

USA : Seafood imports grow and per capita consumption declines in 2016

The new National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) annual report on the United States seafood industry shows that the country imported more seafood in 2016, much of that farm raised.

The document, called Fisheries of the United States, reveals that in the analysed year, seafood imports reached 5.8 billion pounds, representing 1 per cent growth from 2015, and worth USD 19.5 billion, which 3.5 per cent higher than in the previous year.

This report points out that a significant portion of this imported seafood is caught by American fishermen, exported overseas for processing, and then reimported to the United States.

Shrimp and salmon are two of the top three imported species and much of that is farm-raised.

The US ranks 16th in total aquaculture production around the world—far behind China, Indonesia and India. In 2015, 1.4 billion pounds of aquaculture production was reported in the US.

“Expanding our nation’s aquaculture capacity presents an opportunity to reduce America’s reliance on imports while creating thousands of new jobs,” pointed out Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross.

In 2016 the US commercial seafood landings declined in volume by 1.5 per cent to 9.6 billion pounds but grew in value by 2.1 per cent, at USD 5.3 billion, from that in 2015.

The highest value commercial species were lobster (USD 723 million), crabs (USD 704 million), scallops (USD 488 million), shrimp (USD 483 million), salmon (USD 420 million), and Alaska walleye pollock (USD 417 million).

By volume, the nation’s largest commercial fishery remains Alaska walleye pollock, which showed near record landings of 3.4 billion pounds, a 3 per cent growth from 2015, representing 35 per cent of total US commercial and recreational seafood landings.

The new NOAA report also shows that the average American ate 14.9 pounds of fish and shellfish in 2016, a decrease from 15.5 pounds the year before.

For the 20th consecutive year, the Alaskan port of Dutch Harbor led the nation in 2016 with the highest amount of seafood landed—770 million pounds, valued at USD 198 million. Walleye pollock accounted for 89 per cent of that volume.

Likewise, for the 17th year in a row, New Bedford, Massachusetts, claimed the highest value catch from one port—107 million pounds, valued at USD 327 million. Sea scallops accounted for 77 per cent of that value.

Source :

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