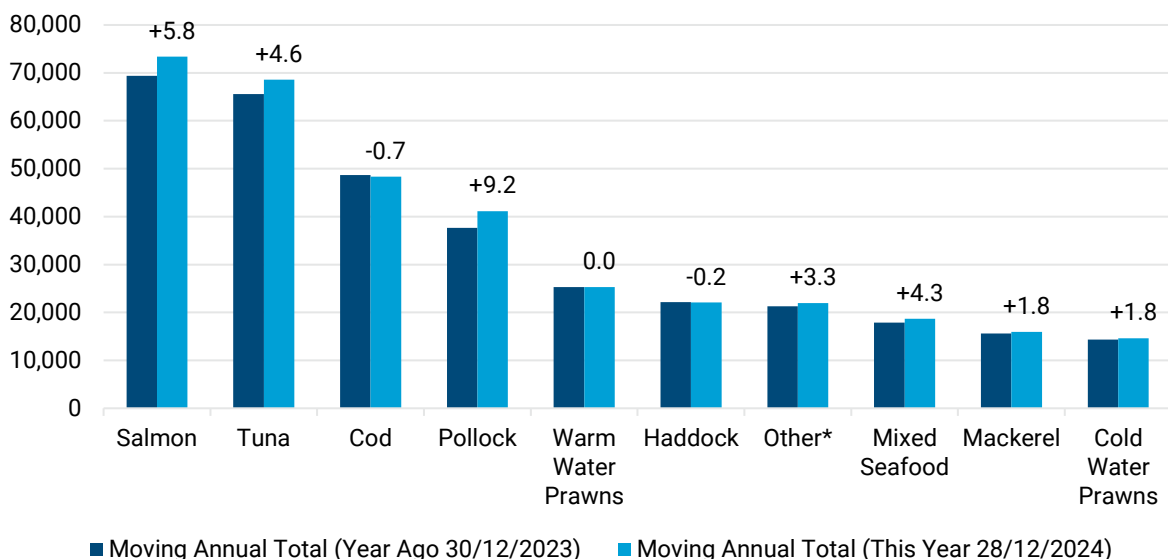
UK shoppers bought 15,922 tonnes of mackerel, worth £152.6 million. Sales rose by +7.8%, driven mainly by a +5.8% increase in price per kg to £9.58. Volume also grew by +1.8%, showing a rise in mackerel consumption compared to the previous year.

Table 10: Sales performance of total mackerel sales in the UK retail market, with annual percentage change (%), to 52 weeks ending 28th December 2024.

Species	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Mackerel	£152.6 (+7.8%)	15,922 (+1.8%)	£9.58 (+5.8%)

Mackerel ranked ninth among the top-selling seafood, making up 4% of total volume sales and 3% of total value sales of seafood in retail. Chart 10 below highlights the top ten seafood species in UK retail by volume, along with annual growth.

Chart 10: Volume sales (tonnes) of the top ten species in the UK retail market, with annual percentage change (%), to 52 week ending 28th December 2024.



At £9.58 per kg, mackerel is the fifth cheapest among the top ten seafood species. Priced 15% below the average retail seafood price of £11.34 per kg. However, it has seen the highest price increase, with above-average inflation, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Sales performance of total seafood, and the top ten selling species in the UK retail market, with annual percentage change (%), to 52 weeks ending 28th December 2024.

Species	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Total seafood	£4.7B (+2.9%)	410,157 (+2.4%)	£11.34 (+0.5%)
Salmon	£1.5B (+5.5%)	73,405 (+5.8%)	£19.76 (-0.3%)
Tuna	£470.9 (+4.0%)	68,598 (+4.6%)	£6.86 (-0.6%)
Cod	£507.1 (-1.4%)	48,326 (-0.7%)	£10.49 (-0.7%)
Pollock	£250.8 (+8.3%)	41,127 (+9.2%)	£6.10 (-0.8%)
*WW prawns	£438.5 (+2.4%)	25,312 (0.0%)	£17.32 (+2.4%)
Haddock	£248.3 (-2.8%)	22,103 (-0.2%)	£11.24 (-2.7%)
*Other	£77.8 (+7.2%)	21,987 (+3.3%)	£3.54 (+3.8%)
Mixed	£223.4 (+3.2%)	16,648 (+4.3%)	£11.98 (-1.0%)
Mackerel	£152.6 (+7.8%)	15,922 (+1.8%)	£9.58 (+5.8%)
*CW prawns	£208.2 (+1.1%)	14,614 (+1.8%)	£14.25 (-0.7%)

*WW Prawn is Warm Water Prawns; Other is used to specify species, when no apparent classification is present when coding the product; CW Prawn is Cold Water Prawns.

