

International Fish Trade Profile: Myanmar

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INTRODUCTION

Myanmar has an area of 213,720 km² of marine waters along the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, and Andaman Sea. The total inland water bodies consist of 8.2 million ha of lakes, rivers, and reservoirs. During the monsoon season from May to September, the flood plains serve as breeding and nursery grounds for freshwater fish (Win, 2004). The country is endowed with rich natural resources from freshwater and marine fisheries. The richness of the country’s aquatic resources makes the fisheries sector vital to national food security because seafood is a major source of animal protein of the people of Myanmar. The fisheries sector also plays an important role as source of income and provides employment to a large number of fishing communities.

The fisheries sector in Myanmar is classified into two sub-sectors, namely: freshwater and marine. The freshwater sub-sector consists of aquaculture, leasable, and open fisheries. The marine sub-sector include inshore and off-shore fisheries. For inshore fisheries, the fishing boats operate from shoreline to 10 nm offshore and the fishing boats are traditional type using less than 25 HP engine. For offshore fisheries, the fishing vessels operate beyond the outer limit of the inshore fishing zone to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The fishing vessels are using more than 25 HP engine.

FISHERIES PRODUCTION

The trend of fisheries production of Myanmar is increasing year by year. In the fiscal year¹ 2017-2018, the total production was about 5.88 million MT which was composed of 19.2 % from aquaculture, 5.8 % from leasable fisheries, 21.3 % from open fisheries, and 53.6 % from marine fisheries (**Figure 1**).

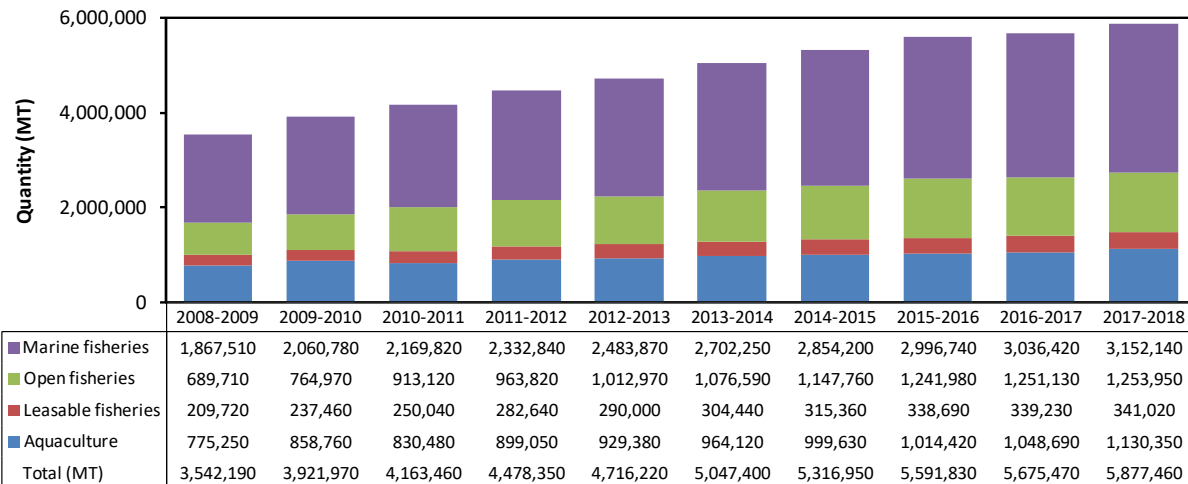


Figure 1. Fisheries production of Myanmar from 2008-2009 to 2017-2018 by quantity (MT)

Source: DoF, 2018

¹ The fiscal year in Myanmar starts in April of the current year and ends in March of the following year.

INTERNATIONAL FISH TRADE

Myanmar's trade with other countries began in the 1990s when it adopted the open-door policies and welcomed foreign direct investment (FDI), particularly in its oil and gas sectors. Private sector businesses in the country were allowed to engage in external trade and to retain export earnings, and the government started to formalize border trade with neighboring countries. Foreign investment was permitted through the enactment of the Foreign Investment Law.

