
According to the newly released statistics, the world aquaculture production in 2012 was 90.43 million tonnes, including 66.63 million tonnes of food fish, 23.78 million tonnes of aquatic algae (mostly marine macroalgae / seaweeds), and 22.4 thousand tonnes of non-food products (pearls and shells, etc.). The term “food fish” often used by FAO includes fin fishes, crustaceans, molluscs, amphibians, freshwater turtles and other aquatic animals (such as sea cucumber, sea urchins, sea squirts and edible jellyfish, etc.) produced for the intended use as food for human consumption.

- On global average, aquaculture supplied 9.41 kg of food fish per person for consumption in 2012. However, production distribution is extremely uneven across the globe and on all continents owing to the imbalance development.

- Aquaculture is now fully comparable to capture fisheries when measured by volume of output on global scale. The contribution from aquaculture to the world total fish production of capture and aquaculture in 2012 reached 42.2 percent, up from 25.7 percent in 2000. Asia is the only continent producing more fish (54 percent) than capture fisheries. The share of aquaculture in total fish production also rose in all other continents with Europe staying at 18 percent and others below 15 percent.

- Finfish aquaculture, especially inland aquaculture of herbivorous and omnivorous finfish species, is the most important sub-sector of aquaculture production in volume terms. It is the source of affordable quality protein food in many developing countries.

- When feed is usually seen as the most important cost to aquaculture production, it should be stressed that over 20 million tonnes, over 30 percent of the total production of farmed food fish, are produced without intentional use of feeds. The non-fed species include filter feeding carps and bivalves, etc.

- Though a total of 567 “species items” had been registered in global aquaculture statistics database it is estimated that a great diversity of over 600 aquatic species are cultured worldwide. Well over 200 aquatic species are farmed commercially in China under less than 90 “species items” currently. Despite the large number of farmed species, the majority of total aquaculture production output rely on several dozens of species only.

- Geographically tilapias are the most widespread species for aquaculture production in the world. Close to 140 countries and territories are now recorded for farming of tilapias in FAO database.
Table 1: World aquaculture production of finfish, crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic species in 2012 from inland aquaculture and mariculture (Unit: thousand tonnes, in live weight equivalent)*

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<th>Mariculture</th>
<th>SUB-TOTAL</th>
<th>(percent)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>(thousand tonnes)</td>
<td>(thousand tonnes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finfish</td>
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<td>5 552</td>
<td>44 151</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3 917</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other species</td>
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<td>41 946</td>
<td>24 687</td>
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* Note: Inland aquaculture also includes operations using inland saline water in inland areas, most notably in Egypt. Mariculture also includes operations using on-shore (land-based) facilities and structures.

Table 2: World production of food fish from inland aquaculture and mariculture by continent

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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>66 633 253</td>
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</table>

*Note: Data for Tanzania exclude Zanzibar, which is separately listed by FAO for statistics purpose. Data for China cover only the mainland.*
Figure 1: The contribution to total fish production (excluding aquatic plants and non-food products) has been rising in the world and on all continents (Unit: Million tonnes in live weight)

Figure 2: World farmed aquatic algae and major producers in 2012 (Unit: Million tonnes in wet weight)

For inquiry, please contact: Fish-Statistics-Inquiries@fao.org