Smoked and unsmoked mackerel

Mackerel is one of over 20 species in retail that is sold smoked. Its volume sales are third behind mixed smoked seafood (9,521 tonnes) and smoked haddock (8,921 tonnes).

However, its unsmoked sales lead with 62.6% of all mackerel volume sales, followed by smoked at 37.4%. Table 12 below shows the sales performance of each mackerel option in UK retail.

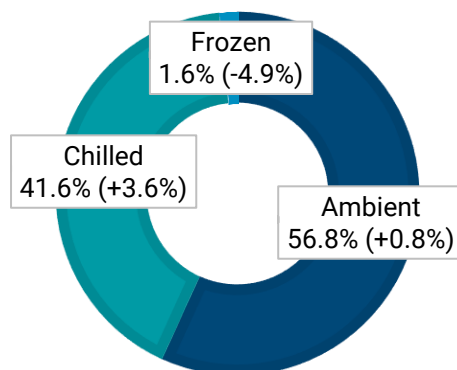
Table 12: Sales performance of total smoked and unsmoked mackerel sales in the UK retail market, with annual percentage change (%), to 52 weeks ending 28th December 2024.

Mackerel	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Smoked	£73.0 (+12.4%)	5,949 (+4.4%)	£12.26 (+7.6%)
Unsmoked	£79.6 (+3.9%)	9,973 (+0.4%)	£7.99 (+3.5%)

Sales performance by sector

Mackerel is sold in three retail sectors: ambient, chilled, and frozen. Ambient leads with 56.8% of all volume sales, followed by chilled at 41.6%, while frozen makes up just 1.6%. Chart 11 below shows the volume share by sector and annual growth.

Chart 11. Volume share of mackerel by sector in the UK retail market, with annual percentage change (%), to 52 weeks ending 28th December 2024.



Ambient mackerel sales

The ambient sector accounts for over half of all mackerel sales, totalling 9,038 tonnes and £71.2 million. While value sales are rising +4.4%, this is mainly due to a +3.6% price increase to £7.88 per kg. However, this makes ambient the most affordable sector for mackerel purchases.

Volume sales have also grown by +0.8%, indicating higher consumption for ambient mackerel in the last year. Mackerel makes up 10% of all ambient seafood sales by volume.

Chilled mackerel sales

The chilled sector makes up over 40% of mackerel sales, amounting to 6,625 tonnes worth £78.9 million. Value sales increased by 11.3%, mainly due to a 7.4% price rise to £11.91 per kg, making it the priciest mackerel sector.

However, volume sales have also grown by +3.6%, indicating higher consumption. Mackerel represents 4% of all chilled seafood sales by volume.

Frozen mackerel sales

The frozen sector is the smallest for mackerel, accounting for just 2% of sales, totalling 259 tonnes and £2.5 million. Despite a +4.1% price increase to £9.62 per kg, value sales are down -1.0%, and volume sales have dropped -4.9%, indicating lower consumption. Mackerel makes up just 0.2% of all frozen seafood sales.

Table 13: Sales performance of mackerel across the three sectors in the UK retail market, with annual percentage change (%), to 52 weeks ending 28th December 2024.

Sector	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Ambient	£71.2 (+4.4%)	9,038 (+0.8%)	£7.88 (+3.6%)
Chilled	£78.9 (+11.3%)	6,625 (+3.6%)	£11.91 (+7.4%)
Frozen	£2.5 (-1.0%)	259 (-4.9%)	£9.62 (+4.1%)

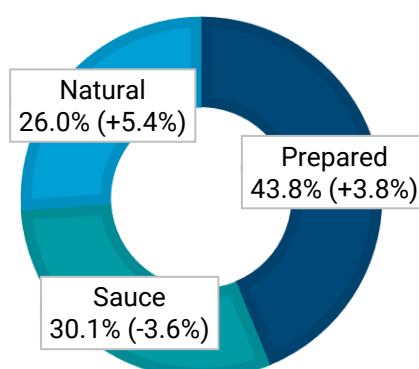
If you are interested to learn more about the seafood sectors in the UK retail market, check out our [Chilled](#), [Ambient](#), and [Frozen](#) reports.

Sales performance by segment

Mackerel is sold in three retail segments: natural, prepared, and sauce. No sales were recorded for meals, sushi, cakes, breaded, battered, fingers, or dusted products in the 52 weeks to 28th December 2025.

The prepared segment leads with 43.8% of total volume sales, followed by sauce at 30.1%, and natural at 26.0%. Chart 12 below shows the volume share by segment with annual growth.

Chart 12: Volume share of mackerel by segment in the UK retail market, with annual percentage change (%), to 52 weeks ending 28th December 2024.



