

Marine Exports Volume

March 2018

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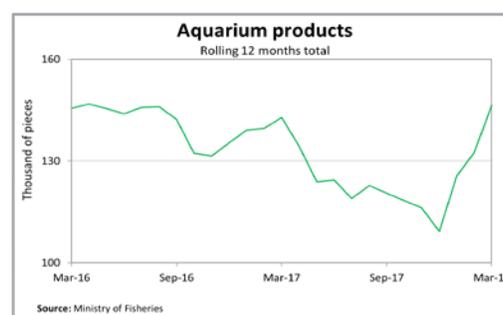
	Mar 18	Feb 18	Jan 18	Dec 17
Total Volume (metric tons)	51.4	48.0	37.6	30.4
Tuna	39.9	38.1	31.9	22.4
Snapper	5.2	5.6	5.7	8.0
Others	6.4	4.3	-	-
Aquarium Products (pieces)	32,413	16,689	28,801	5,806

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

A record high for exported invertebrates

Aquarium exports

The total aquarium exports edged higher similar to the spike in the beginning of 2018. Exported aquarium products increased by 94.2% over the month reaching a high record of 32,413 pieces since the 2013/14 when it had exceptionally high volumes of export. The main driver for higher amount of aquarium exports was the export of invertebrates which rose by 13,161 pieces reaching a new record of 27,991 pieces exported during the month. Other exported aquarium products such as soft coral, live hard coral, and live fish also increased except for shellfish. According to the Reserve Bank's liaison program, there has been a favourable overseas market for Tonga's aquarium products overseas and local suppliers are trying to meet the demand from respective buyers.

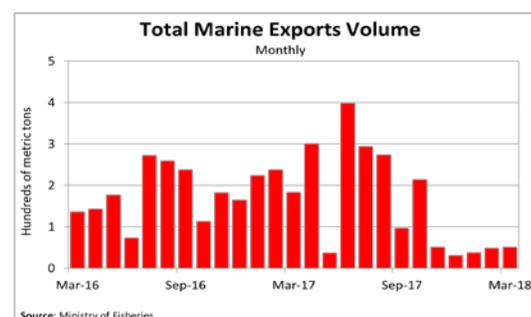


Additionally, the total exported aquarium products slightly rose over the year by 3,640 pieces (2.5%) due to a 21,693 pieces (27.8%) increase in exported invertebrates. This was partially offset by the decline in the export of all other aquarium products such as live hard coral, soft coral, live fish, and shellfish over the year.

Marine products

The total exported marine products¹ slightly rose over the month by 3.5 metric tons (7.2%) due to an increase in exported seaweed and tuna by 3.6 metric tons and 1.8 metric tons respectively. These outweighed the decline in the export of shark meat and snapper.

However, the total exported marine products declined by 435.5 metric tons (19.2%) over the year to March 2018 largely driven by a

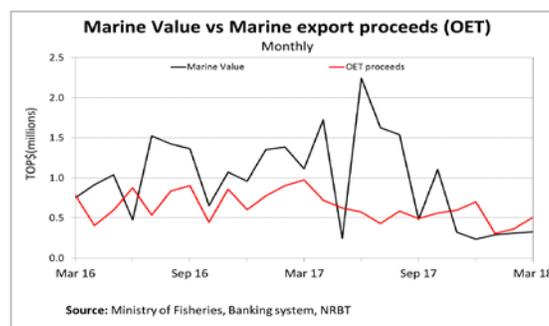


¹ Excluding aquarium products

449.9 metric tons (21.8%) decrease in tuna exports due to lower number of foreign vessels registered to fish the Tongan waters. This was followed by a 14.9 metric tons and 8.0 metric tons fall in the export of shark meat and snapper respectively which outweighed a rise in the volume of exported seaweed.

Export Proceeds

The Ministry of Fisheries estimated the total value of the exported fisheries products to be \$0.3 million in March 2018 which is in line with a \$0.5 million of total proceeds reported by the banking system for the export of fisheries products. Liaison with the Ministry of Fisheries confirmed that local exporters include the cost of freight in their invoices to buyers which may explain the higher proceeds received over the month or lagged effects on the timing of receiving funds. The United States remained the highest source country for these marine exports receipts followed by Australia, South Korea, Japan and New Zealand.



In year ended terms, total marine export proceeds declined by \$2.3 million (25.9%) to a total of \$6.4 million coinciding with the annual decline in marine exports.

Outlook

The Reserve Bank expects a rebound for the fisheries sector in 2017/18 following a negative growth recorded in 2016/17. This is due to successful market development for our fisheries products as reflected in the recent high volume of exported aquarium products. Additionally, a number of initiatives and continued sector plans may continue to help the sector in future developments. These comprised of the Seafood Export Market Development including Market Development for Pearl which explores new markets to increase opportunities for fisheries exporters and pearl farmers in both Vava'u and Ha'apai. The Aquaculture Management and development plan include preparations towards developing and improving of the seaweed planting and marketing. The fisheries sector continues to benefit from the duty exemptions policy on fuel 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.
	Mar 18	Feb 18	Jan 18	Dec 17	Mar 18	Mar 17	
Total Marine Products (in metric tons)	51.4	48.0	37.6	30.4	1,832.4	2,267.9	100.0
Shark Meat	2.8	4.3	-	-	55.4	70.3	3.0
Snapper	5.17	5.64	5.7	8.0	118.6	126.6	6.5
Tuna	39.9	38.1	31.9	22.4	1,617.0	2,066.9	88.2
Others	3.6	-	0.0	-	41.4	4.2	2.3
Total Aquarium Products (in pieces)	32,413	16,689	28,801	5,806	146,465	142,825	100.0
Livfish	517	322	531	714	7,160	11,226	4.9
Invertebrate	27,991	14,830	24,990	2,193	99,733	78,040	68.1
Live Hard Coral	1,850	719	1,587	1,599	20,889	30,854	14.3
Shellfish	143	194	-	-	1,986	2,373	1.4
Soft Coral	1,912	624	1,693	1,300	16,697	20,332	11.4

Source: Ministry of Fisheries