The fishery products were categorized as fish, prawn, and others as shown in **Figure 2**. In 2017-2018, the amount of exported fishery products of Myanmar was around 0.57 million MT with the value of about US\$ 712 million. The top 10 species and top 10 destination countries of exported fishery products are illustrated in **Figure 3** and **Figure 4**, respectively.

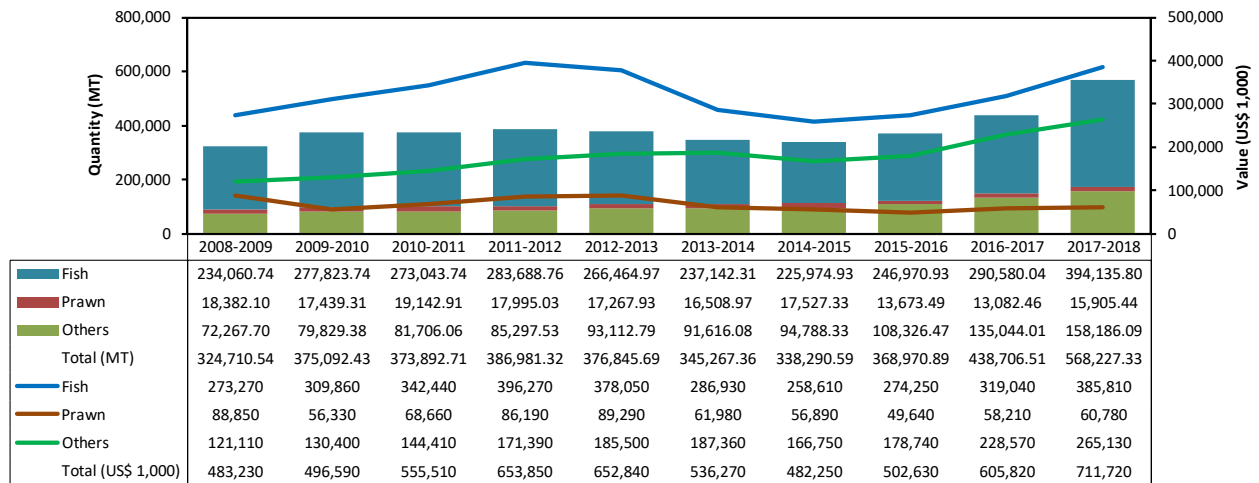


Figure 2. Fishery products exported by Myanmar from 2008-2009 to 2017-2018 by quantity (MT) and value (US\$ 1,000)