Prepared mackerel sales

Prepared mackerel is fish or shellfish with added ingredients or processing, such as brine, oil, marinade, smoking, topping, stuffing, or served with relish but not as a meal.

Nearly half of all mackerel sales come from the prepared segment, totalling 6,979 tonnes and £70.0 million. While value sales are up +11.0%, this is mainly due to a +6.9% price increase to £10.03 per kg.

However, volume sales have also risen by +3.8%, indicating higher consumption of prepared mackerel. Mackerel makes up 6% of all prepared seafood sales by volume.

Sauce mackerel sales

Sauce is defined as mackerel which is in a sauce or that has a separate sauce, dressing or dip (can be a sachet) but has no other additions for example lettuce. Batter, Breaded, Cakes, Dusted and Fingers take priority. For example, if the product is battered seafood in a lemon sauce the product would be categorised in the battered segment.

The sauce segment accounts for nearly a third of all mackerel sales, totalling 4,978 tonnes and £36.3 million. Despite a +3.3% price increase to £7.57 per kg, making it the most affordable mackerel segment, value sales have dipped by -0.5%.

Volume sales are also down -3.6%, indicating a decline in consumption. Mackerel makes up 22% of all sauce seafood sales by volume.

Natural mackerel sales

Natural mackerel is defined as fish or shellfish that has not had anything added or done to it, other than that required for basic processing. It can be raw or cooked or smoked, whole, fillets, headed, gutted fish, or shucked and peeled shellfish.

The natural segment, the smallest for mackerel, accounts for 26.0% of volume sales, totalling 4,145 tonnes and £46.3 million. Value sales rose +10.1%, mainly due to a +4.5% price increase to £11.16 per kg, making it the most expensive mackerel segment.

However, volume sales also grew +5.4%, indicating higher consumption in the past year. Mackerel makes up just 3% of all natural seafood sales by volume.

Table 14: Sales performance of mackerel across the three segments in the UK retail market, with annual percentage change (%), to 52 weeks ending 28th December 2024.

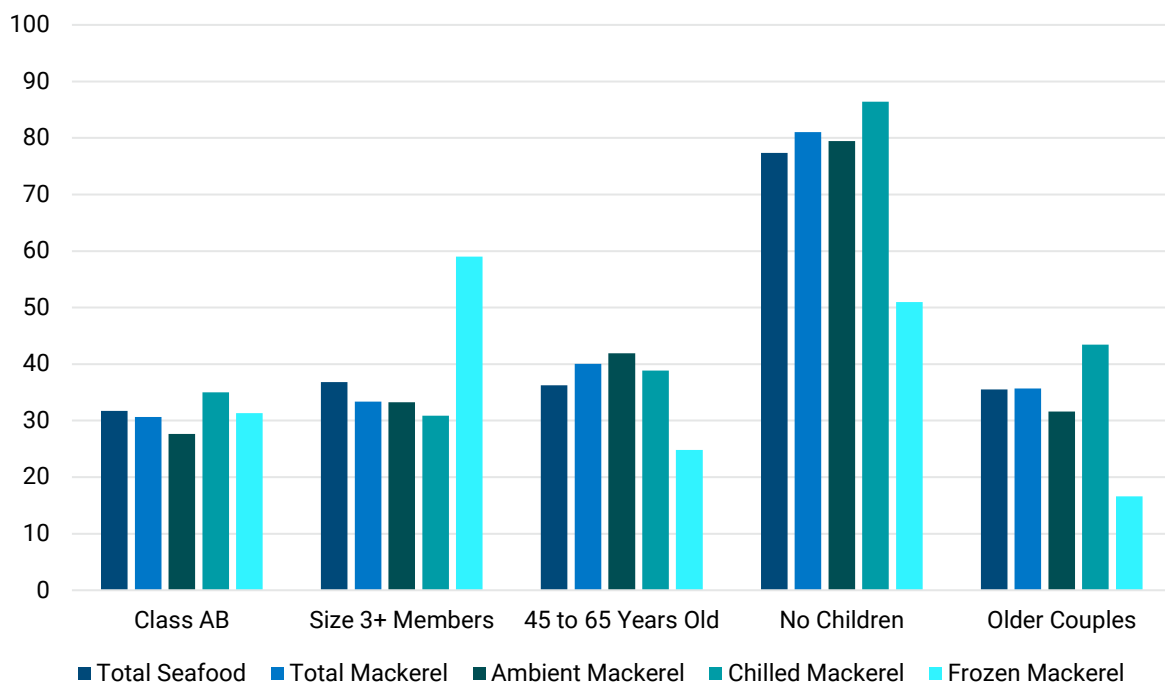
Segment	Value million	Volume tonnes	Price per KG
Prepared	£70.0 (+11.0%)	6,979 (+3.8%)	£10.03 (+6.9%)
Sauce	£36.3 (-0.5%)	4,798 (-3.6%)	£7.57 (+3.3%)
Natural	£46.0 (+10.1%)	4,145 (+5.4%)	£11.16 (+4.5%)

If you are interested to learn more about the seafood segments in the UK retail market, check out our [Seafood Segment Report](#).

