

FISHERY COUNTRY PROFILE	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	FID/CP/IRQ
PROFIL DE LA PÊCHE PAR PAYS	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	 February 2004
RESUMEN INFORMATIVO SOBRE LA PESCA POR PAISES	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación	

THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

GENERAL ECONOMIC DATA

Area:	435 052 km ²
Shelf area:	2 000 km ² approximately
Exclusive economic zone:	None
Length of coastline:	50 km approximately
Population (2001):	approx. 23 860 000
GDP at purchaser's value (2001-02):	\$US 58 000 million
PCE per head (2001-02):	\$US 2 350
Agricultural GDP (2001-02):	Est. \$US 3 480 million

FISHERIES DATA

Commodity balance (2001):

	Production	Imports	Exports	Total supply	Per <i>caput</i> supply
	tonnes liveweight				kg/yr
Fish for direct human consumption	22 800(1)	228	0	23 028	1.0

Fish for animal feed and other purposes	0	0	0	0	
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Note: (1) official data provided by the Government (Most probably a significant over-estimate since it assumes marine fisheries production has remained steady at around 12 000t)

Estimated employment (2000):	
Fish production sector:	20 000 approximately
Aquaculture sector:	5 000 approximately
Processing sector:	none
Marketing:	4 500 approximately
Gross Value of Fisheries Output (2001):	Est. \$US 11.9 million
Trade (2001):	
Value of imports:	\$US 337 000
Value of exports:	-

Commodity balance for 2003 (updated 26/07/2005):

2003	Production	Imports	Exports	Stocks variation	Total Supply	Per Caput Supply
	tonnes liveweight					kg/year
Fish for direct human consumption	23 100(1)	2 290	17	0	25 373	1.0
Fish for animal feed and other purposes	-	-	-	-		

Note: (1) official data provided by the Government

Trade (2003):	
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Imports:	\$US 2 660 000 1 897 tonne
Exports:	US\$ 97 000 17 tonne

STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INDUSTRY

Marine fisheries

Iraq has a limited coastal area that borders the Gulf. Access to this area and particularly to the wider Gulf waters has been severely restricted since the Gulf War of 1991. In addition, there have been major environmental changes to Iraq's coastal habitat as a result of (a) a long term trend of damming of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, with a consequent reduction in the downstream flows and (b) the draining of the extensive marshes in southern Iraq by diversion of major rivers around the marsh areas. These marshes, which have been

reduced in extent by over 90% to an area of around 1 700 km², supported significant fisheries in the past (up to 60% of landings) as well as providing a nursery area for some commercial species that are captured in the Gulf.

The impact of these major changes has been a dramatic decline in marine fish landings (probably more than 50%) although these changes are yet to be reflected in national statistics. The 2003 war has further reduced fishing activity in the Gulf and the Shatt al-Arab waterway.

There is a marine fishing society in Basrah Governorate, which is active in Iraqi territorial waters and the Persian Gulf, and about 70% of the marine fishermen work in this society. There are also some private fishermen working in this sector.

Annual marine fish production has declined from around 12 000 - 13 000 t per annum in the 1980s to an estimated 5 000t in 2002 with the principal species being shad (*Tenuolosa* spp), pomphret (*Pampus* spp) and mullet (*Liza* spp). The industry is now entirely artisanal in nature and fishing techniques used by fishers include trawl, gill- surrounding- cast- and trap nets.

Inland fisheries

Like the fisheries of the marshes in southern Iraq, production from inland fisheries appears to have declined over the past decade. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers and their branches and lakes are the main sources of inland fresh water in Iraq, although flows in these major river systems have been reducing in recent years as a result of extensive damming in their upper reaches.

The mean production from these water bodies for 1981-1997 was 18 800 t/year, compared to an estimated 8 000t in 2001. Previous estimates of annual sustainable production from inland waters have been put at 30 000 t although this is unlikely to be achievable given the environmental changes that have taken place.

The inland fisheries are based in great part on *Cyprinus* spp., while the most important Iraqi indigenous fishes belong to the genus *Barbus*. The fishing techniques used by fishers

are gill-surrounding-purse- and trap nets with the majority of vessels utilized being small and unpowered.

Fishing activities are generally community-based with fishing facilities being owned by fishing community and most activities performed by them. Inland waters are open access with no catch controls.

Aquaculture

Total production from aquaculture in 2001 has been estimated at 2 000t, produced from 1 900 farms with a combined area of 7 500 ha. This compares with a mean annual production for 1986-1997 of 4 000 t. In 1998, production was reported to have increased to about 7 500 t.

The main species cultured is common carp and to a lesser extent grass and silver carp. *Barbus* sp. is also cultured in small quantities. There is hatchery production of common carp.

Economic sanctions imposed on Iraq since 1991 have restricted the availability of imported feed, medications, machinery and other supplies and equipment for aquaculture, thereby restricting the potential for expansion of the sector. The recent lifting of those sanctions may improve the availability of these items to the benefit of the aquaculture industry. However, a comprehensive rehabilitation program and development strategy for the aquaculture sector is required.

Utilization of the catch

All production is consumed locally, mostly in a fresh state. Thus there is no significant fish processing industry.

Economic role of the fishing industry

The fisheries sector in Iraq is of insignificant value to the national economy due to absence of export and import activities at present. Economic sanctions, in place since 1991, have prevented exports of fish and fisheries products and have also restricted imports and little investment has occurred in the industry. The lifting of these sanctions in 2003 may provide future opportunities for investment in the future development of the industry in Iraq.

The fishery industry (catches, production, fish farms and marketing) is exclusively a private sector activity, and it is difficult to estimate the total investment.

RESEARCH

Iraq is a member of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) which addresses regional fisheries research and management issues. However, within Iraq, specific research resources are very limited. There are few technicians, inadequate laboratories and scientific equipment, few vehicles, poor libraries and low and unstable funding.

Despite these difficulties, fisheries research and related activities are carried out at a number of sites by various institutions.

The Fish Research Center (Zeafaraniyah, Baghdad) has five sections: Culture, Nutrition, Diseases, Water Environment and Artificial Propagation. The center provides some facilities for post-graduate studies, and has two fish farms and a hatchery for research purposes.

The Marine Science Center, Basrah, focuses on marine sciences. Staff in one of its sections

(Marine Vertebrates) are interested in studying marine fisheries, biological and ecological studies, aquaculture and food nutrition. The center also provides supervision and facilities to post graduate students.

IPA (the Agriculture Research Center) includes a Fishery Research Department, consisting of an experimental fish farm and hatchery to artificially propagate local fishes. The center has a program to develop inland fisheries and aquaculture in Iraq.

The Central Hatchery at Swairah produces of fingerlings of various species of carp.

AID

No international aid is being received for the fisheries sector.