

# SMALL PELAGICS MARKET ANALYSIS 2026: FINLAND



# LEADING BRANDS AND RETAILERS RISE TO SUPPORT SMALL PELAGICS

MSC CERTIFIED SMALL PELAGIC FISH play an important role on the Finnish market but recently the availability of certified sustainable products has been impacted by fisheries management challenges. Between 2017 and 2020, small pelagics consistently accounted for more than a third of the volume of MSC labelled products in Finland. Due to fishery suspensions, this figure decreased to below 20% since 2022 but now we are starting to see a change for the better.<sup>1</sup> Support from key brands and retailers as well as last year's red listing for NEA pelagics from WWF in their fish guide have now created positive momentum in the availability of MSC certified products on the Finnish market.

## Sustainability & MSC

The market share of MSC has suffered in recent years, mainly due to a few key fisheries failing to meet MSC standard's requirements:

- Atlantic mackerel fisheries were suspended in 2019 due to poor management and overfishing. Alternative mackerel species, such as the Pacific jack mackerel, haven't so far reached the Finnish market to account for the lack of sustainable supply.
- AS (NSS) herring, the largest of the Atlantic herring stocks, does not meet MSC standard's criteria, but alternatives from the North Sea and Iceland are available and already successfully utilized on the Finnish market.
- Baltic herring fishing of the central Baltic herring stock was suspended due to poor recruitment in 2021. The stock in Bay of Bothnia as well as the one in Gulf of Riga have remained more stable and the fisheries certified, which has assured that there is certified Baltic herring

available for human consumption in Finland.

- Baltic sprat fisheries lost their MSC certification in 2023. International efforts are underway to reintroduce the species into the MSC program, with strong support from the processing industry.

## Finnish supply chain committed to sustainability

The Finnish market has been the leader in pelagic sustainability, thanks to dedicated supply chain that has consistently worked hard to keep MSC certified herring on the plates of the Finnish consumers. Suomen Sillikonttori, the only herring processor processing Atlantic herring in Finland, offers a 100% MSC certified selection. In retail remit, Kesko, Lidl and IKEA have done the same and stuck to their 100% commitments.

Also, the continued commitment from the Finnish Baltic herring fishery, managed by the Finnish professional fishermen's association SAKL, ensures there is continued domestic supply of Baltic herring available on the Finnish market. The Finnish fishery has worked hard for sustainability and was recertified in July 2024 - a true testament to their commitment to sustainable fisheries management in the local Finnish waters.

Across species, price points, and product formats, there is strong consumer demand for certified sustainable fish and seafood in Finland. With government guidance encouraging the public to eat two to three portions of fish per week, including one oily, small pelagic species provide a health benefit that packs a flavour punch. ●

<sup>1</sup> The market data used in this piece is provided to the MSC quarterly, semesterly, or annually, by businesses using the MSC ecolabel on products and menus.

**Find out more:**

[www.msc.org/fi/lajit/pienet-pelagiset-kalat](http://www.msc.org/fi/lajit/pienet-pelagiset-kalat)

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