Japanese Frozen Shrimp Imports Continue to Climb

Japanese imports of frozen shrimp in 1978 amounted to 143,962 t, a new all-time high surpassing by 15 percent the previous record high of 124,780 t set in 1977, according to the customs clearance data released by the Japanese Finance Ministry (Table 1). In contrast to the increase in volume, the value of the imports in yen dropped to ¥209,702 million (US$998.58 million at ¥210=US$1), down approximately ¥3,000 million from the 1977 import value. The unit import price of shrimp in yen fell in 1978 due to the rise in the value of the yen.

Japanese imports of frozen shrimp have increased remarkably since the liberalization of shrimp imports in 1961, and annual import volumes exceeding 100,000 t have been maintained since 1973. Up to 1970, Mexico and Mainland China were leading suppliers of shrimp to Japan. Since 1971, however, India and Indonesia have been the dominant suppliers. In 1978, these two countries together supplied 59,918 t or 42 percent of the total frozen shrimp imports into Japan. Mainland China increased its supply to 9,197 t in 1978 from the previous 3,749 t in 1977.

Other important suppliers in 1978 were Thailand, 8,377 t; Mexico, 7,860 t; Australia, 7,546 t; Taiwan, 5,567 t; Hong Kong, 4,608 t; and Pakistan, 3,675 t (Table 2). Record imports for the year were reported from India, Indonesia, and Mainland China. Imports from Mexico, Thailand, Taiwan, Philippines, Brazil, Bangladesh, and U.S.S.R. increased in 1978. Imports from the United States were 479 t. (Source: FFIR 79-3.)

Frozen shrimp imports into Japan for the month of December 1978 were 15,406 t valued at ¥25,793 million (US$132 million at ¥196=US$1) on a customs clearance basis, according to the Finance Ministry. This represented a record second only to the 17,038 t recorded in December 1976.

Indonesia was the top supplier with 3,836 t followed by India which supplied 2,766 t. Mainland China provided 1,244 t; Taiwan, 1,084 t;

Table 1.—Japanese frozen shrimp imports in metric tons, by country of origin, 1973-78.

Country of origin	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
India	21,903	19,898	29,942	26,901	25,803	31,580
Indonesia	18,764	19,385	21,060	25,510	25,701	28,338
China (PRC)	4,475	9,483	9,768	5,569	3,749	9,197
Mexico	8,839	4,580	4,085	5,235	4,184	7,860
Thailand	9,884	6,314	8,837	9,849	2,750	8,377
Taiwan	5,040	3,245	3,395	3,241	4,389	5,567
Pakistan	4,231	2,305	2,951	3,892	3,889	3,675
Korea, South	2,571	3,127	2,932	4,673	2,574	2,461
Malaysia	5,190	2,619	2,382	3,877	3,392	2,827
Iran	859	854	651	803	515	815
Australia	4,769	5,189	4,663	6,189	7,742	7,546
Hong Kong	3,052	4,051	4,140	4,627	5,993	4,608
Cuba	1,985	3,193	3,548	1,693	1,417	919
Kuwait	768	236	379	1,031	572	635
Vietnam	662	2,154	1,639	2,356	2,760	2,411
Philippines	2,281	1,521	1,109	2,081	2,393	2,791
Nigeria	375	771	867	831	1,060	1,060
Sabar	1,347	1,728	1,515	2,296	2,505	2,328
Bahrain	1,447	1,227	1,014	974	1,041	1,031
Brazil	1,196	855	391	770	1,595	2,597
Liberia	475	611	330	320	270	212
Guyana	850	762	939	900	1,067	1,176
Camaroons	768	809	474	386	217	88
Singapore	831	517	345	336	489	374
United States	636	130	68	332	454	479
Bangladesh	628	220	339	565	865	1,170
U.S.S.R.	6,141	1,294	0	0	0	1,861
Total (including other countries)	117,474	103,311	113,672	123,334	124,780	143,962

Table 2. —Japanese frozen shrimp imports in metric tons, by leading countries, 1963-78.

