



MSC UK Tuna Shopper Report 2023

February 2024

2nd edition

Introduction

Tuna is one of the world's most popular fish to eat. In the UK, its versatility is celebrated in everything from salads, sandwiches and sushi, to pasta and poke. Alongside cod, haddock, salmon and prawns, it is one of the 'big five' species that make up the majority of the seafood we eat. While most of what we buy is in a can, tuna is a staple in many aisles of the supermarket, found in fridges, freezers, in ready meals and food-to-go.

Most of what can be found in supermarkets is imported, with the two most widely consumed species – skipjack and yellowfin - inhabiting warmer, tropical and subtropical waters. However, after being absent for several decades, bluefin tuna are now regularly being seen in UK waters. Their populations have recovered from near collapse, following a successful 15-year

recovery plan launched by the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation for the Atlantic, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), in 2007.¹ In a major milestone for the species, the first two Atlantic bluefin fisheries achieved MSC certification in 2020, followed by a third, small-scale handline and fishing rod fishery in Spain two years later. In the UK, the success of the stock's resurgence has also had noticeable impact. In August 2023, the UK government announced the opening of a trial commercial fishery for Atlantic bluefin, of similar size and structure to that of the MSC certified fishery in Spain. As a result, consumers in the UK have once again been able to enjoy locally caught tuna.²

Atlantic bluefin tuna is a great example of what can be achieved through the development and

implementation of sustainable management measures. Today, 61% of tuna stocks are at a healthy level of abundance, 22% are at an intermediate level, while 17% are overfished.³

Tuna fisheries are highly complex due to how they are caught and their highly migratory nature, and the health of stocks and environmental impact of fishing activity can vary by species, ocean and the type of fishing gear and methods used. In recent years, tuna fisheries have made substantial progress in improving their practices, and today, about 42% of all tuna caught in the world is MSC certified.⁴ The MSC has an ambition of engaging more than a third of the world's marine catch in our programme by 2030, and as one of the most widely caught fish on the planet, tuna represents a major component of that target.

¹Recent History of Bluefin Tuna, <https://www.msc.org/species/tuna/recent-history-of-bluefin-tuna>.

²Department for Environment and Rural Affairs, [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bluefin-tuna-commercial-trial-fishery/bluefin-tuna-commercial-trial-fishery-2023#:~:text=For%202023%20the%20UK%20has,ICCAT%20\)%20of%20fishing%20plan%20for%202023](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bluefin-tuna-commercial-trial-fishery/bluefin-tuna-commercial-trial-fishery-2023#:~:text=For%202023%20the%20UK%20has,ICCAT%20)%20of%20fishing%20plan%20for%202023).

³ISSF, 2023. Status of the World Fisheries for Tuna: November 2023. ISSF Technical Report 2023-12. International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, Washington, D.C., USA. Available at: <https://www.issf-foundation.org/research-advocacy-recommendations/our-scientific-program/scientific-reports/download-info/issf-2023-12-status-of-the-world-fisheries-for-tuna-november-2023/>

⁴Estimates are derived from catch data published on tuna fishery profiles in [Track a Fishery](#) compared to UN FAO data (2021) for total global tuna landings.

Note: not all fisheries currently in assessment have catch data listed.

As a market-driven programme, achieving the 2030 ambition will only be possible with the support of our partners and the consumers who buy their products. When it comes to purchasing tuna, shoppers in the UK appear ready to do their part to protect our oceans, with over two thirds agreeing that if they knew that an independent and trusted ecolabel on the product packaging would guarantee that the tuna has been caught sustainably, they would be more likely to choose that over a product without an ecolabel. Brands and retailers have an important role to play in ensuring they are providing

their customers with this option by offering products from sustainable sources.

The aim of this second edition of our MSC UK Tuna Shopper Report is to offer insights into any changes in consumer preferences when it comes to buying and eating tuna, including perceptions on sustainability, compared to the last report. It also highlights where progress has been made by tuna fisheries in achieving MSC certification, and how the UK retail market is increasingly recognising and rewarding those fisheries that

have committed to sustainability, by expanding their MSC labelled tuna product ranges. Specifically, it profiles the retailers and brands leading the market in sourcing and selling sustainable tuna and draws attention to where further progress can be made. While the shopper report provides a detailed analysis of tuna, as one of the nation's most popular fish, it is being published alongside the MSC UK and Ireland Market Report 2023, which offers a more holistic view of the sustainable seafood landscape in these markets.