The mackerel shopper profile

Mackerel buyers are typically older, from smaller households, and less affluent than general seafood buyers. Chart 13 shows differences in purchase volume of ambient, chilled, and frozen mackerel by shopper demographics.

Chart 13: Purchase volume share of trade for each shopper demographic across total seafood, total mackerel and by ambient, chilled, and frozen mackerel by percentage to 52 week ending 28th December 2024.



Opportunities for mackerel in the UK retail market

As mackerel sales evolve, there are key opportunities to drive growth. Expanding the chilled and natural offerings, targeting new demographics, and adapting to consumer trends could help boost demand. The following strategies highlight some ways to maximise mackerel’s potential in the UK retail market.

Expand chilled and natural offerings

As consumer demand for fresh, minimally processed seafood grows, expanding chilled and natural mackerel options can attract more shoppers. Retailers can introduce marinated fillets, ready-to-eat portions, sushi, or lightly smoked variations to appeal to convenience-driven consumers who want high-quality seafood without extensive preparation.

Target younger and affluent shoppers

Mackerel’s rich omega-3 content, and versatility make it an ideal choice for younger, health-conscious, and higher-income consumers. Retailers can use marketing campaigns, recipe inspiration, and social media engagement to highlight mackerel’s

role in quick, nutritious meals, such as grain bowls, wraps, Mediterranean-style dishes, or sushi, to increase its appeal.

Innovate in the frozen sector

With frozen mackerel sales in decline, retailers can introduce pre-seasoned, ready-to-cook options to make frozen seafood more accessible. Products like marinated fillets, pre-cut portions for easy meal prep, or mackerel-based meal kits, could attract busy consumers looking for convenient, long-lasting seafood options.

Final thoughts – mackerel consumption in the UK retail market

Mackerel remains a strong performer in the UK retail market. A popular option with home cooks thanks to its versatility, it has experienced a steady demand despite rising prices.

While ambient sales have led the way, the chilled sector and natural segment are showing growth, presenting opportunities for expansion. Targeted marketing, product innovation, and highlighting mackerel's affordability, and health benefits, could drive further success.

By adapting to shifting consumer preferences, mackerel can sustain its position as a popular option for seafood shoppers. And, with the right strategies, mackerel can continue to thrive in an evolving retail market.

If you are interested to learn more about total seafood in the UK retail market, check out our [Total Retail Report](#).



GB foodservice market

In this section

Sales performance in the GB foodservice market

Sales performance by channel

Consumer demographics, preference, and motivations out of home

Opportunities for mackerel in the GB foodservice market

Mackerel consumption out of home

The following section explores trends in the foodservice sales of mackerel in Great Britain (GB), highlighting channel performance and shifting consumer behaviour, using year ending data to December 2024.

Mackerel's bold, rich, and salty flavour has made it a growing favourite in the foodservice industry. Its distinct taste sets it apart from milder species, making it ideal for dishes like smoked mackerel pate, fishcakes, salads, and sushi. This has driven its widespread adoption across various foodservice channels in Great Britain, from Quick Service Restaurants to upscale dining, as reflected in the annual increase in servings.