	Leading suppliers				All imports	
Year	India	Indonesia	China[1]	Mexico	t	US$1,000
1963	n.a.[2]	n.a	n.a	n.a.	11,708	23,475
1964	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	18,167	31,437
1965	851	n.a.	5,875	5,210	21,011	35,938
1966	993	n.a.	11,769	4,889	36,156	60,085
1967	2,147	15	5,004	7,995	44,466	79,732
1968	3,164	661	3,769	5,769	35,204	78,079
1969	4,864	2,604	4,136	5,511	48,886	121,748
1970	6,210	3,684	6,248	7,210	57,146	137,026
1971	9,702	8,223	4,990	6,520	78,874	214,591
1972	12,812	13,824	3,519	5,407	88,120	291,943
1973	21,903	18,764	4,475	8,839	117,474	429,845
1974	19,898	19,385	9,483	4,580	103,311	404,024
1975	29,942	21,060	9,768	4,085	113,672	464,527
1976	26,901	25,510	5,569	5,235	123,334	733,986
1977	25,803	25,701	3,749	4,184	124,780	790,806
1978	32,580	28,338	9,197	7,860	143,962	998,581

[1]Mainland China
[2]Not available.

Mexico, 991 t; Thailand, 990 t; Australia, 692 t; Norway, 353 t; Philippines, 294 t; Bangladesh, 267 t; Malaysia, 254 t; and Guyana, 218 t. Imports from the United States were 93 t. (Source: FFIR 79-3.)

Frozen shrimp imports into Japan during January 1979 were 11,071 t valued at ¥17,183 million (US$86.78 million at ¥198=US$1) on a customs clearance basis, according to the Finance Ministry. This quantity is the highest ever recorded for January and surpasses by 97 t the previous January high of 10,974 t recorded in 1976. Heaviest shipments were 2,309 t from Indonesia and 2,187 t from India, which together accounted for over 40 percent of the imports for the month. Other important suppliers were Mainland China with 755 t, Thailand with 562 t, Mexico with 520 t, Australia with 425 t, and Norway with 368 t. Imports from the United States were 51 t. (Source: FFIR 79-4).

Price of Sea Urchin Roe Climbs Sharply in Japan

Prices of fresh sea urchin roe climbed sharply early this year in Japan as a result of the lagging delivery from Hokkaido, a major domestic supplier. The production in Hokkaido suffered from a spell of bad weather last winter, and a snow storm which occurred in late January cut the air shipments from Hokkaido in half.

Wholesale prices of fresh domestic sea urchin roe at the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market at the end of January jumped between ¥500 and 600 (US$2.50-3.00 at ¥200=US$1) per tray for both large and small trays over the prices at the beginning of the month. (A large tray is about 0.44 pound and a small tray runs about 0.22 pound in net weight.)

Influenced by the rise in the price for domestic products, wholesale prices for imported sea urchin roe edged up to ¥3,000 (US$15.00) per large tray for shipments from Los Angeles and to ¥1,500 (US$7.50) per large tray for the shipments from South Korea.

Informed sources in Japan predicted little hope for letup in the price of sea urchin roe until sometime in March or April. Large-scale shipments of South Korean sea urchin roe were expected to arrive in Japan in March. The spring harvest on the Sanriku coast was expected to add to the supply of domestic products in April. (Source: FFIR 79-3.)

Canadian Fisheries Aid Loans Up by 65 Percent

More than 900 loans totalling $16,338,181 were made under the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act during the period 1 April 1978 to 31 December 1978, Fisheries and Oceans Minister Romeo LeBlanc has announced. This compares with 593 loans totalling $9,924,670 made during the same period in 1977, representing increases of 65 and 60 percent, respectively (Table 1). The responsibility for administering the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act was transferred 1 June 1978 to Fisheries and Oceans from the Department of Finance.

Only fishermen may borrow, and loans may be made for building or buying a fishing vessel or equipment such as engines, nets, etc., for major repair or overhaul exceeding $400, for purchasing or constructing shore installations such as piers or wharves, and for the development or improvement of a primary fishing enterprise.

