

OCTOBER 2008

**BLUEFIN TUNA SUPPLY, DEMAND,
AND MARKET OF JAPAN**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Japan is the world's largest market for bluefin tuna (northern bluefin tuna, *Thunnus thynnus*, and southern bluefin tuna, *Thunnus maccoyii*) utilizing an average of 43,977 (metric tons) mt during 1987-2007. Supply for this market comes from both domestic catch and imports. The share of the Japanese market for bluefin tuna supplied by imports increased from 19 percent in 1987 to 73 percent in 2007. In 2007, imports were worth \$718 million. Frozen gilled, gutted, and tail-off bluefin tuna products dominated product imported into Japan, representing 42 percent in volume in 2007. Japanese imports of fresh gilled, gutted, and tail-off bluefin tuna in 2007 came mostly from Mexico.

Factors which influenced the recent rise in bluefin tuna imports to Japan are: decreasing catches by Japan's own fishing fleet, increasing demand for gourmet food, and the appreciation of the Japanese yen relative to U.S. dollar.

Japan regulates imports of bigeye tuna products with import tariffs. As the United States and Japan are signatories to the World Trade Organization (WTO), WTO tariffs apply to imports of bluefin tuna products from the U.S.

Bluefin tuna is sold through auctions at consumer wholesale markets located in consumption areas, and at production wholesale markets located at Japanese ports of landing. Bluefin tuna is also sold directly to supermarket chains. Between January and December 2007, wholesale prices at the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market for both domestic and imported bluefin tuna showed fluctuations which were influenced mainly by volume of supply, usually, the lower the supply, the higher the price, and vice versa.

INTRODUCTION

Japan, the world's largest consumer of bluefin tuna, relies mainly on landings by her own fleet. Recently, however, decreasing domestic catches have forced Japan to increase imports of bluefin tuna.

Fresh bluefin tuna from the United States has found a market niche in Japan. In 2007, Japan imported 91 metric tons valued at \$2.7 million of fresh bluefin tuna from the United States.

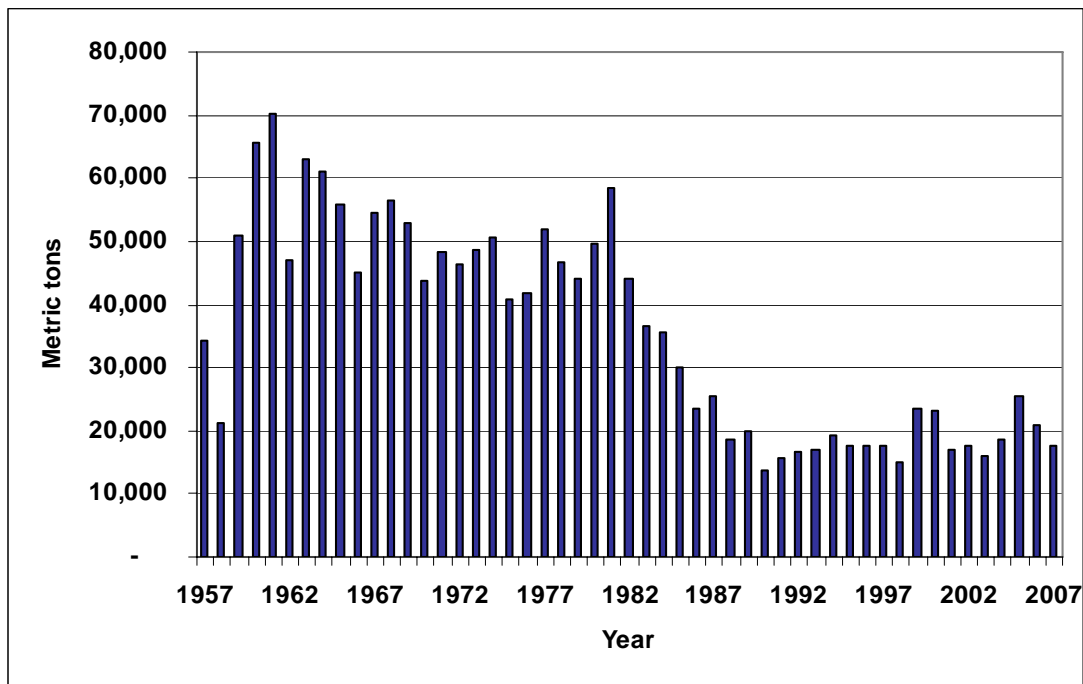
This report provides a detailed examination of Japan's bluefin tuna fishery, import, export, supply, demand, and market, in order to identify potential opportunities for export of U.S. producers.

JAPANESE FISHERY

The bluefin tuna fishery is a valuable fishery in Japan. In 2007, Japan's bluefin tuna landings were valued at \$337 million (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries 2008).

The Japanese catch of bluefin tuna peaked in 1961 at 70,129 mt and showed a decreasing trend to 2007 with exceptions in 1973-1974 and 1980-1981 (Figure 1). The catch in 2007 decreased 15 percent from 2006 (Table 1). The catch of bluefin tuna in 2007 represented 3 percent of the total catch of major tuna species.

In 2005, about 48 percent of bluefin tuna was caught by tuna longline, 31 percent by purse seine, 10 percent by other pole and line, 6 percent by set net, 4 percent by skipjack pole-and-line and less than 1 percent by drift net, other longline, and gillnet.



Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries 2008

Figure 1. Japan's bluefin tuna catch, 1956-2007 (metric tons).