Sales performance in the GB foodservice market

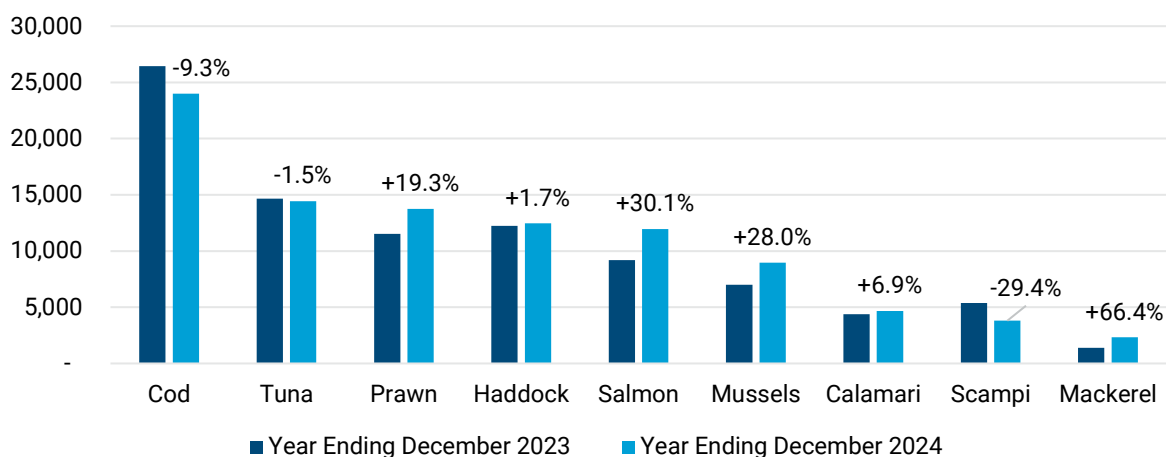
GB consumers bought 2,321 tonnes of mackerel, worth £165.8 million. Servings grew +66% showing a rise in mackerel consumption compared to the previous year.

Table 15: Sales performance of total mackerel sales in GB foodservice, to year ending December 2024.

Species	Volume tonnes	Growth (%)	Servings millions	Value millions	Price per serving
Mackerel	2,380	+66.4%	17	£165.8	£10.00

Mackerel ranked ninth among the top-selling seafood in foodservice, making up 2% of the total seafood servings out of home. Chart 14 below highlights the top selling seafood species in GB foodservice by volume, along with annual growth.

Chart 14: Volume sales (tonnes) of the top selling species in the GB foodservice market with annual percentage change (%) to year ending December 2024.



At £10.00 per serving, mackerel is the third cheapest among the top selling seafood species but is priced 64% above the average of total seafood at £6.11 per serving, further illustrated in Table 16.

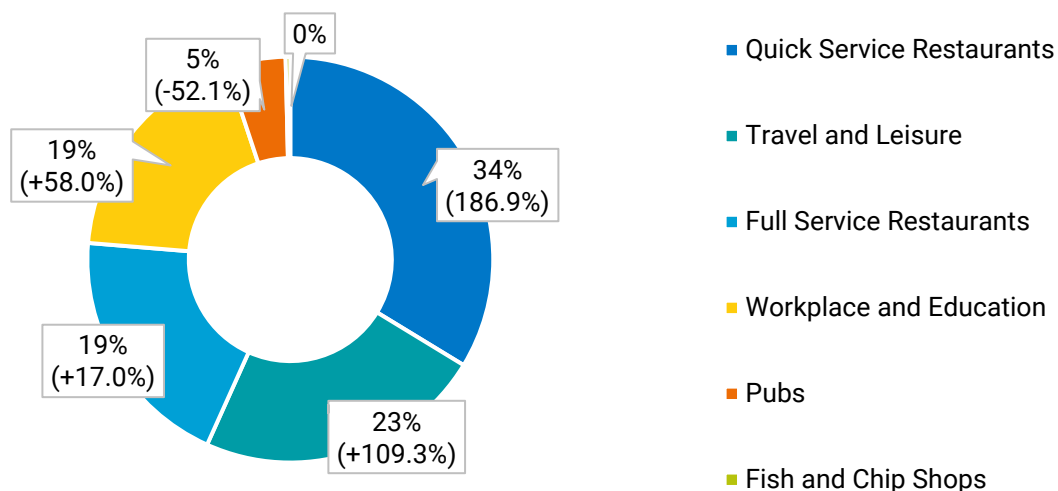
Table 16: Sales performance of total seafood, and the top selling species in GB foodservice, with annual percentage change (%) to year ending December 2024.

Species	Volume tonnes	Growth (%)	Servings millions	Value millions	Price per serving
Seafood	145,460	+5.0%	1,039	£6.4B	£6.11
Cod	23,940	-9.0%	171	£2.9B	£17.00
Tuna	14,420	-1.0%	103	£1.9B	£18.00
Prawn	13,720	+19.0%	98	£932.5	£9.50
Haddock	12,460	+2.0%	89	£1.5B	£17.00
Salmon	11,900	+30.0%	85	£1.6B	£18.50
Mussels	9,000	+28.0%	18	£305.0	£17.00
Calamari	4,620	+7.0%	33	£300.3	£9.00
Scampi	3,780	-29.0%	27	£271.7	£10.00
Mackerel	2,380	+66.0%	17	£165.8	£10.00

Sales performance by channel

Mackerel is sold in five main foodservice channels: Quick Service Restaurants (33%), Travel and Leisure (23%), Full-Service Restaurants, Workplace and Education, and Pubs. Fish and Chip Shops account for 0.4% of mackerel sales, up from no sales reported in 2023. Chart 16 shows volume share by channel and annual growth.