Source: DoF, 2018

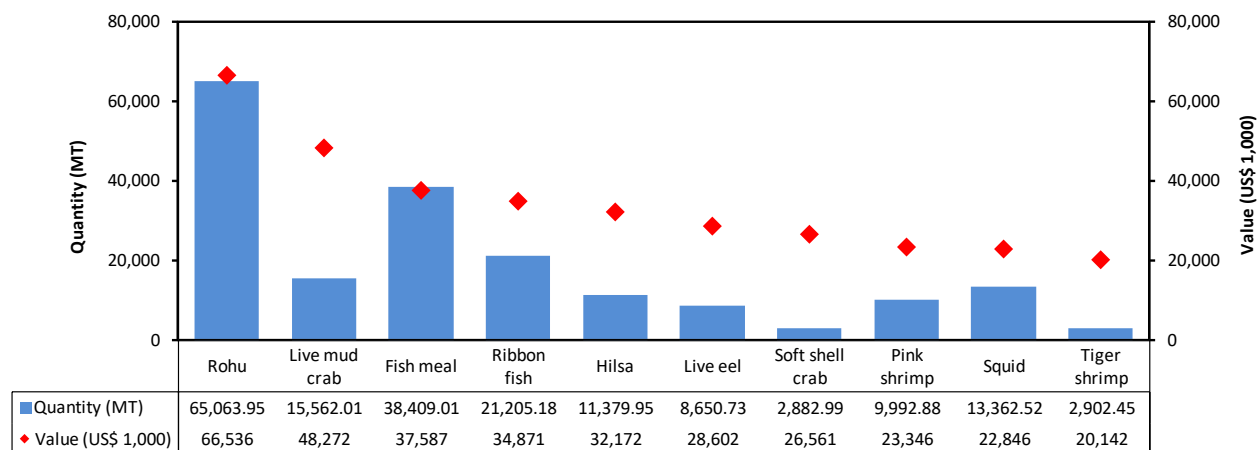


Figure 3. Top 10 species of fishery products exported by Myanmar in 2017-2018 by quantity (MT) and value (US\$ 1,000)

Source: DOF, 2018

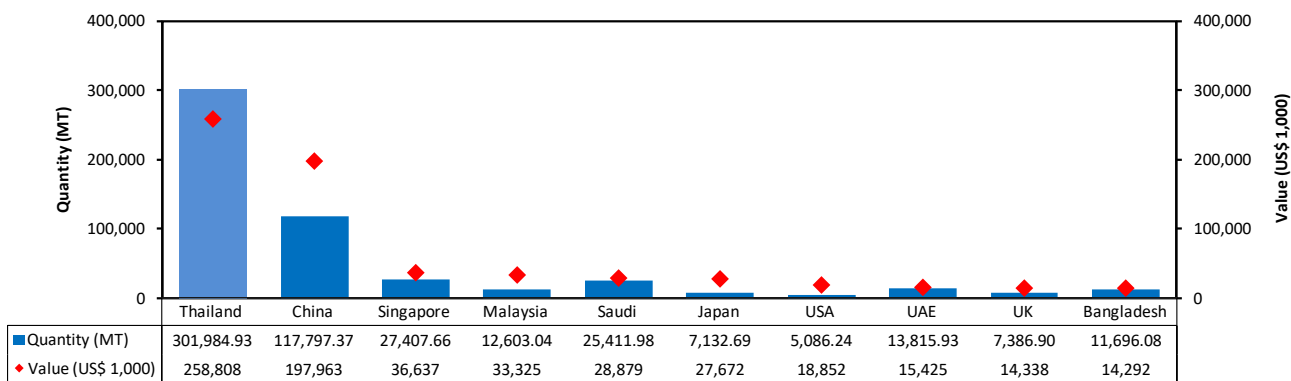


Figure 4. Top 10 destination countries of fishery products exported by Myanmar in 2017-2018 by quantity (MT) and value (US\$ 1,000)

Source: DOF, 2018

In terms of import, the country imported around 815.87 MT of fishery products with a value of US\$ 1.26 million in 2016-2017 and increased to 1,804.24 MT with a value of USD 2.22 million in 2017-2018. There are 50 kinds of fishery products imported by Myanmar and among them are saba, salmon, ocean trout, octopus, prawn eggs, mollusks, and shishamo fish. Myanmar's main countries of origin of imported fishery products are Japan, France, Norway, Russia, Canada, Indonesia, Thailand, New Zealand, Chile, Viet Nam, China, Taiwan, Greenland, UAE, and USA (DOF, 2018).

FISH TRADE POLICIES

Myanmar adopted the international instruments related to international fish trade such as the General Agreement on Trade Tariff (GATT). The country has agreed to pursue the GATT principles which are non-discrimination, reciprocity, binding and enforceable commitments, transparency, and safety value. Also, Myanmar has become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since January 1995.

