



ATLANTIC HERRING (*CLUPEA HARENGUS*)



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BIOLOGY AND HABITAT

- **Species description** ([Read more](#))

The Atlantic herring belongs to the family of *Clupeidae*.

- **Geographical distribution and habitat** ([Read more](#))

The Atlantic herring is one of the most abundant fish species in the world. It lives in the North-East Atlantic (from Norwegian waters in the North to the Bay of Biscay in the South) and in the North-West Atlantic (from Greenland to South Carolina in the USA).

RESOURCE, EXPLOITATION AND MANAGEMENT

- **Stock and resource status/conservation measures** ([Read more](#))

Minimum conservation sizes are set at 18 cm of total length in Skagerrak and Kattegat and 20 cm in other fishing areas.

- **Production methods and fishing gears** ([Read more](#))

The main fishing gears used are gillnets and similar nets, pots and traps, seines and trawls.

Source: [Information system on commercial designations](#)

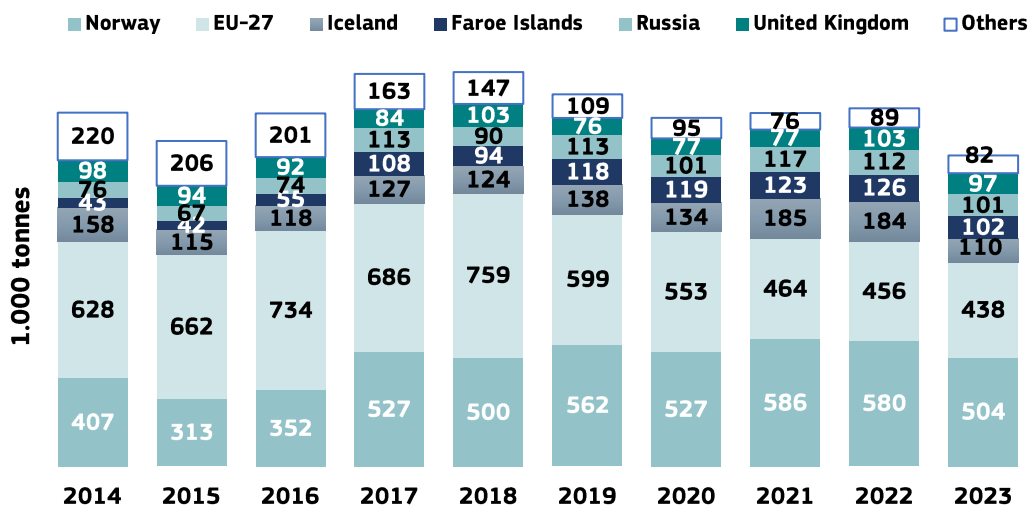
Atlantic herring



CATCHES

Evolution of world catches

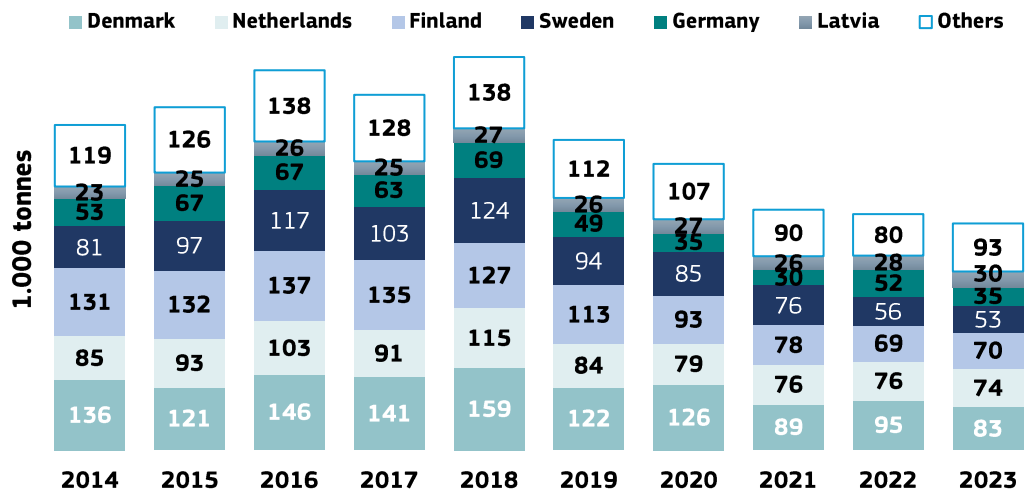
- Atlantic herring catches reached 1,4 million tonnes in 2023, i.e. **2%** of the global catches. The majority of this is caught by Norway (35% of global catches in 2022) as well as the EU (31%) (EU fleet operating mainly in the North Atlantic) and Iceland, Faroe Islands, Russia, and the United Kingdom. During the last decade (2014-2023), Atlantic herring catches have decreased by 12% at global level in relation to the decrease of catches of EU fleets and Iceland (-30% each).



