

Marine Exports Volume

December 2017

Release date: 29 March 2018

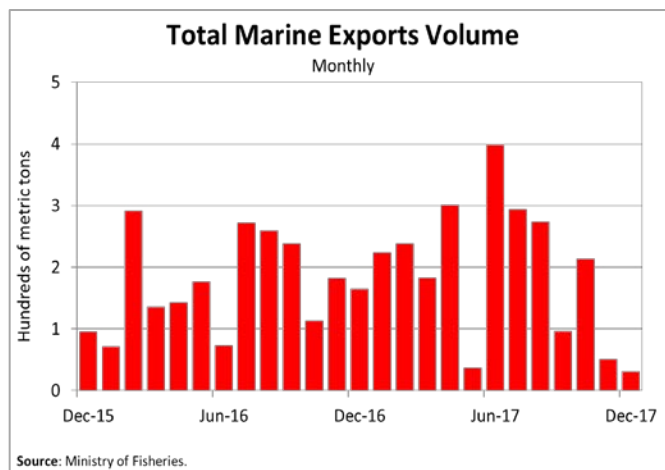
	Dec 17	Nov 17	Oct 17	Sep 17
Total Volume (metric tons)	30.4	50.9	213.9	96.5
Tuna	22.4	37.0	178.0	70.2
Snapper	8.0	7.7	7.5	6.2
Others	-	6.2	28.4	20.2
Aquarium Products (pieces)	5,806	8,373	4,222	7,358

Note: Numbers may not add up to the total volume due to rounding error.

Exported marine products finish the year at a low level

Marine products

The total exported marine products¹ continued to fall over the month by 20.5 metric tons (40.3%). The monthly trend for December followed a high volume of exported tuna in October 2017 before decreasing in the last two months of 2017. This was due to less foreign fishing vessels registered to fish the Tongan seas. This is lower than the average December of the past 5 years and also the lowest recorded for 2017.



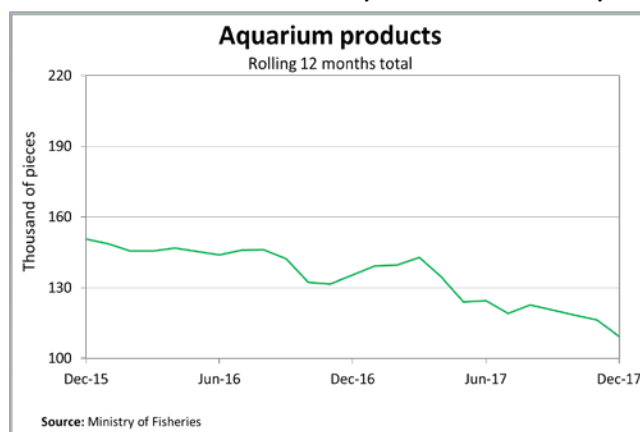
However, total marine products exported rose by 219.1 metric tons (10.3%) over the year to December 2017 largely driven by a 188.0 metric tons (9.8%) increase in tuna exports. This was followed by the export of snapper and seaweed which rose by 17.1 metric tons (14.5%) and 17.0 metric tons (81.6%) respectively. This outweighed a decrease in the export of shark meat and reef fish.

¹ Excluded aquarium products

Aquarium exports

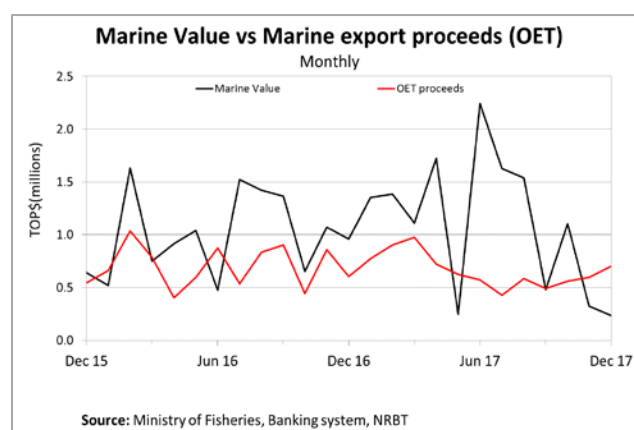
The total aquarium exports declined over the month by 2,567 pieces (30.7%), after an increase in November 2017 by 2,567 pieces which was driven by the seasonality in aquarium products. Over the month of December recorded lower exports of invertebrates and shellfish by 3,902 and 105 pieces respectively. This outweighed an increase in exported live hard coral by 652 pieces, soft coral by 555 pieces, and live fish by 233 pieces.

Similarly, total exported aquarium products fell over the year by 26,157 pieces (19.3%). This was due to lower exports in amount of various aquarium products such as invertebrates, live hard coral, soft coral, live fish, and shellfish.



Export Proceeds

The Ministry of Fisheries estimated the total value of the exported fisheries products to be \$0.2 million (FOB value) in December 2017. However, the banking system reported \$0.7 million received for the export of fisheries products. The United States remained the highest export destination for the marine exports followed by Japan, and New Zealand.



In year ended terms, total marine exports proceed declined by \$0.6 million (7.1%) to a total of \$7.9 million.

Outlook

The Reserve Bank expects that the fisheries sector will continue to grow supported by development plans facilitated by the Ministry of Fisheries. These included the Aquaculture Management and development plan which is currently planning on markets to increase opportunities for pearl farmers in both Vava'u and Ha'apai. This plan also

include preparations towards planting of seaweed. The fisheries sector continues to benefit from the duty exemptions policy on oil and fishing gear and the initiatives of the Government's Fisheries Development and Export Fund (FDEF) through the Government Development Loans facilitated by the Tonga Development Bank.

Marine Export Volumes							
	Month-ended				Year-ended		Share of total Sample ave.
	Dec 17	Nov 17	Oct 17	Sep 17	Dec 17	Dec 16	
Total Marine Products (in metric tons)	30.4	50.9	213.9	96.5	2,340.2	2,121.1	100.0
Shark Meat	-	2.9	11.4	2.7	63.8	66.5	2.7
Snapper	7.99	7.71	7.5	6.2	134.9	117.9	5.8
Tuna	22.4	37.0	178.0	70.2	2,103.6	1,915.6	89.9
Others	-	3.4	17.0	17.4	37.9	21.0	1.6
Total Aquarium Products (in pieces)	5,806	8,373	4,222	7,358	109,268	135,425	100.0
Livefish	714	481	188	291	9,109	10,442	8.3
Invertebrate	2,193	6,095	1,383	3,685	56,979	73,913	52.1
Live Hard Coral	1,599	947	1,402	1,785	23,492	28,730	21.5
Shellfish	-	105	259	175	2,174	3,023	2.0
Soft Coral	1,300	745	990	1,422	17,514	19,317	16.0

Source: Ministry of Fisheries