Under the legislation, the Federal government may guarantee loans granted by chartered banks and other designated lenders to fishermen. Loans must be secured and may be repayable over a period of up to 10 years. The maximum total of all loans outstanding to any one borrower at any one time is $75,000.

The rate of interest charged on these loans is set at 1 percent over the current prime lending rates of chartered banks and fluctuates with the banks' prime rate of interest for the term of the loan. The Fisheries Improvement Loans Act came into effect in December 1955 and to the end of December 1978, more than 10,900 loans totalling $109,058,625 have been made.

Table 1.—Loans made under Canada's Fisheries Improvement Loans Act.

	4/78-12/78		4/77-12/77	
Province	No	Amount	No	Amount
Brit Columbia	373	13,130,713	295	8,338,458
Alberta	0	0	0	0
Saskatchewan	0	0	0	0
Manitoba	2	16,400	2	9,110
Ontario	5	63,923	8	70,190
Quebec	3	34,500	0	0
New Brunswick	29	385,115	3	43,854
Nova Scotia	112	1,199,754	95	623,743
Prince Edw Isl	113	502,040	41	256,002
Newfoundland	265	1,005,736	149	583,313
	902	16,338,181	593	9,924,670

Mussel Processing Plant Established in Norway

A large plant for the processing of mussels will be ready for operation at Storebø, in Austevoll county outside Bergen, Norway, this fall and will have an annual gross capacity of 1,000 t, according to Norinform, the Norwegian Information Service. The plant, which is expected to cost 3 million NOK, has been established as a result of a project initiated by the Development Association for Trade in Vestlandet (UNV) to review the possibilities for the cultivation and sale of mussels for food.

The cultivation of mussels in Norway is no new phenomenon, but this is the first time a report has collected all relevant information on the cultivation. One of those behind the project in Austevoll county, Bjarne Rieber, a Director in Rika Trading A/S, Bergen, expects considerable success from the new plant, and he bases this confidence on organization. Rieber says that production in the district has been unsystematic and defective and that experience from the past 12-24 months has shown that mussels can be cultivated cheaper and with less manpower than before.

The plant has the capacity for bulk production of finished products and packages of 1 kilo or more, according to Rieber. The main markets will be those in such countries as West Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg. From 8 to 10 people

will be employed primarily, as well as 50-60 local breeders, who will possibly gain annual contracts from 10,000 to 20,000 NOK.

A company, with share-capital from 300,000 to 500,000 NOK, is expected to be established before the new year and the building itself should be finished this fall. Machinery costing 1.25 million NOK will then be installed. It is anticipated that the first phase will yield 250 t of mussels but the plant is not expected to operate profitably until the third season.

Japan's 1977 Marine Fish Catch Up 1% Over 1976

Japan's marine fisheries catch from January through December 1977 totaled 9,695,000 t, up 90,000 t or barely 1 percent from 1976, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (Table 1). Significant gains were recorded in the catches of sardine (up 26 percent), mackerel (up 38 percent), and saury (up 141 percent), whereas sharp declines occurred in Alaska pollock (down 21 percent), sandlance (down 39 percent), albacore (down 50 percent), and the common squid, surume-ika (down 22 percent).

Alaska pollock remained the single most important species landed in terms of quantity, although the catch of this fish at 1,931,000 t declined as much as 514,000 t from 1976 owing to the catch limitations imposed in Soviet and U.S. waters in the North Pacific in 1977. Second in importance was sardine, which, at 1,752,000 t showed an increase of 357,000 t over 1976. Alaska pollock and sardine together accounted for approximately 38 percent of the total marine catches for 1977. Tuna and skipjack landings, which totaled 660,000 t, were down 8 percent from 1976 due largely to the sharp decline in the catch of summer albacore in 1977. (Source: FFIR 78-14.)

Table 1.—Japan's marine fisheries catch of selected species, 1976 and 1977, in metric tons.

