

# Marine Exports Volume

## May 2016

Release date: 5 August 2016

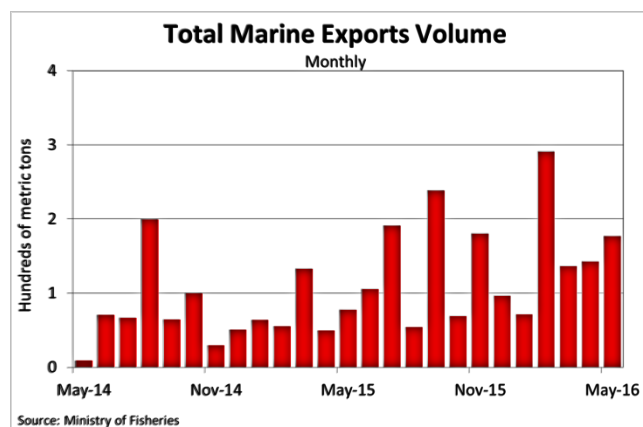
	May 16	Apr 16	Mar 16	Feb 16
Total Volume (metric tons)	176.8	142.5	135.9	290.7
Tuna	161.8	134.6	103.8	275.1
Snapper	7.2	3.7	10.2	8.9
Others	7.8	4.2	22.0	6.7
Aquarium Products (pieces)	12,995	15,404	13,938	9,266

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

## Rising tuna exports continue

### Marine exports

A total of 176.8 metric tons of marine exports<sup>1</sup> were recorded in May 2016, which is an increase in the total volume by 34.3 metric tons (24.1%) compared to April 2016. The increasing number of tuna exports over the month continued to drive the rise in marine exports as its volumes grew by 27.2 metric tons (20.2%). In addition, exports of shark meat and snapper also contributed to the monthly increase in volumes increasing by 3.6 metric tons (83.4%) and 3.5 metric tons (95.7%) respectively.



Likewise, the continuous increase in exports of tuna over the year by 956.3 metric tons (158.7%) drove the annual rise in the total marine exports volume by 791.6 metric tons (82.5%). The increase in the number of fishing vessels for tuna has also contributed to the overall rise in tuna exports. Furthermore, exports of snapper rose by 27.9 metric

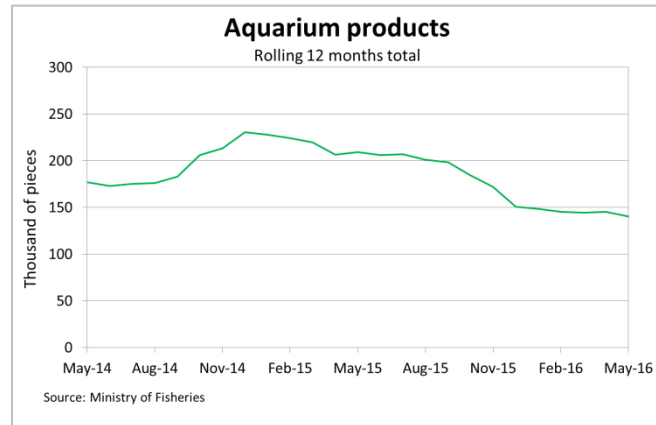
<sup>1</sup> Excluded aquarium products

tons (44.8%). On the other hand, relatively lower declines over the year were recorded in the remaining categories of marine products namely beche der mer, seaweed, shark meat, reef fish and shark fin.

### Aquarium exports

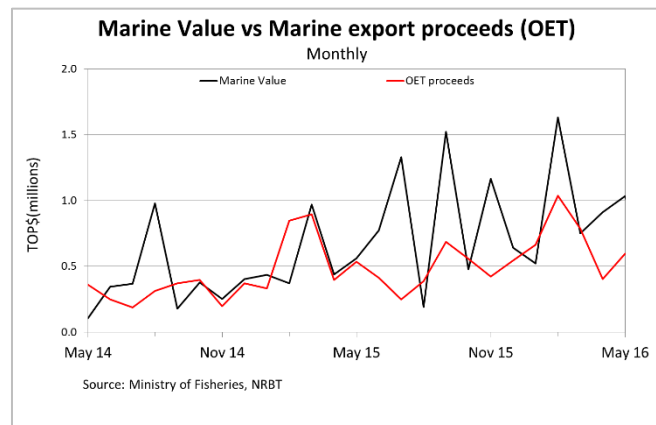
Lower exports of invertebrates, shellfish and live fish have caused a decline of 2,409 pieces (15.6%) in the total quantity of aquarium exports over the month. The exports of invertebrates continued to fall by 3,213 pieces (34.9%), shellfish exports declined by 154 pieces (43.8%) and live fish exports decreased by 20 pieces (3.6%). In contrary, exports of live hard and soft corals increased over the month.