**Table 1. Japan's tuna catch by major species, 1956-2007
(metric tons).**

Year	Bluefin	Southern Bluefin	Albacore	Bigeye	Yellowfin	Skipjack	Total
1956	36,923	- *	65,772	49,113	80,854	97,990	330,652
1957	34,235	-	77,724	60,305	99,516	97,463	369,243
1958	21,131	-	63,176	72,979	111,530	147,433	416,249
1959	51,079	-	68,170	74,174	126,401	166,707	486,531
1960	65,736	-	89,107	72,499	154,023	78,608	459,973
1961	70,129	-	87,768	113,836	148,143	144,327	564,203
1962	46,978	-	104,645	126,234	158,070	170,284	606,211
1963	63,005	-	115,522	129,690	130,874	112,887	551,978
1964	61,026	-	116,487	112,256	123,493	166,763	580,025
1965	55,904	-	127,341	110,486	123,589	136,067	553,387
1966	45,179	-	106,255	105,712	128,429	229,076	614,651
1967	54,653	-	97,980	105,927	93,734	181,892	534,186
1968	56,509	-	70,295	96,118	115,541	168,887	507,350
1969	52,982	-	77,870	100,047	89,962	182,044	502,905
1970	43,899	-	63,626	92,342	79,077	202,870	481,814
1971	48,260	-	88,140	89,489	70,857	171,544	468,290
1972	46,311	-	92,104	98,257	67,761	222,826	527,259
1973	48,534	-	95,113	104,974	75,681	321,617	645,919
1974	50,460	-	97,163	101,755	75,845	346,895	672,118
1975	40,716	-	68,861	113,445	71,939	258,736	553,697
1976	41,805	-	107,071	114,775	85,744	331,047	680,442
1977	51,900	-	54,027	128,333	82,845	309,407	626,512
1978	46,555	-	87,675	127,666	98,066	369,530	729,492
1979	44,241	-	66,822	130,466	99,659	329,948	671,136
1980	49,494	-	69,677	123,168	119,001	354,156	715,496
1981	58,485	-	64,082	110,513	110,009	289,281	632,370
1982	44,206	-	70,043	131,772	114,219	302,982	663,222
1983	36,663	-	51,512	139,164	112,493	352,694	692,526
1984	35,718	-	63,624	131,425	115,389	446,318	792,474
1985	29,948	-	57,820	148,940	134,395	314,799	685,902
1986	23,455	-	51,136	157,806	118,257	413,975	764,629
1987	25,335	-	46,945	140,985	115,225	330,932	659,422
1988	18,614	-	45,151	135,856	102,265	434,400	736,286
1989	19,938	-	45,273	117,263	100,002	338,151	620,627
1990	13,798	-	43,315	122,148	98,257	301,231	578,749
1991	15,791	-	38,213	124,501	108,088	397,329	683,922
1992	16,553	-	48,709	143,560	122,753	322,970	654,545
1993	16,858	-	60,331	139,507	126,915	345,181	688,792
1994	19,257	-	73,993	125,696	105,819	299,995	624,760
1995	11,213	6,271	63,628	116,232	111,951	308,943	618,238
1996	11,233	6,281	61,149	101,591	80,135	275,124	535,513
1997	11,444	6,317	83,960	107,835	111,862	313,918	635,336
1998	8,465	6,640	74,160	98,891	93,888	385,448	667,492
1999	16,354	7,209	100,687	98,600	96,684	287,344	606,878
2000	16,692	6,331	66,432	87,051	98,968	341,450	616,924
2001	10,812	6,210	69,803	90,079	102,096	276,721	555,721
2002	11,792	5,902	90,104	90,101	73,246	301,915	573,060
2003	11,424	4,694	68,275	82,796	79,287	322,456	568,932
2004	14,199	4,543	69,379	79,941	76,519	296,591	541,172
2005	19,326	6,105	52,999	71,665	82,569	370,384	603,048
2006	15,200	5,700	50,600	70,700	73,800	328,000	544,000
2007	15,100	2,600	73,200	77,700	78,300	328,700	575,600

