

CUBA

The Cuban fishing industry has received high priority since 1959. A Development Program was conceived with the objective of creating additional export capability as well as providing an additional source of protein to the Cuban population. The Cuban government owns the local fishing fleet and controls the country's fish product retail sales network. Cuban vessels receive allocations to fish surplus stocks in Canadian waters and NAFO managed stocks elsewhere in the Northwest Atlantic. The total catch in 1989 amounted to 191,889 tons, of which 30,400 tons was hake, 11,700 tons was lobster and 4,900 tons of shrimp. Cuba devotes most of its seafood production to export markets, primarily Canada, Western Europe and Japan. 1989 exports totalled 33,000 tons of fresh/processed lobster/shrimp, while fish preparations exports were 146,000 tons.

Cuba imports fish from Canada under a bilateral arrangement totalling approximately \$2.2 million. The agreement is renegotiated on an annual basis. Canadian salted fish is primarily used in Cuba's mountainous and remoter areas where electricity and/or refrigeration is unavailable. Local consumption of fish products is rather low, as the Cuban population has never developed a taste for fish. The current onset of present economic difficulties may push the Cuban population to increase consumption of fish products (provided it is made available) to supplement the current diet, and to provide an alternative source of protein, as a substitute for reduced allocations of beef/poultry. It is rumoured that fish will also be subject to rationing; a departure from previous practice where fish has been traditionally sold outside the rationing system. Cubans have a strong preference for wreckfish, red snapper and tuna, fresh or processed. Caribex is the state trading organization responsible for imports/exports of fish, fish preparations and seafood in Cuba, however, initial contact should be made with the Caribex office in Toronto.

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