The international trading is regulated by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) and Myanmar Department of Trade under the Ministry of Commerce. The export and import mechanisms in Myanmar are simplified to four steps as described in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Export and import mechanisms in Myanmar

Step	Procedure	Documents	Agency
1	Registration with DICA	none	DICA
2	Register with Department of Trade	none	DoT
3	Register with the Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry	none	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
4	Prepare import declaration or export declaration	Custom valuation Other required documents (import license, invoice, bill of landing, air consignment, cargo release order, terminal handling report, packing list; technical standard and health certificate; recommendation from concerned ministry	

For exporting goods from Myanmar, the trader must provide an export declaration form called CUSDEC-2 as well as the CUSDEC-4 Customs Valuation Form. Other related documents required are:

- Export license
- Invoice
- Bill of landing
- Packing list
- Sales contract
- Shipping instruction
- Letter of credit or general remittance or exemption certificate
- Samples of good
- Fumigation certificate (when required)
- Phyto-sanitary certificate (when required)
- Recommendation from concerned ministry

The exported fishery products are subjected to the food safety management systems such as Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) enforced by Inspection and Certification Unit under the Research and Development Division, Department of Fisheries. The quality control of the exported fishery products are in accordance with the regional and international market requirements and in compliance with Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) agreement and standards of the WTO.

In 2017-2018, the Inspection and Certification Unit of the DOF issued factory license to 123 processing establishments to monitor and control the procedures to comply with the international standard for food safety and quality assurance. Currently, 20 establishments have been approved to export to the EU, 33 establishments have been approved to export to Vietnam, and 6 fish meal establishments and 105 establishments including dried product warehouses and chilled product sites have been registered to export to China.

For the regulation of tariff, Myanmar charges a 2 % income tax to all imported and exported goods in 2013. In 2014, Myanmar developed special economic zones, which are regulated under the Special Economic Zone Law to encourage foreign direct investment. The enactment of the law provided tariff exemption for five years on custom duties on approved exported goods. Currently, all products with HS codes from 0301 to 0308 are tariff exempted according to the Myanmar Custom Publication(**Table 1**).

Table 2. Harmonized System (HS) codes for fish and crustaceans, mollusks, and other aquatic invertebrates that are tariff exempted according to the Myanmar Custom Publication

HS code	Description
0301	Fish; live
0302	Fish; fresh or chilled, excluding fish fillets and other fish meat of heading 0304
0303	Fish; frozen, excluding fish fillets and other fish meat of heading 0304
0304	Fish fillets and other fish meat (whether or not minced); fresh, chilled or frozen
0305	Fish, dried, salted or in brine; smoked fish, whether or not cooked before or during the smoking process; flours, meals and pellets of fish, fit for human consumption
0306	Crustaceans; in shell or not, live, fresh, chilled, frozen, dried, salted or in brine; smoked, cooked or not before or during smoking; in shell, steamed or boiled, whether or not chilled, frozen, dried, salted or in brine; edible flours, meals, pellets
0307	Molluscs; whether in shell or not, live, fresh, chilled, frozen, dried, salted or in brine; smoked molluscs, whether in shell or not, cooked or not before or during the smoking process; flours, meals and pellets of molluscs, fit for human consumption

0308	Aquatic invertebrates, other than crustaceans and molluscs; live, fresh, chilled, frozen, dried, salted or in brine, smoked, whether or not cooked before or during the smoking process; flours, meals, and pellets, fit for human consumption
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Myanmar regulates the procedures on the importation of fishery products to ensure that the products enter the Myanmar market are free from IUU fishing. The procedure required the Product Movement Documents (PMDs) as stipulated by DOF, which consists of Certificate of Origin specifying the species, fishing vessel, fishing ground, landing site, etc.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Investments in Myanmar's fisheries sector almost came from the private sector and the government should continue extending more assistance in order to improve domestic food security and generate more revenue from exports. The increasing fisheries production of Myanmar could create more jobs and income. Moreover, the international fish trade will benefit the country such as better economic growth if the traded fishery products obtain more added values. The stakeholders, with the support from the government, should therefore enhance diversifying the fishery products as well as conform to the international standards aside from the standards set by destination countries so that more international markets can be penetrated.

REFERENCE

DOF. (2018). Myanmar Fisheries Statistics. Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. Myanmar.