* included in bluefin tuna

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries 2008

IMPORTS

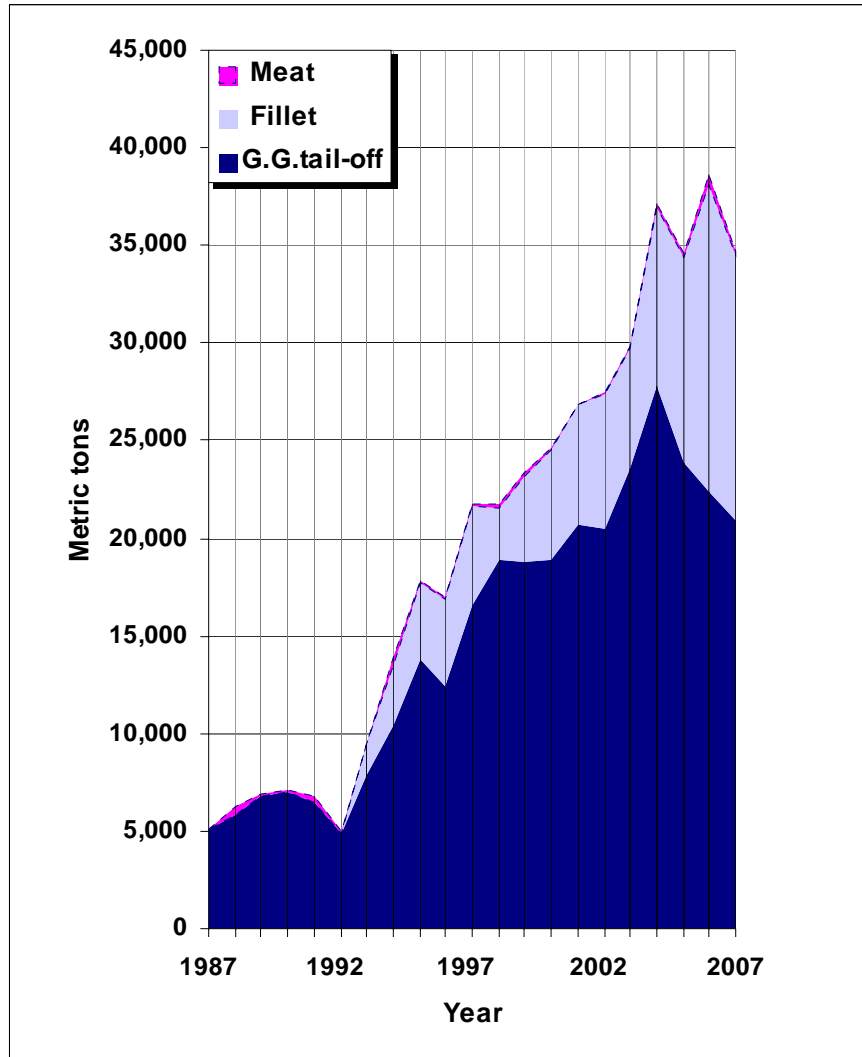
Japan liberalized the import of tuna in 1961, making it free from import quota restrictions (Suisan Sha 1968). From 1987 to 2007, imports of bluefin tuna into Japan increased more than 6.8 times in volume (Table 2 and Figure 4). Much of this increase was due to strong demand, decreased domestic catches, and strong yen (Appendix).

Japan's imports of fresh and frozen gilled, gutted, and tail-off bluefin tuna in 2007 were 20,934 mt (product weight), a decrease of 7 percent in volume over 2006 imports. Frozen products dominated, representing 42 percent in volume. Fresh products accounted for 18 percent in volume.

Japanese imports of fresh gilled, gutted, and tail-off bluefin tuna in 2007 came mostly from Mexico (Table 3). In 2003, Mexico replaced the Republic of Korea (South Korea) as the leading supplier of fresh gilled, gutted, and tail-off bluefin tuna to Japan (Japan Marine Products Importers Association 1992-2008).

Imports of frozen bluefin tuna fillet decreased from 15,542 mt in 2006 to 13,446 mt in 2007. Turkey has been the leading supplier of frozen bluefin tuna fillet to the Japanese market since 2005. In 2007, significant quantities of frozen bluefin tuna fillet were also shipped from Italy, Malta, Spain, Morocco, and Tunisia (Table 9). Supplies of frozen bigeye tuna from Taiwan to Japan decreased from 83,831 mt in 2003 to 44,305 mt in 2006.

Bluefin tuna products imported into Japan are subject to tariffs. As the United States and Japan are signatories to the World Trade Organization (WTO), WTO tariffs apply to imports of bluefin tuna products from the U.S. The current tariff for fresh or frozen bluefin tuna products is 3.5 percent, calculated as percentage of total cost, including insurance and freight.



Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 1988-2008

Figure 2. Japan's imports of fresh and frozen bluefin tuna by product form, 1987-2007.

Table 2. Japan's imports of fresh and frozen bluefin tuna, 1987-2007 (metric tons).

Year	G.&G. tail-off	Fillet	Meat	G.&G. tail-off	Fillet	Meat	Total
	----- (Product weight) -----			----- (Round weight**) -----			
1987	5,101	0		5,866	0	0	5,866
1988	5,838	0	393	6,714	0	393	7,107
1989	6,845	0	73	7,872	0	73	7,945
1990	6,956	0	141	7,999	0	141	8,140
1991	6,488	0	273	7,461	0	273	7,734
1992	4,932	0	81	5,672	0	81	5,753
1993	7,833	1,590	39	9,008	2,655	39	11,702
1994	10,435	3,037	465	12,000	5,071	465	17,536
1995	13,805	3,901	152	15,876	6,514	152	22,542
1996	12,393	4,487	49	14,252	7,493	49	21,794
1997	16,591	5,046	93	19,080	8,427	93	27,600
1998	18,875	2,722	183	21,706	4,547	183	26,436
1999	18,803	4,322	218	21,623	7,217	218	29,058
2000	18,910	5,652	68	21,747	9,439	68	31,254
2001	20,732	6,097	62	23,842	10,182	62	34,086
2002	20,483	6,928	104	23,555	11,570	104	35,229
2003	23,572	6,118	115	27,108	10,218	115	37,441
2004	27,830	9,120	158	32,005	15,230	158	47,393
2005	23,828	10,566	222	27,402	17,644	222	45,268
2006	22,405	15,721	463	25,766	26,254	463	52,483
2007	20,934	13,518	298	24,074	22,575	298	46,947

** Converted from product weight to round weight (live) by using these conversion factors: 1.15, fresh and frozen gilled, gutted and tail-off; and 1.67, Fillet. A conversion factor is not applied to meat products in order to diminish risk of double counting, as meat are usually shipped separately from other product from the same fish (Restrepo 2004).