Source: FAO

Evolution of EU catches

- In 2023, the EU catches of Atlantic herring reached circa 438.000 tonnes. Similarly to the global trend, the EU catches have decreased (-30% during the last decades). The decrease was mostly driven by decreased Danish catches (-39%) but also by the notable decreases of the Finnish (-47%), Swedish (-35%) and Dutch (-13%) catches. The latter is home of the largest EU freezer trawler company involved in pelagic fishing. In 2023, 71% of the EU landings was used for human consumption, while the rest was used for industrial use (i.e. fishmeal and fish oil).



Source: FAO



AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION

- No aquaculture production of Atlantic herring has been developed, as it would not be competitive (low sale prices).

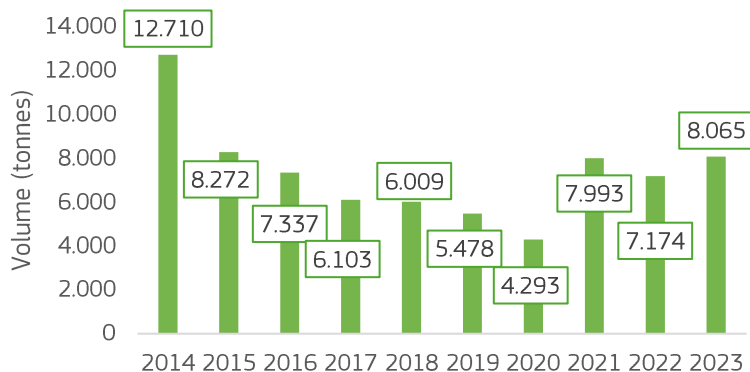
PROCESSING

- A significant processing activity for the Atlantic herring exists in the EU.
- 2 [PRODCOM](#) codes refer to herring:
 - 10 20 24 55: smoked herrings,
 - 10 20 25 20: preserved or prepared herrings.

Smoked herring

The EU-27 production of smoked herring was estimated to 8.065 tonnes in 2023. EU production has dropped substantially since 2014 and significantly increased between 2020 and 2022. This increase is related to the increase of the French production by 364% since 2018 (after a significant decrease since 2015). In 2023, France was the main producer in the EU, contributing to 80% of the EU production of smoked herrings.

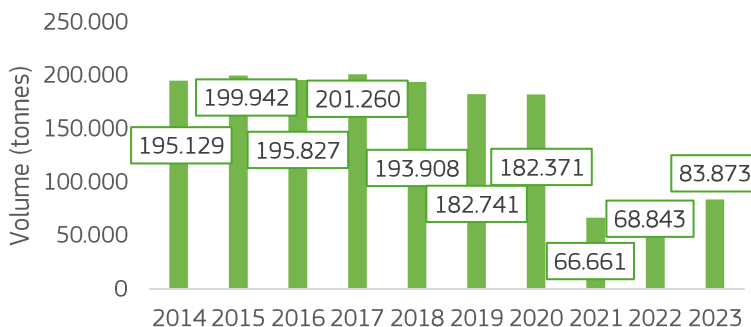
EU production of smoked herring



Prepared/preserved herring

The EU production of prepared/preserved herring was estimated to 83.873 tonnes. The EU production of prepared/preserved herring decreased by 57% since 2014. Germany was the main EU producer with a production over 36.904 tonnes (44% of EU production) in 2023, followed by Sweden (26%) and Lithuania (13%).

EU production of prepared or preserved herring



Atlantic herring



TRADE

- [Combined nomenclature](#)

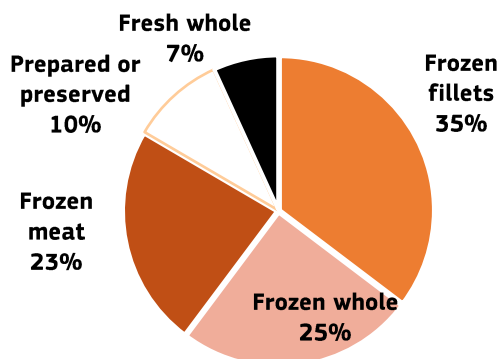
EU trade of herring products (tonnes – 2024)

