

FAO Fish Price Index

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Abstract

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has for years compiled prices and indexes for all major food categories, except fisheries. This gap has now been filled, and a fish price index has been developed. The FAO fish price index (FPI) relies on trade statistics because seafood is heavily traded internationally, exposing non-traded seafood to price competition from imports and exports. Easily updated trade data can thus proxy for domestic seafood prices that are difficult to observe in many regions and costly to update with global coverage. Calculations of the extent of price competition in different countries support the plausibility of reliance on trade data. Overall, the FPI shows less volatility and fewer price spikes than other food price indices including oils, cereals, and dairy. The FPI generally reflects seafood scarcity, but it can also be separated into indices by production technology, fish species, or region. Splitting FPI into capture fisheries and aquaculture suggests increased scarcity of capture fishery resources in recent years, but also growth in aquaculture that is keeping pace with demand.