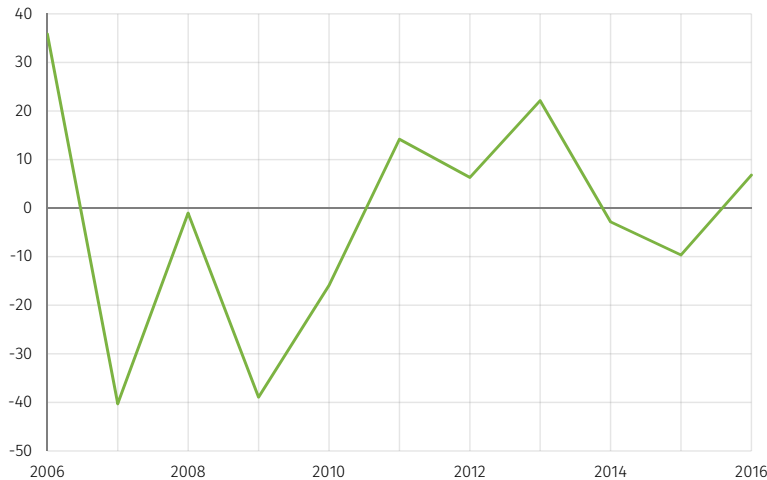


Figure 14: Volume of Fish Exports, 2006–2016

(annual percentage change)



7%

Volume of fish exports increased by 7% in 2016

Source: Maldives Customs Service

Box 1: Trends in the International Tuna Market

The international tuna market¹ showed mixed developments during the year 2016. Although the market was favourable during the first quarter of the year—with fish catch improving in the main fishing grounds—supply declined during the latter part of the year. The decline in supply was due to the closure of fish aggregating devices in the Western and Central Pacific region from July to October, as well as the ‘veda’ closure² in the Eastern Pacific in late July. However, prices of non-canned products were largely stable for most of the year because heavy inventories of frozen fish stocks held in Thai canneries compensated for the lower fish catch from the Pacific. Meanwhile, prices of canned products declined in the international market during the first half of the year, as a result of lower demand in the US and Europe.

For Thailand, the largest exporter of canned and processed tuna, the export of such items declined moderately during the first half of 2016. This was largely due to lower demand from European countries. However, an increase in Thai exports

¹Data relating to international trends in the tuna markets were taken from Globefish, a body of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

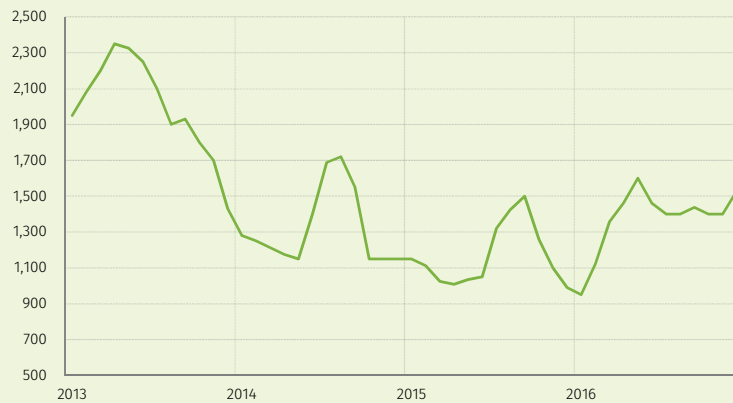
²‘Veda closure’ is a seasonal fishing ban in the Eastern Pacific, imposed periodically by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

to other markets, such as the US and the Middle East, partly offset this decline. Prices were higher on average during 2016 in the Thai market compared with the previous year. For instance, frozen skipjack tuna prices rose significantly during 2016, reaching an average of US\$1,530.0 per metric ton in December 2016 (Figure 1). This can be attributed to the lower supply arising from fishing bans in the Pacific.

In the US, the demand for canned or pouched tuna declined markedly during the first half of the year; the US was holding enough inventories from the previous year, which resulted in lower import volumes. As for imports of canned or pouched tuna to the European Union (EU), demand fell significantly. Looking at other individual markets, imports to the UK rose annually during the first half of the year, particularly due to an increase in demand for Maldivian tuna caught by pole and line fishing method, reflecting growing consumer awareness about the importance of sustainably and equitably caught and produced tuna. Imports to Germany suffered an annual decline, while imports to the Netherlands registered an annual increase during this period. Belgian imports declined in annual terms due to high local inventories during the period.

Figure 1: Skipjack Tuna Prices, 2013–2016

(US dollars per metric ton)



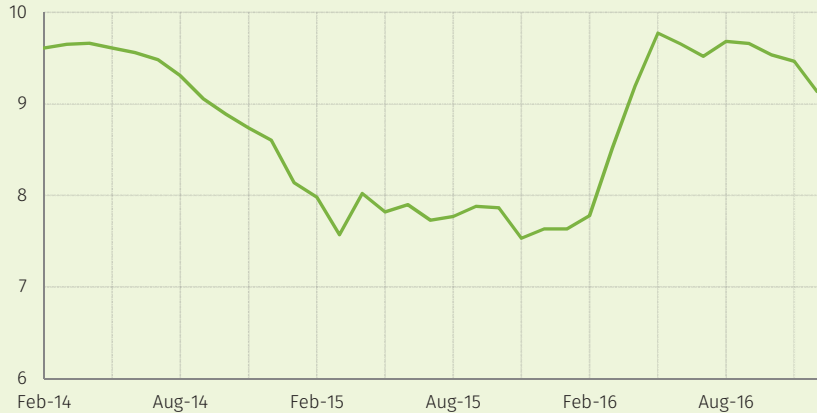
Source: Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture

Note: Prices are based on Bangkok frozen market prices.

As for tuna prices in the EU, yellowfin tuna prices rose from an average of US\$7.6 per kilogram in January 2016 to US\$9.2 per kilogram in April 2016. The prices remained largely stable from there onwards and closed at an average of US\$9.1 per kilogram in December 2016 (Figure 2).

Looking at other regions, the largest markets for canned tuna in volume terms following the EU and US are Egypt, Japan, Australia and Canada. Imports to Australia fell due to the weaker Australian currency in the first half of the year, while imports to Egypt and Canada also declined during this period. However, Japan recorded a growth for such imports. Meanwhile, consumer demand for canned tuna increased in some East Asian and South Asian countries due to a general decline in canned tuna prices during this period.

Figure 2: Yellowfin Tuna Prices, February 2014 - December 2016
(US dollars per kilogram)



Source: Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture
Note: Prices are based on Spain Mercamadrid fresh market prices.