Chart 15. Volume share of mackerel by channel with annual percentage change (%) to year ending December 2024.



Quick Service Restaurants mackerel sales

The Quick Service Restaurant channel represents over a third of all mackerel sales, totalling 776 tonnes. Sales have surged by 187%, driving significant growth in mackerel sales overall. Mackerel makes up 1.6% of all seafood sales in Quick Service Restaurants.

Travel and Leisure mackerel sales

The Travel and Leisure channel accounts for over one fifth of all mackerel sales, totalling 524 tonnes. Sales have increased by 109%, contributing to mackerel's overall growth. Mackerel represents 2.8% of all seafood sales in this channel.

Full-Service Restaurants mackerel sales

The Full-Service Restaurants channel accounts for just under a fifth of all mackerel sales, totalling 446 tonnes, with sales up by 17%. Mackerel makes up 1.8% of all seafood sales in this channel.

Workplace and Education mackerel sales

The Workplace and Education channel accounts for just under a fifth of all mackerel sales, totalling 424 tonnes, with sales up by 58%. Mackerel represents 2.7% of all seafood sales in this channel.

Pubs mackerel sales

Pubs account for 5% of all mackerel sales, totalling 108 tonnes. This is the only channel to see a decline, with sales down by 52%. Mackerel makes up 0.5% of all seafood sales in Pubs.

Fish and Chip Shops mackerel sales

The smallest channel, Fish and Chip Shops, accounts for just 0.4% of all mackerel sales. This marks an increase from 2023, when no mackerel sales were recorded in this channel. Mackerel makes up just 0.05% of all seafood sales in Fish and Chip Shops.

If you are interested to learn more about the seafoods performance in the difference channels, check out our [Foodservice Channels Report](#). For Fish and Chips specifically, see our latest [Fish and Chip Report](#).

Consumer demographics and preferences out of home

In foodservice, consumer demographics like age, gender, and income impact dining choices. Preferences involve meal types or occasions, while motivations like convenience, socialising, and health affect food selections. Understanding these factors helps businesses tailor products to their audience's needs.

The mackerel consumer profile

Mackerel consumers have a distinct profile compared to the general out-of-home seafood consumer. They tend to be younger, more affluent, and predominantly male, with a higher likelihood of being served to families with children.

Consumer profiles vary across channels:

- Younger consumers are more common in Quick Service Restaurants, while older consumers dominate in Pubs.
- More affluent diners purchase mackerel in Pubs, whereas less affluent consumers are found in Full-Service Restaurants.
- Males are the primary consumers in Pubs, while more females consume mackerel in Full-Service Restaurants.
- Families are a key demographic in Quick Service Restaurants, but less so in Full-Service Restaurants.

Mackerel consumer preferences

Mackerel consumers have unique preferences compared to the broader out-of-home seafood consumer. They are more likely to enjoy mackerel as a snack rather than a dinner, with servings peaking on Wednesdays rather than Fridays, and are more often served during social occasions.

Key serving trends include:

- Mackerel is mostly served as a snack, with the least servings at breakfast.
- Wednesday is the most popular day for mackerel servings, while Thursday sees the fewest.
- November is the peak month for mackerel servings, with January being the least popular.
- Social occasions drive most mackerel servings, while treating occasions are less of a motivator.

Daypart

Mackerel is popular at breakfast, lunch, dinner, and for snacks. Over a third of mackerel servings out of home are for snacks. In Pubs, more than half of mackerel servings occur at lunch, whereas in Full-Service Restaurants, half are at dinner. Quick Service Restaurants see two-fifths of mackerel servings during snacking.

