



European Commission

Seabass

Market trends of one of Europe's top fish

A high-value iconic species, wild seabass has long been on the A-list of European delicacies. Depleted in the North-East Atlantic less than 5 years ago, seabass has recovered thanks to drastic management measures taken by the European Union. It is part of the livelihood of many small-scale fleets in Europe.

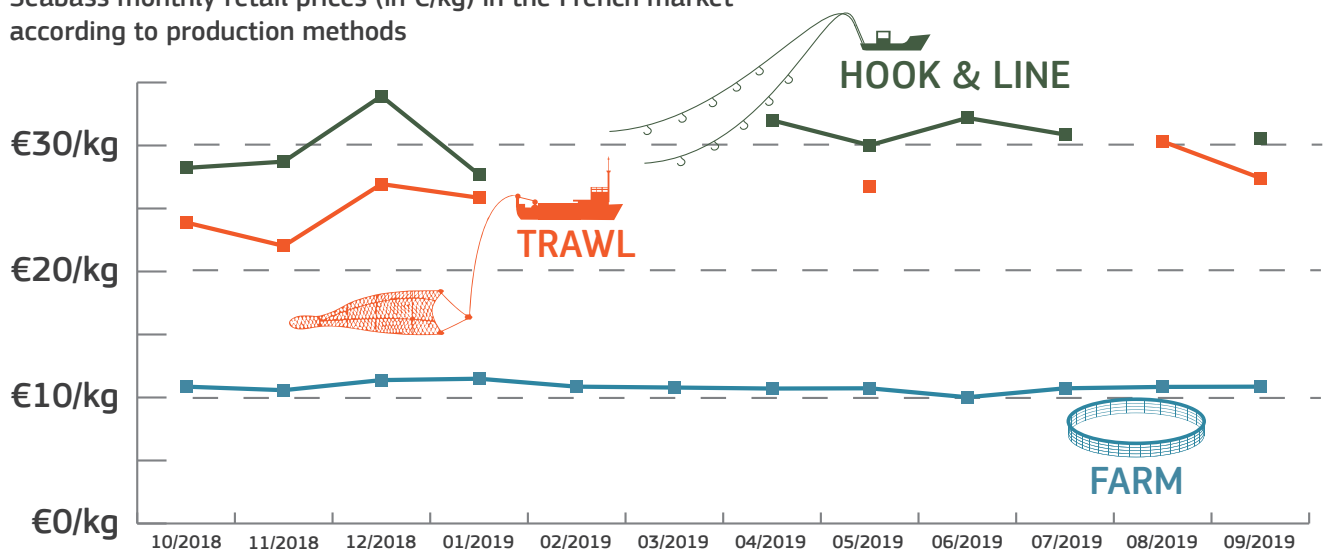
Small-scale vessels depend on seabass and value it best

Many small-scale fleets are economically dependent on seabass, making up more than 10% of their landing value from this species, peaking at 50% for some vessels in the Netherlands and around 40% for hooks and liners in France. These profitable fleets account for 35% of seabass catches in the Atlantic.

Vessels under 12 meters using hooks and line usually sell the fish at higher prices than trawlers. The hooks and line fishing technique is not only the most sustainable, but also ensures a high quality product for consumers, reflected in the final price of up to €35/kg on the French market.

Wild seabass is mainly traded in France and the UK, and is fished by fleets from France, Spain, the UK and, to a lesser extent, Belgium and the Netherlands. France is Europe's #1 market for seabass with high demand and high prices and is the destination of more than 50% of the UK's wild-caught seabass exports.

Seabass monthly retail prices (in €/kg) in the French market according to production methods



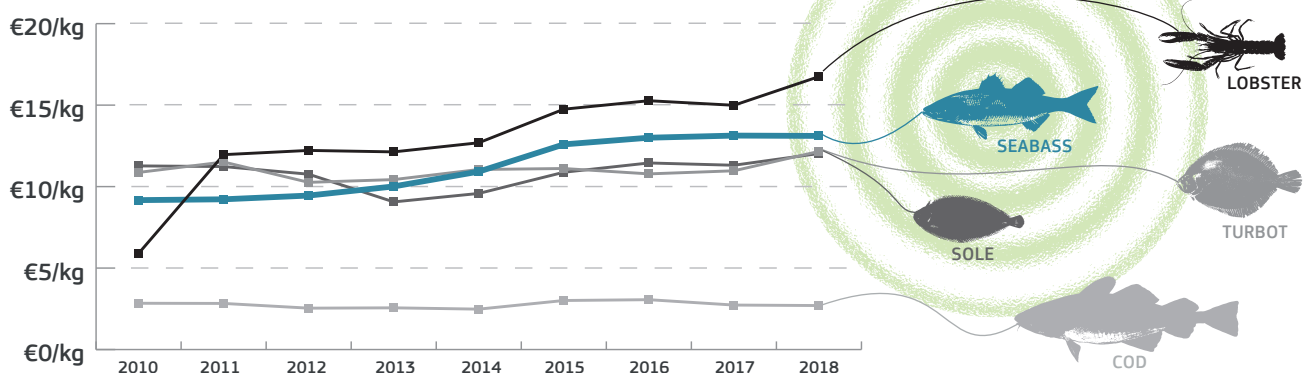
Source: RNM.FranceAgriMer.fr



Popularity of seabass

While catches have dropped in recent years, consumers' appetite for seabass never wavered. This makes seabass the second most expensive fish on average among major commercial species in the North-East Atlantic, after European lobster.

Evolution of first sale prices (North-East Atlantic, nominal value in €/year)



Source: EUMOFA

Although seabass is marketed as a whole and fresh fish, there is significant market segmentation according to three main criteria:

- ▶ production methods (wild-caught seabass fetches higher prices than farmed seabass)
- ▶ size category
- ▶ fishing gear used (higher prices for fish caught with hooks and lines)

Recreational fisheries play an important part in the exploitation of the seabass stock. EUMOFA estimates that anglers account for 20 to 50% of the catch in Europe and represent an overall economic weight of more than €262 million in the EU (FR, IE, NL, BE) and the UK.

[Read this and more in the EUMOFA Thematic analyses.](#)

The study is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

➤ **Fished by** fleets from



➤ **Up to €35/kg**
first sale prices for hook and line wild catches

➤ **Mainly traded**
in



➤ **Recreational fisheries represent more than €262 million**
in economic weight