Similarly, the total volume of aquarium products also decreased over the year by 68,915 pieces due to lower exports volume of invertebrates, live hard and soft corals, offsetting the rises in exports of live fish and shellfish. A fall in demand from overseas market for these products may have contributed to the lower exports during the year.



### Exports Proceeds

The fisheries and other marine export proceeds received through the banking system recorded a growth of \$0.19 million (47.5%) over the month to \$0.59 million which may also reflect lagged effects of fisheries export proceeds. However, the Ministry of Fisheries estimated a value of \$1.03 million for this month's export proceeds. This implies export proceeds of \$0.44 million are being unaccounted for.



Higher marine exports volume over the year is consistent with total proceeds increasing by \$1.65 million (33.5%) to \$6.73 million. The strengthening of the US dollar and the

Japanese Yen against the Tongan pa'anga supports the higher receipts. Fisheries and aquarium products are mainly exports to the US, Japan and Hawaii.

## Outlook

The NRBT expects the fisheries sector will continue to grow, with tuna exports being the main contributor. The Ministry of Fisheries plans to expand the pearl industry, and new markets available for seaweed exports in the coming year would contribute to the expected 2.0% growth in the fisheries sector for 2016/17. This is supported by the first Fisheries Sector Plan, recently approved by Cabinet. The key focal points included in this plan are to develop the Special Management Areas program, particularly on coastal and commercial fisheries and also the economic development of commercial fisheries and aquaculture. This sector continues to benefit from the consumption tax and custom duty exemptions on oil and fishing gear, as well as the Fisheries Development and Export Fund (FDEF) initiatives by the government through its Government Development Loans, which is facilitated by the Tonga Development Bank. The Ministry of Fisheries is also negotiating with one of the donors for loan guarantee funds to increase the amount of loan funds available to fishing enterprises with limited loan collaterals. The introduction of the Air New Zealand Boeing 777-200 aircraft provides extra capacity for more exports volume going forward.

The National Reserve Bank of Tonga (NRBT) is currently working on amendments to the Foreign Exchange Control Act. This is to improve the NRBT's ability to protect the foreign reserves through the establishment of a framework for the return of proceeds of exports of goods and services rendered in Tonga.

**Table 1:**

	Marine Export Volumes						
	Month-ended				Year-ended		Share of total Sample ave.
	May 16	Apr 16	Mar 16	Feb 16	May 16	May 15	
<b>Total Marine Products (in metric tons)</b>	<b>176.8</b>	<b>142.5</b>	<b>135.9</b>	<b>290.7</b>	<b>1,750.6</b>	<b>959.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Shark Meat	7.8	4.2	5.0	6.7	50.5	54.1	2.9
Snapper	7.2	3.7	10.2	8.9	90.3	62.4	5.2
Tuna	161.8	134.6	103.8	275.1	1,559.1	602.8	89.1
Others	0.0	-	16.9	-	50.7	239.7	2.9
<b>Total Aquarium Products (in pieces)</b>	<b>12,995</b>	<b>15,404</b>	<b>13,938</b>	<b>9,266</b>	<b>140,586</b>	<b>209,501</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Livefish	537	557	800	966	14,903	12,211	10.6
Invertebrate	5,983	9,196	9,296	5,815	81,165	145,991	57.7
Live Hard Coral	4,161	3,340	1,891	1,180	25,518	31,417	18.2
Shellfish	198	352	328	182	4,521	3,379	3.2
Soft Coral	2,116	1,959	1,623	1,123	14,479	16,503	10.3

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Food, and Fisheries