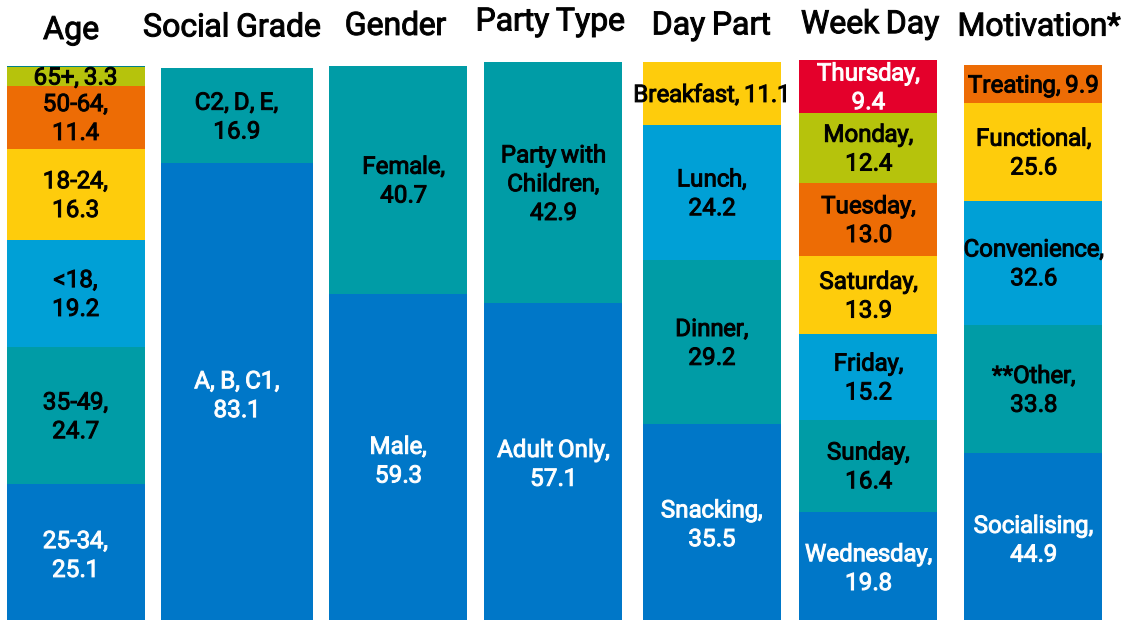
Day of the week

Mackerel is enjoyed throughout the week, with Wednesday being the most popular day, accounting for nearly one fifth of all servings. There are channel-specific preferences: in Pubs, mackerel is most popular on Saturdays, in Full-Service Restaurants on Fridays, and in Quick Service Restaurants on Mondays.

Motivation

Nearly half of mackerel servings occur during social occasions. In Pubs, 88% of mackerel is enjoyed socially, and in Full-Service Restaurants, it's 61%. At Quick Service Restaurants, socialising motivates 43% of servings, with convenience driving 42%.

Chart 16: Mackerel servings by consumer demographics, and preferences, in total foodservice to two year ending December 2024.



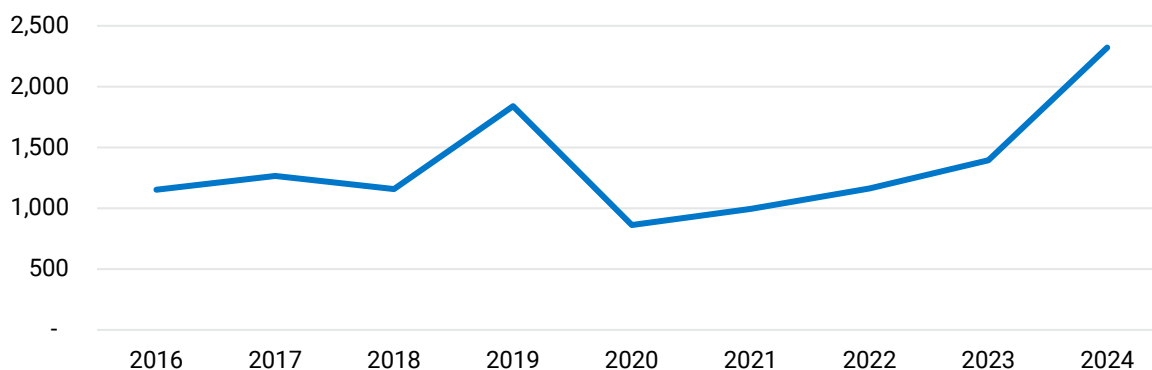
*Motivation numbers do not add up because it is a multiple-choice question in CREST survey that allows more than one answer. **Other in Motivations includes “Because of Travel/Event/Holiday, Wanted Something Light/Balanced, I needed a break, Other (non-specified)”.

Long term trends in mackerel consumption in GB foodservice

In 2024, mackerel servings surged +101.3% compared to 2016 to 2,321 tonnes, reaching their highest level in nine years. Further illustrated in chart 18 below.

After a sharp dip in 2020, likely due to the pandemic, consumption has steadily rebounded, surpassing pre-COVID levels. Mackerel’s share rose by 0.8 percentage points to 1.6, signalling a strong long-term growth in out-of-home consumption. This has been driven by servings increases in Quick Service Restaurants, Travel and Leisure, and Workplace and Education with Pubs and Full-Service Restaurants below 2016 servings.

Chart 16: Long term trends of mackerel servings in tonnes in GB foodservice year-end 2016-2024.



Opportunities for mackerel in the GB foodservice market

As the demand for mackerel continues to grow in the GB foodservice market, several key opportunities can help drive its success.