Data include all species of herring

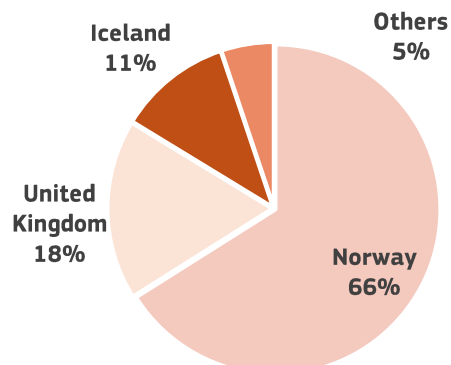
CN code	Product	EU imports	EU exports
03 02 41 00	Herrings, fresh	11.419	4.896
03 04 59 50	Flaps of herrings, fresh	41.693	186.259
03 04 86 00	Fillets of herrings, frozen	107	5
03 04 99 23	Meat of herrings, frozen	59.005	41
03 03 51 00	Herrings, frozen	39.683	29
03 05 42 00	Herrings, smoked	222	68
03 05 54 30	Dried herrings, even salted but not smoked	16	0
03 05 61 00	Herrings, salted or in brine	204	635
16 04 12 10	Fillets of herrings, coated, frozen	84	278
16 04 12 91	Herrings, prepared or preserved, in airtight containers	2.223	7.789
16 04 12 99	Herrings, prepared or preserved, other	14.104	1.664
Total		168.761	201.664

- Main extra-EU imports** almost reached 169.000 tonnes in 2024, of which 83% were frozen. EU imports from Norway reached 111.556 tonnes in 2024, representing 66% of total EU imports of herring in volume terms. The imported volume of herring from the second largest supplier, the United Kingdom, totaled circa 30.000 tonnes in 2024. The top-four import markets in 2024 were Poland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark, representing 84% of total imports volume.

Imports by product type (2024, % in volume)



Main EU suppliers (2024, % volume)



Atlantic herring

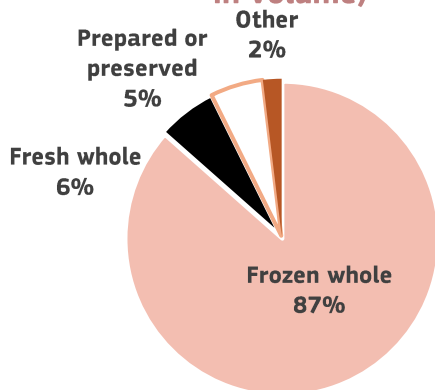


TRADE

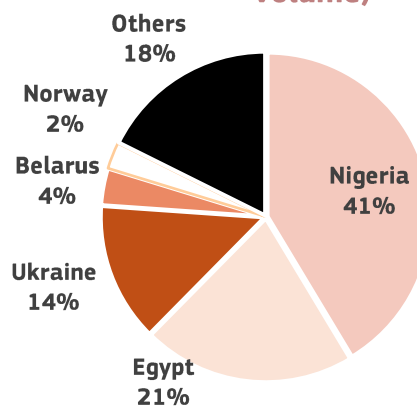
- Extra-EU exports:**

Herring is one of the most exported fish by EU Member States. In 2024, volumes totaled over 201.000 tonnes. Herrings were mainly exported frozen (83%). The Netherlands was the largest EU exporter representing 71% of the EU-exports. In 2024, Nigeria, Egypt, and Ukraine were the main markets for EU exports, accounting for 76% of total volume.

Exports by product type (2024, % in volume)



Main destinations (2024, % volume)