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 1988-2008

Table 3. Japan's imports of fresh bluefin tuna, gilled, gutted, and tail-off, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Mexico	2,037.5	3,023.0	39,506.4	43,865.7	19.39	14.51
Spain	1,301.2	1,815.8	34,848.7	45,697.8	26.78	25.17
Korea, Rep. of	988.1	1,006.6	3,026.8	3,004.1	3.06	2.98
Canada	248.7	360.0	6,947.0	9,522.8	27.93	26.45
Turkey	128.5	229.1	3,151.9	4,958.8	24.53	21.64
Croatia	122.3	281.2	3,536.9	7,094.8	28.92	25.23
U.S.A.	91.4	93.1	2,659.3	2,919.8	29.10	31.36
Morocco	60.2	15.3	1,233.6	328.4	20.49	21.46
Italy	47.1	257.1	1,107.5	5,843.4	23.51	22.73
Tunisia	38.1	110.4	835.7	1,901.5	21.93	17.22
Malta	17.9	171.0	649.3	4,338.5	36.27	25.37
Greece	9	8.9	225.4	205.8	25.04	23.12
New Zealand	5.8	14.5	194.4	462.9	33.52	31.92
Taiwan	5.7	4.0	81.7	69.5	14.33	17.38
France	2.5	2.0	77.4	49.4	30.96	24.70
South Africa	1.8	0	42.7	0	23.72	0
Liberia	1.7	0.7	52.5	11.1	30.88	15.86
Australia	0.8	2.4	18.8	60.6	23.50	25.25
Palau	0	0.7	0	7.2	0	10.29
Total	5,108.3	7,395.51	98,196.3	130,342.0	19.22	17.62

Total may not add due to rounding

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 4. Japan's imports of fresh Southern bluefin tuna, gilled, gutted, and tail-off, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Australia	1,037.1	1,692.7	19,663.7	30,884.3	18.96	18.25
New Zealand	143.3	105.9	2,964.3	2,212.9	20.69	20.90
South Africa	5.9	2.5	106.7	72.9	18.08	29.16
Total	1,186.3	1,801.1	22,734.7	33,170.1	19.16	18.42

Total may not add due to rounding

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 5. Japan's imports of frozen bluefin tuna, gilled, gutted, and tail-off, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Croatia	2,809.7	3,056.2	50,978.8	50,482.4	18.14	16.52
Tunisia	637.1	414.0	13,544.4	7,495.1	21.26	18.10
Italy	599.8	398.8	14,677.3	8,679.1	24.47	21.76
Mexico	512.7	85.6	8,180.2	1,177.9	15.96	13.76
Spain	449.1	278.3	10,508.3	5,537.6	23.40	19.90
Australia	293.9	0	5,357.5	0	18.23	
Malta	229.6	298.6	4,923.2	6,425.4	21.44	21.52
Turkey	215.4	346.9	4,940.6	6,694.1	22.94	19.30
Liberia	201.1	126.2	2,986.2	1,543.1	14.85	12.23
Morocco	127.1	46.7	2,676.7	808.7	21.06	17.32
China	83.5	43.5	2,008.9	1,191.7	24.06	27.40
Greece	41.8	147.9	1,062.2	3,098.5	25.41	20.95
France	41.7	36.6	683.5	450.7	16.39	12.31
Cyprus	24.3	39.5	595.5	923.6	24.51	23.38
Taiwan	9.5	6.2	116.7	104.8	12.28	16.90
Guinea	5.9	0	44.0	0	7.46	
Vanuatu	0.4	0	4.5	0	11.25	
Korea, Rep. of	0	29.9	0	539.0		18.03
Total	6,282.6	5,354.9	123,288.5	95,151.7	19.62	17.77

Total may not add due to rounding

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 6. Japan's imports of frozen southern bluefin tuna, gilled, gutted, and tail-off, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Australia	7,402.7	6,869.7	130,878.9	107,847.7	17.68	15.70
Taiwan	564.9	874.7	5,534.7	6,489.3	9.80	7.42
Korea Rep. of	325.6	101.3	5,659.9	1,495.1	17.38	14.76
Philippines	64.2	7.3	1,017.0	86.4	15.84	11.84
Total	8,357.4	7,853.0	143,090.5	115,918.5	17.12	14.76

Total may not add due to rounding

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 7. Japan's imports of fresh bluefin tuna, fillet, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Mexico	51	115.2	1374	2,212.3	26.94	19.20
Tunisia	2.4	2	47.3	36.8	19.71	18.40
Spain	1.7	34.8	109.2	1,422.8	64.24	40.89
Malta	0.3	1.3	11.4	31.1	38.00	23.92
U.S.A.	0.1	0	3.2	0	32.00	
Turkey	0	2	0	66.7		33.35
Norway	0	1.4	0	21.9		15.64
Italy	0	1.1	0	19.9		18.09
Croatia	0	0.2	0	7.6		38.00
Total	55.5	158	1,545.1	3,819.1	27.84	24.17

Total may not add due to rounding

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 8. Japan's imports of fresh southern bluefin tuna, fillet, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Australia	11.4	19.3	314.7	519.9	27.61	26.94
Total	11.4	19.3	314.7	519.9	27.61	26.94

