

Marine Exports Volume

April 2017

Release date: 15 August 2017

	Apr 17	Mar 17	Feb 17	Jan 17
Total Volume (metric tons)	300.8	161.0	238.1	224.0
Tuna	257.1	146.7	226.5	209.3
Snapper	35.7	6.1	8.0	10.9
Others	8.1	8.2	3.6	3.7
Aquarium Products (pieces)	7,000	5,574	9,264	12,528

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

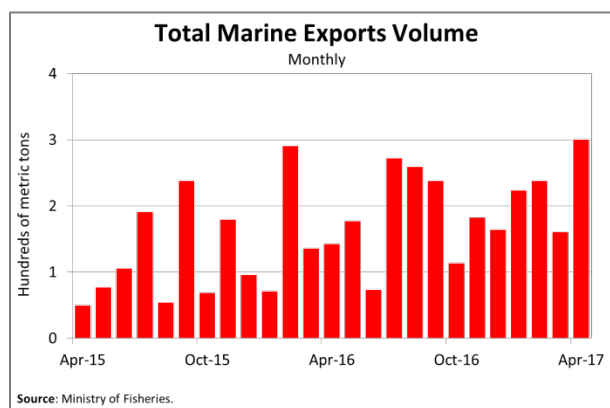
A favourable month for tuna and snapper exports

Marine products

The total exported marine products¹ increased in April by 139.8 metric tons (86.9%) to a high level of 300.8 metric tons. This was due to a significant increase in exports of tuna and snapper which rose by 110.4 metric tons (75.2%) and 29.6 metric tons (483.8%) respectively. These outweighed a decrease of 0.1 metric tons (1.2%) in the exported shark meat.

According to the Reserve Bank's liaison program, the increase over the month was largely due to catches of 6 foreign vessels which unloaded in Tonga's port during the month.

Additionally, total marine products exported rose by 752.9 metric tons (45.6%) over the year to April 2017 largely driven by a 720.0 metric tons (49.5%) increase in tuna exports. This was followed by the export of snapper and shark meat which rose by 57.9 metric

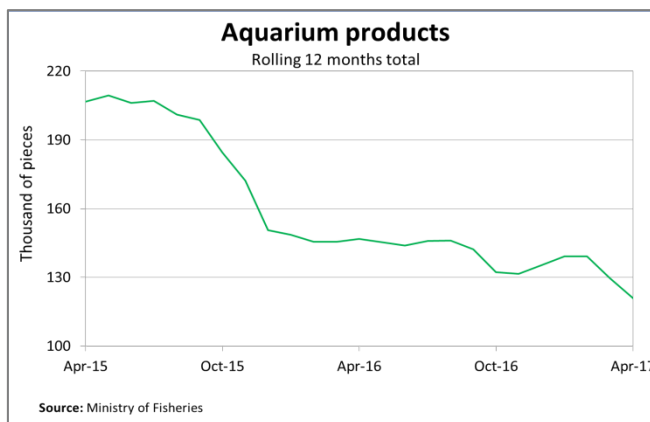


¹ Excluded aquarium products

tons (62.4%) and 28.3 metric tons (61.9%) respectively. This offset a decrease in the export of seaweed and reef fish.

Aquarium exports

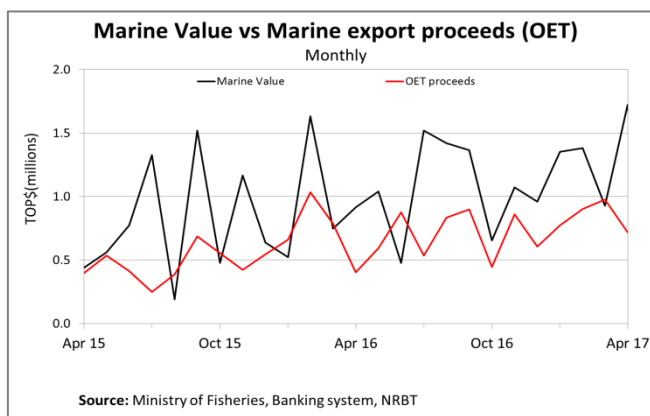
The total aquarium exports rose over the month by 1,426 pieces (25.6%) driven by higher exports of invertebrate and coral. Invertebrate export increased by 1,652 pieces (69.9%) followed by the export of soft coral and live hard coral which increased by 428 pieces (61.5%) and 119 pieces (7.4%) respectively. These growths outweighed a decline in live fish exports of 773 pieces (85.2%).



Over the year, total exported aquarium products fell by 25,741 pieces (17.5%). This was due to lower export of invertebrate (20,812 pieces), live fish (6,226 pieces), and shellfish (3,831 pieces) over the year which outweighed an increase in the export of soft and live hard coral of 3,607 and 1,521 pieces respectively.

Export Proceeds

The Ministry of Fisheries estimated the total value of the marine exports² proceeds to be \$1.7 million in April 2017. However, \$0.7 million was reported by the banking system that was received for export of fisheries products. The export proceeds fell by \$0.3 million (26.2%) over the month reflecting the lagged effects in receipt



of payments. The United States remained the highest export destination for the marine exports followed by Hawaii, New Zealand, and Hong Kong.

² Both marine and aquarium products

Over the year to April 2017, the 45.6% growth in total marine exports coincided with a \$2.3 million (35.1%) rise in the total proceeds received. The strengthening of the US dollar against the Tongan pa'anga supported the higher export receipts during the year, as the main export destination countries are the US, Hawaii, New Zealand and some European countries. According to the liaison with individuals involved in the sector, the better weather conditions during the year and the increased number of fishing vessels supported by the Government Development loan scheme contributed to the annual growth.

Outlook

The Reserve Bank continues to expect the fisheries sector will grow, with tuna exports being the main contributor. This is supported by the Fisheries Sector Plan that the Ministry of Fisheries is determined to implement. 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 also 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 facilitated by the Tonga Development Bank. Additionally, according to the Ministry of Fisheries, “the mabe pearl industry in Ha'apai is progressing well and shows great potential to provide income and livelihood benefits for the communities of Ha'apai”, which supports the positive outlook for the fisheries sector.

Marine Export Volumes							
	Month-ended				Year-ended		Share of total Sample ave.
	Apr 17	Mar 17	Feb 17	Jan 17	Apr 17	Apr 16	
Total Marine Products (in metric tons)	300.8	161.0	238.1	224.0	2,404.2	1,651.2	100.0
Shark Meat	8.1	8.2	3.6	3.7	74.1	45.8	3.1
Snapper	35.70	6.12	8.0	10.9	150.6	92.7	6.3
Tuna	257.1	146.7	226.5	209.3	2,175.4	1,455.4	90.5
Others	-	-	0.0	-	4.1	57.4	0.2
Total Aquarium Products (in pieces)	7,000	5,574	9,264	12,528	121,081	146,822	100.0
Livefish	134	907	428	890	9,709	15,935	8.0
Invertebrate	4,014	2,362	5,890	8,163	64,216	85,028	53.0
Live Hard Coral	1,728	1,609	1,713	1,666	27,471	25,950	22.7
Shellfish	-	-	80	245	1,821	5,652	1.5
Soft Coral	1,124	696	1,153	1,564	17,864	14,257	14.8

Source: Ministry of Fisheries