Species	Catch(t) 1977	Catch(t) 1976	Species	Catch(t) 1977	Catch(t) 1976
Tuna			Sandfish	14,759	22,845
Bluefin	51,900	41,805	Argentine	15 006	9,906
Albacore	54,027	107,071	Croaker	40 439	39,044
Bigeye	128,333	114,775	Lizardfish	22,631	19,534
Yellowfin (large)	82,845	85,744	Butterfish	15,969	25,128
Yellowfin (small)	19,425	18,398	Marine eel	19,414	17,461
Total	336,530	367,793	Hairtail	28,138	30,564
			Ray	9 409	7 819
Skipjack			Sea bream	23,489	23,600
Skipjack	309,407	331 047	Spanish mackerel	40,619	15,204
Frigate mackerel	13,349	20,201	Dolphin fish	13,058	9,703
Total	322,756	351,258	Flying fish	9 135	8,641
			Mullet	10,455	9,892
Billfish	41,548	45,155	Sea bass	11,026	10 147
Salmon	116,465	126,094	Sandlance	137,341	224 390
Shark	49,377	43,652	Shrimp	53 430	61,022
Herring	19,873	66,083			
Sardine	1,752,278	1,394,982	Crab		
Jack mackerel	185,801	206,667	King	100	1,258
Pacific mackerel	1,354,624	978,826	Tanner	21,070	22 028
Saury	253,465	978,826	Blue	2,959	3,104
Yellowtail	26,914	42,763	Other crab	47 490	40,181
			Total	71 619	66,571
Flatfish					
Flounder	6,446	7,158	Squid		
Bastard halibut	281,579	344,976	Common squid	234 472	300 963
Total	288,025	352,134	Cuttlefish	18 081	19,750
			Other squid	230,302	169,975
Cod	85 252	90,468	Total	482,855	490,688
Alaska pollock	1 931 071	2,455,423			
Atka mackerel	234,812	229 194	Octopus	67 913	66,873
Rockfish	52 491	76,798	Sea urchin	26 898	23 069
Rockcod	9,435	13,012	Sea cucumber	9 793	10,579
			Seaweeds	206,000	226,000

Japanese, Canadian Firms Sign Herring Roe Contract

The Japanese Taiyo Fishery Company has signed a contract with British Columbia Packers (B.C.P.) of Canada, agreeing to purchase the entire amount of semiprocessed herring roe produced by the latter. Under the terms of the contract, B.C.P. will become Taiyo's sole supplier of semiprocessed herring roe in Canada. The duration of the contract was referred to as long-term by informed sources in Japan. The contract is said to be aiming at keeping the spiraling price of the product under control while ensuring a stable supply.

B.C.P. produced about 1,900 t of semiprocessed herring roe last year, about 23 percent of the total production for the year in Canada, and was expected to turn out about 1,500 t this year. Canada is a leading supplier of semiprocessed herring roe to Japan, accounting for about 80 percent of Japan's total foreign purchases of this product annually. Quantities sold to Japan by Canada were 7,661 t in 1976, 8,767 t in 1977, and 7,588 t in 1978.

Japanese imports of herring roe have decreased steadily in volume but increased in value in recent years as a result of soaring prices at the landing ports. The imports were 11,698 t in 1976, 10,295 t in 1977, and 9,616 t in 1978. This year's imports are expected to total about 8,700 t, consisting of 6,000 t from Canada, 1,200 t from Alaska, 500 t from San Francisco, and an estimated 1,000 t from Mainland China. (Source: FFIR 79-4.)

High-Seas Sale Price of Soviet-Caught Alaska Pollock Hiked 40 Percent

Japanese and Soviet negotiators have agreed to set this year's high-seas purchase price of Soviet-caught Alaska pollock at US$220/t. The new price represents a hike of 40 percent over the 1973 price of US$157/t. This year's transaction, reportedly amounting to 65,000 t as in 1978, was scheduled to begin around 23 or 24 February off Kamchatka. (Source: FFIR 79-3.)