

WHITEFISH MARKET ANALYSIS 2026: UK



MARKET ANALYSIS: UK WHITEFISH

WHITEFISH HAS BEEN CRUCIAL TO THE GROWTH OF THE MSC PROGRAMME since its inception more than 25 years ago. In the 2025/26 financial year, UK consumers purchased over 100,000 metric tonnes of MSC labelled whitefish, accounting for approximately 47% of total MSC labelled product sales. Cod, haddock, and pollock account for three-quarters of all chilled and frozen MSC sales volumes in the UK, and have accounted for the majority of labelled product sales across these categories continuously since 2012.

The UK's retail sector has held firm in its commitment to offering certified sustainable whitefish for many years now, with eight of the ten leading UK supermarkets offering MSC certified own-brand whitefish products. Household brands have also been crucial in promoting MSC certified whitefish in the UK, with Birds Eye selling a wide range of MSC-labelled frozen whitefish products in formats such as their famous fish fingers. The majority (57% by volume) of MSC labelled whitefish sold in the UK is frozen, in both plain formats such as fillets and prepared formats such as fishcakes. MSC labelled whitefish is also available in UK foodservice outlets, such as in the McDonald's filet-o-fish and in a number of fish and chip shops around the country. Many of the MSC certified fisheries supplying the UK market have been longstanding sustainability champions – New Zealand hoki was the world's first whitefish fishery to achieve MSC certification in 2001, whilst Alaska pollock, the world's largest whitefish fishery, became certified in 2005. These two certifications opened up opportunities in the UK for businesses to start selling whitefish with

the blue MSC ecolabel. Since then, many other fisheries all over the world have followed suit to meet demand for certified sustainable whitefish.

While certified cod, haddock, and walleye pollock remain particularly important to the UK market, other whitefish species, such as hoki and hake, have become increasingly available as MSC certified options. The number of MSC labelled hake products sold in the UK grew from 21 to 45 between 2016 and 2026. This includes Cape hake from South Africa and Namibia, European hake from across the UK and Europe, and North Pacific hake from the US and Canada. Retailers have been crucial in increasing the availability of MSC labelled hake, with Waitrose leading the way by offering seven own-brand MSC labelled hake products across the past year. Brands have also been important in promoting locally-sourced MSC certified hake, with Hook, Line & Sinker selling chilled hake from the Cornish hake gill net fishery.

Going forward, whitefish will continue to be an essential component of certified sustainable fish offerings across the UK. With economic conditions remaining challenging, the often affordable cost of MSC certified whitefish, particularly in a frozen format, and the breadth of options, in terms of species and sources, provides an invaluable demonstration that sustainability does not have to cost the earth or the ocean. The network of retailers, brands, suppliers, and fisheries that have enabled so much MSC certified whitefish to reach consumers is essential to driving the MSC's broader theory of change, in the UK and globally.

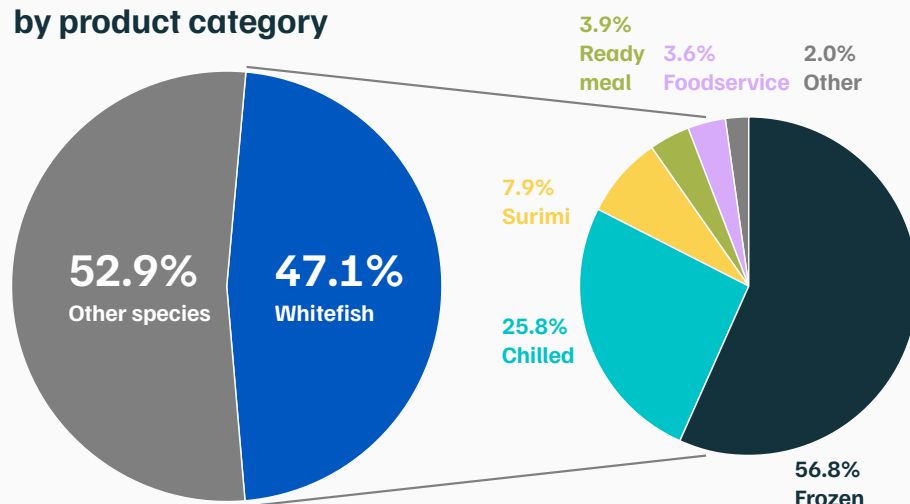


MARKET DATA: UK

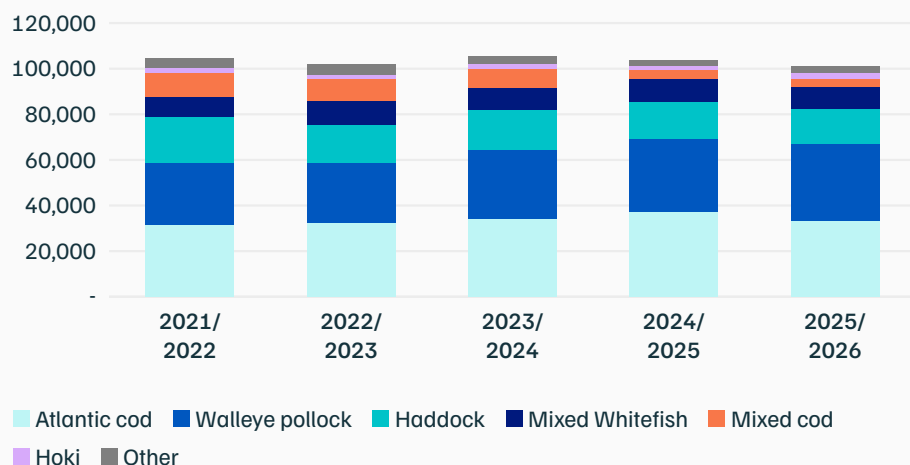
Top three UK retailers by volume sold



Volume of MSC labelled whitefish sold in the UK by product category



MSC labelled whitefish sold in the UK by volume (metric tonnes) and species



Find out more

<https://www.msc.org/species/whitefish-yearbook>

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