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 9. Japan's imports of frozen bluefin tuna, fillet, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Turkey	2,993.8	2,597.9	71,840.0	49,808.1	24.00	19.17
Italy	2,147.6	1,980.5	52,960.2	46,612.1	24.66	23.54
Malta	1,941.6	3,953.4	48,210.5	89,567.1	24.83	22.66
Spain	1,547.4	1,520.1	35,343.8	32,362.7	22.84	21.29
Morocco	1,297.1	1,226.6	28,010.9	21,449.7	21.60	17.49
Tunisia	1,132.3	1,170.0	27,381.3	23,999.0	24.18	20.51
Croatia	993.0	1,302.0	23,123.3	28,124.0	23.29	21.60
Cyprus	683.5	991.5	16,526.1	21,656.3	24.18	21.84
Greece	381.7	629.7	9,656.9	13,830.4	25.30	21.96
France	316.1	19.5	8,654.5	282.8	27.38	14.50
Guinea	5.9	0	64.2	0	10.88	
Taiwan	5.5	0	142.5	0	25.91	
Mexico	5.2	0	67.3	0	12.94	
Panama	0	146.2	0	2,157.2		14.76
Korea, Rep. of	0	4.8	0	97.9		20.40
Total	13,445.5	15,542.2	321,981.5	329,947.3	23.95	21.23

Total may not add due to rounding

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 10. Japan's imports of frozen southern bluefin tuna, fillet, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Australia	0.6	1.9	9	44.9	15	23.63
Total	0.6	1.9	9	44.9	15	23.63

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 11. Japan's imports of fresh bluefin tuna, meat, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Mexico	12.7	61.7	668.6	1984.5	52.65	32.16
Spain	0	6.1	0	199.4		32.69
Liberia	0	2.8	0	43.1		15.39
Italy	0.1	0.8	4.3	23.9	43.00	29.88
France	0	0.2	0	3.2		16.00
Turkey	0	0.2	0	6.9		34.50
Korea, Rep. of	0.4	0	4.1	0	10.25	
Total	13.2	71.8	677	2261	51.29	31.49

Total may not add due to rounding

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 12. Japan's imports of fresh southern bluefin tuna, meat, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Australia	0.4	19.1	11.2	498.4	28.00	26.09
Total	0.4	19.1	11.2	498.4	28.00	26.09

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 13. Japan's imports of frozen bluefin tuna, meat, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Malta	50.0	125.5	1,166.3	2,744.6	23.33	21.87
Cyprus	47.1	39.5	1,157.5	938.5	24.58	23.76
Turkey	45.1	41.3	1,021.8	730.4	22.66	17.69
Spain	41.3	16.4	538.6	304.5	13.04	18.57
Croatia	40.8	47.1	975.3	1,012.7	23.90	21.50
Morocco	29.7	29.8	643.8	521.5	21.68	17.50
Italy	23.2	44.2	504.0	1,020.6	21.72	23.09
Greece	3.8	6.7	96.2	145.6	25.32	21.73
Tunisia	3.2	10.2	65.2	199.8	20.38	19.59
Australia	0	4.4	0	71.1		16.16
Total	284.2	365.1	6,168.7	7,689.3	21.71	21.06

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Table 14. Japan's imports of frozen southern bluefin tuna, meat, by country of origin, 2006-2007.

Country of Origin	Volume (metric tons) (Product weight)		Total Value (U.S.\$1000)		Unit Value (\$/kg)	
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
Australia	0	7.1	0	107.4		15.13
Total	0	7.1	0	107.4		15.13

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 2007-2008

Exports

Japanese exports of bluefin tuna products from 2002 through 2007 are summarized in Table 15. In 2007, Japan exported about 29 mt (product weight), amounting to \$0.96 million worth of fresh and frozen bluefin tuna products, an increase of 2.2 times in volume and 2.5 times in value from the 2006 level. Much of the increase was due to increase exports of fresh bluefin tuna.

Table 15. Japan's exports of fresh and frozen bluefin tuna, 2002-2007.

	Volume (Kg)				Value (1,000 yen)		
	Product weight*			Round weight**	Fresh	Frozen	Total
	Fresh	Frozen	Total	Total			
2002	667	30,124	30,791	35,410	3,201	60,752	63,953
2003	223	46,296	46,519	53,497	1,456	109,921	111,377
2004	252	7,393	7,645	8,792	1,920	31,282	33,202
2005	11,480	50,543	62,023	71,326	41,415	65,900	107,315
2006	8,699	4,654	13,353	15,356	32,886	12,141	45,027
2007	22,245	7,193	29,438	33,854	91,803	21,389	113,192