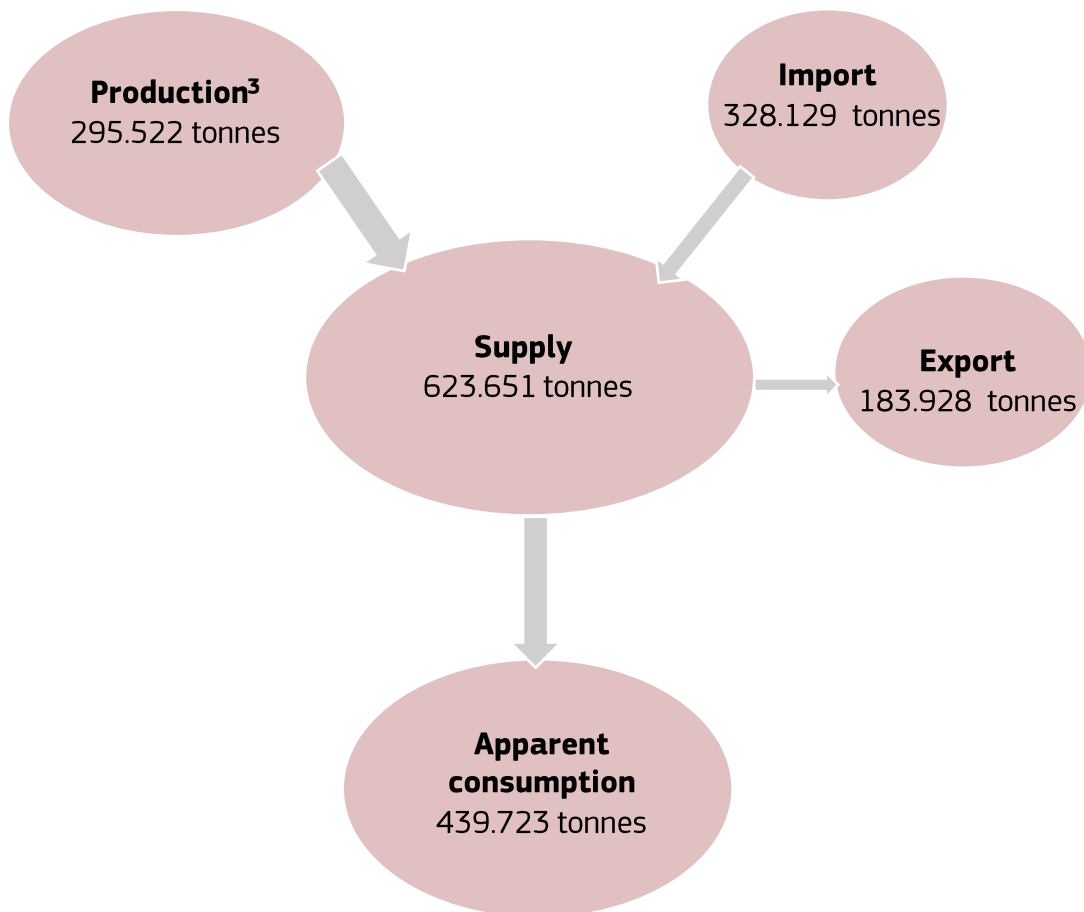
Source: EUROSTAT-COMEXT



Supply balance

EU supply balance (2023¹) – Tonnes of live weight equivalent² – Herring:

Data concern Atlantic herring and other species of herring



Source: FAO/ EUROSTAT-COMEXT

¹ Supply balance is provided for the year 2023 (trade data for 2023 were taken into account). Detailed trade data provided in the slides 4 and 5 concern the year 2024.

² The [conversion factors](#) were used to convert net weight of imports and exports of fishery and aquaculture products into live weight equivalents.

³ Production figure used in this supply chain is different from the production figure provided in the slide on catches (i.e. slide 2) as only production for human consumption has been considered.

Atlantic herring



PRICES ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN (EUR/kg)

First-sale (fresh)

First-sale prices are provided for one of the main EU producers (Denmark).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
Denmark	0,47	0,45	0,42	0,47	0,53	0,61	0,64	0,81	0,84	0,77	EUMOFA

(*) From January to September 2025

Wholesale (fresh)

Wholesale prices are reported for Mercamadrid (Madrid, Spain).

Most frequent price	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
Spain	2,1	2,1	2,1	2,1	2,1	2,1	2,1	2,1	2,1	2,1	Mercamadrid

(*) From January to October 2025

Extra-EU import (frozen fillets)

EU imports from third countries concern mainly frozen herring, in fillets. Data concern Atlantic herring and other species of herring

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
Poland	2,02	1,7	1,37	1,37	1,37	1,58	1,70	1,80	2,04	2,24	EUMOFA
Sweden	2,08	1,68	1,48	1,41	1,42	1,55	1,67	1,73	2,00	2,23	EUMOFA
Denmark	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,45	1,57	1,74	1,99	2,03	2,19	EUMOFA
Netherlands	2,01	1,85	1,46	1,43	1,56	1,70	1,70	1,77	1,95	2,19	EUMOFA

(*) From January to September 2025

Extra-EU export (frozen whole)

The Netherlands is by far the main EU exporter of herrings to third countries. The Dutch exports are mainly composed of frozen whole herrings. Data concern Atlantic herring and other species of herring.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
Netherlands	0,77	0,7	0,71	0,78	1,08	1,06	1,13	1,10	1,05	1,11	EUMOFA

(*) From January to September 2025

Atlantic herring



MARKETING

- National lists of commercial designations ([Read more](#))
- Information system on commercial designations and scientific names in all EU languages ([Read more](#))
- Applicable marketing standard ([Read more](#))
- There are two names protected under **Protected Geographical Indication** (PGI) and **Traditional Specialities Guaranteed** (TSG) for processed herring:
 - PGI “**Glückstädter Matjes**” in Germany;
 - TSG “**Hollandse maatjesharing / Hollandse Nieuwe / Holländischer Matjes**” in the Netherlands.

CONSUMPTION

- Herring (all species included) is the 8th most consumed species in the EU (source: [The EU Fish Market – 2025 edition](#), EUMOFA)
- Apparent consumption per capita of herring (all species) in 2023: **0,98 kg** live weight equivalent (source: [Supply balance – 2023](#), EUMOFA)
- Nutritional value (Atlantic herring, nutrition values per serving 100g) ([Read more](#))

Nutrition values	Herring
Energy (kcal)	158
Total fat (g)	9,04
Saturates (g)	2,04
Carbohydrate (g)	0
Sugars (g)	0
Protein (g)	17,96
Salt (mg)	225