Promoting mackerel's health benefits

Mackerel's high omega-3 content appeals to health-conscious consumers. Foodservice operators can highlight these benefits through menu descriptions, marketing, and staff education.

Expanding into the snacking and convenience market

With snacking on the rise, mackerel can be introduced in grab-and-go formats like wraps, salads, and protein boxes. Quick-service and takeaway brands can also offer mackerel tacos, fishcakes, or sliders to attract health-conscious, time-pressed consumers. Fish and Chip Shops present an untapped opportunity for quick, on-the-go mackerel options, such as battered mackerel bites or grilled mackerel fillets as an alternative to traditional fish choices.

Enhancing premium appeal and menu innovation

Mackerel's rich and bold flavour makes it ideal for premium and diverse menu offerings. Restaurants can elevate it with grilled preparations, smoked pâtés, or fusion dishes like mackerel sashimi. Highlighting its use in global cuisines and premium seafood dishes can help boost its appeal.

Final thoughts – mackerel consumption in the GB foodservice market

Mackerel is experiencing strong growth in the GB foodservice market, driven by rising consumer demand across multiple channels. Its affordability, bold flavour, and health benefits make it appealing to both mainstream and premium dining.

While Quick Service Restaurants and Travel and Leisure led the overall growth, opportunities exist in snacking, premium dining, and Fish and Chip Shops, where

sales remain low. Introducing convenient options like battered bites or grilled fillets to this channel's offerings, could boost demand.

To sustain momentum, operators can highlight health benefits, innovate snacking options, and position mackerel as a premium ingredient, further strengthening its role in the evolving seafood market.

If you are interested to learn more about total seafood in the GB foodservice market, check out our [Total Foodservice Report](#).

Sources

The data sources used in this report include HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) trade data, and Marine Management Organisation (MMO) landings data, NielsenIQ retail data, and Circana foodservice data. This covers various market metrics up to the end of 2024. Some provisional figures subject to revision are listed below.

Data sources

Annual percentage growth (%) values represent changes from the previous year unless otherwise stated.

Trade data: HMRC and MMO

- HMRC trade data to 12-month ending December 2024: Import, exports HMRC data provided by Trade Data Monitor to year ending December 2024. Published data is provisional for 18 months once published and subject to change during this time.
- MMO landings data to year ending December 2024: UK sea fisheries annual statistics provided by the Marine Management Organisation to year ending December 2024.

Retail data: NielsenIQ

- Retail data to 52 week ending 28th December 2024:
 - ScanTrack – UK Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) data from key retailers (including composite data from discounters Aldi, Lidl and Northern Ireland) excludes seafood sandwiches.
 - HomeScan – GB (including discounters) consumer panel data of 15,000 households excludes seafood sandwiches.

Foodservice data: Circana

- GB foodservice data to year ending December 2024: panel-based CREST data more of more than 75,000 respondents per annum.

Additional market data and insights

Seafish's Market Insight reports provide key insights into the UK and GB seafood market. They cover retail purchasing patterns, evolving foodservice trends, and the latest trade data on imports and exports. Our latest reports can be accessed below:

- Seafish, 2025, [Ambient Seafood in Multiple Retail](#)
- Seafish, 2025, [Seafood in Foodservice across the six channels](#)
- Seafish, 2024, [Latest Mid-Year UK Seafood Trade Data](#)

These reports are available on [Seafish.org](https://www.seafish.org). Seafood business seeking more detailed data can register for the Market Insight Portal to access [retail](#), [foodservice](#), and [trade](#) reports directly. [\[Click here to register today\]](#).

Data Caveats

Notes and limitations of the foodservice, trade, and landings data.

Trade and landings data

Unless otherwise specified, volume in tonnes is in live weight.

The trade and landings data available lacks traceability and doesn't reveal insights into the end market. This means that it shows where seafood products were landed to, imported from, and exported to, but not where they were consumed. Import data only indicates the country from which the product was dispatched and directly shipped. Countries exporting seafood to the UK don't always reflect where the fish or shellfish were originally caught or farmed.

Foodservice data

Due to a low sample size, this data is for directional use only.

Volumes in tonnes is an estimation calculated by the total number of servings sold multiplied by 140g and divided by 1000, the recommended serving size of seafood, except for mussels, which uses the recommended 500g.

Individual species values and prices per servings are from desk research and reflect current published process in various restaurants, including Café Rouge, Wright Brothers, J.D. Wetherspoon, Cote, Lussmanns. However, Total Seafood price per serving is from Circana/CREST® one item one person transactions.

We only have a limited number of species available in the data due to the limitations of the consumer survey. Some species although identified by respondents do not have enough sample to be reported on with any degree of reliability.

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



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