*..Gilled, gutted, and tail-off

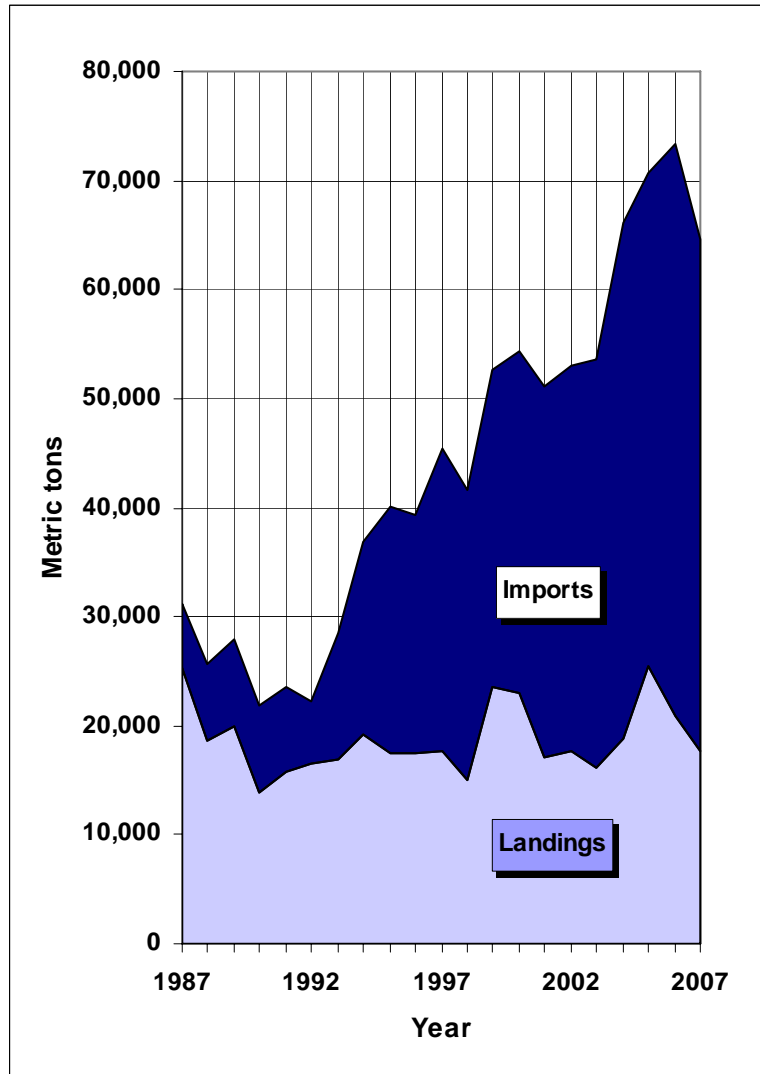
**..Converted from product weight to round weight (live) by using conversion factors of 1.15

Source: Japan Fish Traders Association 1988-2008

SUPPLY

The annual supply of bluefin tuna for the Japanese market and for export is comprised of that year's domestic catches and imports. The annual supply reached a record high in 2006 due mainly to sharply increased imports (Figure 3 and Table 16).

Between 1987 and 2007, annual supply of bluefin tuna ranged between 22,000 mt and 73,000 mt (round weight equivalent), averaging 44,000 mt. During this period imports averaged 25,000 mt (about 57 percent of the total supply) and landings 19,000 mt (43 percent).



Sources: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries 2008
 Japan Fish Traders Association 1988-2008

Figure 3. Japan's annual supply of bluefin tuna, 1987-2007.

Table 16. Japan's annual supply of bluefin tuna, 1987-2007.

Year	Landings ..(round weight, metric tons)..	Imports	Supply	Share of Supply	
				Landings	Imports
			(percent)....	
1987	25,335	5,866	31,201	81%	19%
1988	18,614	7,107	25,721	72%	28%
1989	19,938	7,945	27,883	72%	28%
1990	13,798	8,140	21,938	63%	37%
1991	15,791	7,734	23,525	67%	33%
1992	16,553	5,753	22,306	74%	26%
1993	16,858	11,702	28,560	59%	41%
1994	19,257	17,536	36,793	52%	48%
1995	17,484	22,542	40,026	44%	56%
1996	17,514	21,794	39,308	45%	55%
1997	17,761	27,600	45,361	39%	61%
1998	15,105	26,436	41,541	36%	64%
1999	23,563	29,058	52,621	45%	55%
2000	23,023	31,254	54,277	42%	58%
2001	17,022	34,086	51,108	33%	67%
2002	17,694	35,229	52,923	33%	67%
2003	16,118	37,441	53,559	30%	70%
2004	18,742	47,393	66,135	28%	72%
2005	25,431	45,268	70,699	36%	64%
2006	20,900	52,483	73,383	28%	72%
2007	17,700	46,947	64,647	27%	73%
Average (1987-2007)	18,771	25,205	43,977	43%	57%

Sources: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries 2008
Japan Fish Traders Association 1988-2008

CONSUMPTION

Bluefin tuna is mainly used for sushi and "sashimi" (which typically consists of thin slices of raw seafood) served with soy sauce and condiments. Sashimi is eaten both at home and in restaurants.

The annual Japanese apparent consumption of bluefin tuna (demand minus exports) was 64,613 mt (round weight equivalent) in 2007, a decrease of 12 percent compared with 2006 (Table 17). Between 2002 and 2007, annual apparent consumption of bluefin tuna averaged about 64,000 mt per year.

Table 17. Japan's annual consumption of bluefin tuna, 2002-2007.

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Supply	52,923	53,559	66,135	70,699	73,383	64,647
Export	35	53	9	71	15	34

Consumption 52,888 53,506 66,126 70,628 73,368 64,613

WHOLESALE MARKETS

Bluefin tuna is usually sold through auctions at consumer wholesale markets located in consumption areas, and at production wholesale markets located at Japanese ports of landing. Bluefin tuna is also sold directly to representatives of supermarket chains. The largest consumer wholesale fish market is the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market. Wholesale prices at the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market generally serve as price indices for fishery products throughout the world.

Wholesale prices for bluefin tuna vary widely, depending on quality, origin (Table 18), supply (Table 19) and demand, as well as other factors.

Table 18. Wholesale prices of imported fresh bluefin tuna at Tokyo Central Wholesale Market, August 29- September 19, 2008.

Date of sale (month/date)	Sales volume	Origin	Price range (yen/kg)		
			High	Average	Low
08/29	1 fish	Boston			4,000
08/29	14 fish	Canada	5,000-3,760		3,000
09/01	4 fish	Boston	4,400-4,200		4,000
09/02	2 fish	Boston			4,300
09/03	1 fish	Boston			4,000
09/03	1 fish	Canada			4,500
09/04	2 fish	Canada	6,000-4,380		3,700
09/05	33 fish	Boston	5,000-4,750		4,500
09/05	7 fish	Canada	4,200-4,029		3,500
09/06	2 fish	Boston			4,000
09/06	10 fish	Canada	4,800-3,867		2,700
09/08	4 fish	Boston	6,600-5,233		4,300
09/08	7 fish	Canada	5,300-4,743		4,300
09/08	1 fish	Italy			4,500
09/08	48 fish	Mexico	2,000-1,707		1,500
09/09	2 fish	Boston			4,500
09/09	3 fish	Canada			4,800
09/11	2 fish	Boston	4,500	4,150	3,800
09/11	27 fish	Canada	5,000-3,761		3,000
09/13	2 fish	Boston	5,300-5,150		500
09/16	33 fish	Canada	4,800-3,893		3,300
09/17	6 fish	Canada	4,100-3,800		3,500
09/17	21 fish	Mexico	1,800-1,767		1,700
09/18	2 fish	Boston			4,100
09/18	13 fish	Canada	5,300-4,580		3,800
09/18	44 fish	Mexico	2,300-1,750		1,500
09/19	8 fish	Canada	4,800-4,434		3,800
09/19	28 fish	Mexico	1,800-1,469		1,300

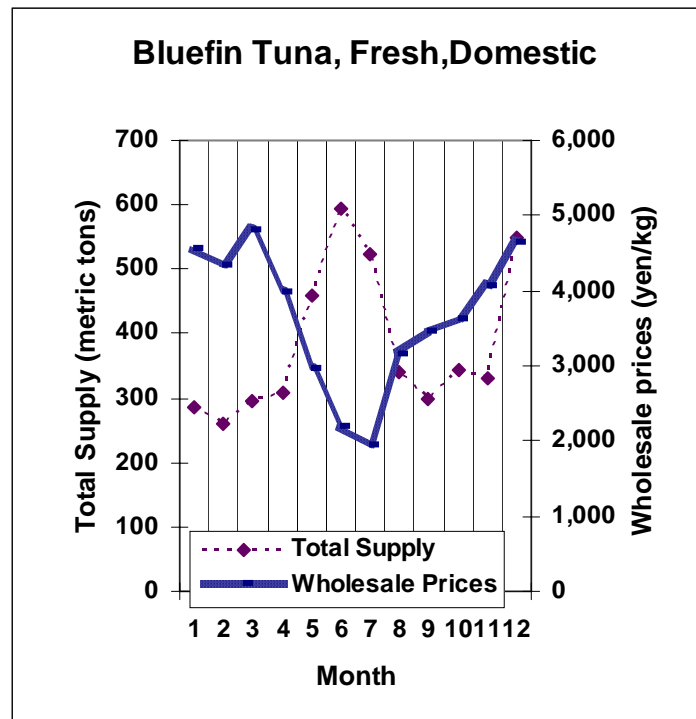
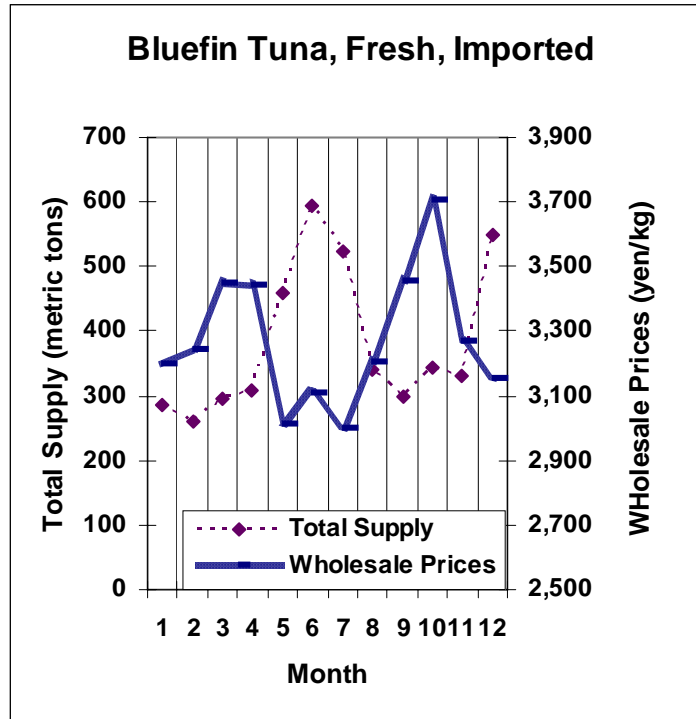
Source: Minato shinbun sha 2008

Table 6 and Figures 4 show monthly average wholesale prices and supply of bluefin tuna at the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market between January and December 2007. Wholesale prices for both domestic and imported bluefin tuna showed fluctuations which were influenced mainly by volume of supply, usually, the lower the supply, the higher the price, and vice versa.

Table 19. Monthly average wholesale prices and supply of fresh bluefin tuna at Tokyo Central Wholesale Market, January-December 2007.

Month	Supply (metric tons)			Wholesale Prices (yen/kg)	
	Domestic	Imported	Total	Domestic	Imported
January	135	151	286	4,558	3,197
February	128	132	260	4,349	3,247
March	133	164	297	4,823	3,449
April	181	126	307	4,002	3,442
May	358	100	458	2,974	3,014
June	502	93	595	2,195	3,113
July	500	24	524	1,966	2,999
August	321	20	341	3,176	3,204
September	254	46	300	3,460	3,457
October	224	119	343	3,622	3,709
November	245	85	330	4,082	3,271
December	340	208	548	4,652	3,156

Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government 2008.



Source Tokyo Metropolitan Government 2008.

Figure 4. Monthly average wholesale prices and supply of fresh bluefin tuna at Tokyo Central Wholesale Market, January-December 2007.

Direct Sales to the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market

United States exporters can export fresh bigeye tuna on consignment basis to auction houses at the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market for sale through auctions. Auction houses do not receive frozen bluefin tuna directly from overseas. Auction houses at Tokyo Central Wholesale Market are authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery to handle fish through auctions at the market. Auction houses at the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market are listed at:
http://www.tsukiji-market.or.jp/youkoso/oroshi7/orosi7_e.htm

Direct Sales to Supermarket Chains

Huge national chains of supermarkets have become significant factors in the Japanese economy. Many of these supermarkets maintain independent supply systems dealing directly with producers, including those located overseas. Since these retailers are powerful enough to use their own independent suppliers, they represent additional potential buyers other than wholesale markets.

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Appendix. Monthly and annual average exchange rate applied to Japanese imports, 1981-2007 (yen/U.S. \$1.00).

Month	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
January	203.99	221.36	232.89	233.83	252.04	202.07	159.01
February	203.44	231.15	237.03	233.98	256.66	193.53	152.70
March	207.80	237.03	235.99	228.79	260.53	180.21	153.47
April	211.99	246.01	238.61	225.10	254.49	178.62	146.97
May	217.18	237.25	235.43	227.48	251.36	167.08	139.91
June	223.89	243.66	238.48	231.56	250.26	169.29	142.58
July	226.55	256.07	239.93	238.69	246.22	163.17	147.81
August	236.35	257.18	242.70	243.69	237.92	155.04	150.83
September	230.26	258.60	244.80	243.02	239.20	154.66	143.02
October	229.15	268.14	236.15	246.68	221.43	154.23	144.59
November	230.56	272.81	234.22	244.08	209.32	160.34	138.52
December	218.15	250.33	234.81	246.07	202.60	162.73	132.65
Annual Average	219.94	248.30	237.59	236.91	240.17	170.08	146.01

Month	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
January	126.01	125.64	144.36	135.27	126.21	124.66	111.79
February	128.57	128.49	144.93	130.97	125.47	123.98	109.23
March	128.72	128.00	148.61	134.02	130.46	117.95	105.04
April	125.64	132.12	156.99	137.68	133.37	115.05	104.47
May	124.76	133.78	157.09	137.71	132.77	110.81	103.07
June	125.23	143.06	159.28	139.05	128.15	107.97	104.29
July	131.40	141.60	151.95	138.85	125.61	108.16	99.55
August	133.12	140.29	148.90	137.00	126.99	105.38	99.57
September	134.21	145.10	142.96	136.24	124.36	104.37	99.25
October	132.58	142.58	133.82	131.72	121.03	105.79	98.97
November	125.36	142.67	128.31	130.47	122.71	107.80	97.41
December	122.21	143.83	130.86	129.14	124.11	108.35	99.22
Annual Average	128.15	137.26	145.67	134.84	126.77	111.69	102.66

Appendix (continued). Monthly and annual average exchange rate applied to Japanese imports, 1981-2007 (yen/U.S. \$1.00).

Month	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
January	100.25	104.49	115.60	130.98	114.09	103.76	115.37
February	99.19	106.38	121.26	125.90	115.02	107.05	116.56
March	94.49	105.32	122.38	127.35	119.88	108.29	118.10
April	86.99	107.07	124.29	130.84	119.55	106.02	123.97
May	83.75	106.02	123.99	132.33	120.21	107.38	122.56
June	84.96	108.19	114.98	138.65	121.52	108.36	120.93
July	85.46	109.55	114.08	140.47	121.56	106.34	124.40
August	90.73	107.84	117.18	143.44	115.95	108.70	123.50
September	98.48	108.78	119.44	138.58	110.21	106.71	119.97
October	100.88	110.99	121.18	129.32	106.34	107.88	119.40
November	101.56	112.86	122.27	118.14	105.21	108.14	121.73
December	101.51	112.70	127.90	120.26	103.73	110.67	124.35
Annual Average	94.02	108.35	120.38	131.36	114.44	107.44	120.90

Month	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
January	131.11	119.60	106.93	103.66	116.09	119.21
February	133.32	119.30	106.03	103.83	116.93	120.96
March	132.04	118.06	108.98	104.84	117.5	118.44
April	132.09	119.62	106.25	107.15	117.55	118.20
May	128.74	118.54	110.39	106.02	113.5	119.59
June	124.84	117.74	111.1	107.9	112.72	121.64
July	120.17	118.31	108.75	110.6	115.33	122.98
August	118.39	119.35	110.45	111.54	115.89	119.02
September	118.93	117.32	109.72	110.21	116.78	115.17
October	123.23	111.49	110.29	113.34	117.94	115.96
November	122.40	109.18	106.66	116.67	118.16	113.69
December	122.83	108.71	103.64	119.52	116.53	110.39
Annual Average	125.67	116.44	108.27	109.61	116.24	117.94

Sources: Japan Fish Traders Association 1982-2008