Methodology

To deliver the second edition of the **MSC UK Tuna Shopper Report**, the MSC UK and Ireland team commissioned two sets of independent research:

- 1.** In November 2023, YouGov conducted a research survey on tuna consumption and attitudes towards tuna sustainability with British consumers. These findings, which build on a similar study conducted by YouGov in February 2021, shed light on why shoppers choose tuna, what influences their decisions in the supermarket, and what expectations they have when it comes to sustainable sourcing decisions and ecolabels, like MSC's. The results of this YouGov research are summarised throughout the report but if you would like a more detailed analysis, please get in touch (our contact information is at the end of the report).
- 2.** MSC also commissioned [Savanta](#) to conduct a review of all tuna products (excluding pet food, fish counter items, and products on sale at sushi kiosks) available in all major retailers across the UK. In November and December of 2023, shoppers visited four large retail outlets of each of the ten largest supermarkets (Asda, Aldi, Co-op, Iceland, Lidl, Marks & Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, and Waitrose) across Great Britain. Store visits covered four regions: Southern England/London, Northern England, the Midlands/Wales, and Scotland. In addition, shoppers visited two outlets of Amazon Fresh and Whole Foods, both of which have stores in London. The shoppers purchased every tuna product on sale in store during their visit. The environmental claims, including the presence of a blue MSC ecolabel, on each product pack were reviewed and the tuna itself was donated for consumption. Their findings are presented in the following MSC UK Tuna Shopper Report.
- 3.** New to this year's report was the addition of product counts for two online retailers: Ocado and Amazon Fresh. In November 2023, the MSC UK Commercial team reviewed every tuna product on sale on both of these platforms. The environmental claims, including the presence of a blue MSC ecolabel, on each product page was reviewed and recorded. These findings are also presented in the section Tuna in Online Retail.

Please note: This report, and the methodology used to capture product-level data, is designed to reflect the MSC certified, sustainably sourced tuna options for a shopper in the UK at a specific moment in time. Seasonal or promotion products available in supermarkets in the year may not be captured in these findings.



Executive Summary



This second edition of the MSC UK Tuna Shopper Report provides a picture of the evolving sustainable tuna landscape in the UK retail sector, showcasing which brands and supermarkets sell MSC labelled tuna. The report examines how certified tuna sales in the UK compare to other regions, and explores the global fisheries landscape that is meeting demand for sustainable tuna. It also explores the growth that the MSC tuna landscape has experienced since the first edition was published in 2021. The data used to analyse MSC labelled product sales over time, presented in this report, is provided to the MSC by businesses using the ecolabel on products and menus.

Key Tuna Consumer Insights

- 68% of consumers who buy tuna want to do their best to buy sustainably caught tuna
- However, only 42% of those consumers are satisfied with the range of sustainably caught tuna available in Great Britain
- 63% of consumers want to know that the fish they buy can be traced to a known and trusted source
- 52% of tuna consumers say they have seen the MSC ecolabel often or sometimes

Key Market Insights

- As of November 2023, MSC certified tuna products were sold under eleven different brands and in eight supermarkets: Aldi, Asda, Amazon Fresh, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose and Whole Foods
- Shoppers found that 25% of tuna products on offer in UK retail carried a blue MSC ecolabel, up from 18% two years prior
- In the 12 months preceding October 2023, 20% of jarred, canned, and preserved tuna sold in the UK

had the blue MSC ecolabel attached – up from just 4% in 2021

- Waitrose offered the greatest selection of sustainable tuna products with 79% (45 of 57) of their tuna carrying a blue MSC ecolabel
- Shoppers found MSC labelled ambient tuna products sold by six brands: Aldi, John West, Princes, Rio Mare, Sainsbury's and Waitrose
- Waitrose, Sainsbury's, and Amazon Fresh are the only supermarkets to use MSC certified tuna in all their own brand 'to go' meal options (e.g. sandwich, sushi, salads/deli fillers)
- Consumers in the UK purchased 15,360 tonnes of MSC certified tuna in 2022/23, the highest figure to date and three times more than in 2020/21
- Despite this growth, the UK still only accounted for 8% of all MSC certified tuna sold globally, as progress has been made in many other markets as well
- As of January 16, 2024, an estimated 42% (2,085,200 tonnes) of the global tuna catch is MSC certified, with a further 11% (539,179 tonnes) in assessment



CONSUMER INSIGHTS: THE BRITISH TUNA SHOPPER

71%
of consumers
eat tuna*



*sample size: 2,017



24%

of tuna consumers eat
canned tuna at least
once a week



(up from 22% in 2021)

16%

of tuna consumers eat
tuna sandwiches at least
once a week



(up from 11% in 2021)

68%

of consumers who buy tuna
want to do their best to buy
sustainably caught tuna;
however, only

42%

are satisfied with the range
of sustainably caught tuna
available in Great Britain



68%

of consumers who buy
tuna agree if they knew
an independent and trusted
ecolabel on product packaging
guaranteed the tuna was caught
sustainably, they would be more
likely to choose that over a product
without an ecolabel



63%

of consumers want to
know that the fish they
buy can be traced to a
known and trusted
source



52%

of tuna consumers say
they have seen the MSC
ecolabel often or
sometimes



1 in 3 (32%)

consumers find it difficult to make
the right choice when looking for
which tuna to buy because they are
confused about what to look for,
up from 1 in 4 (26%) in 2021

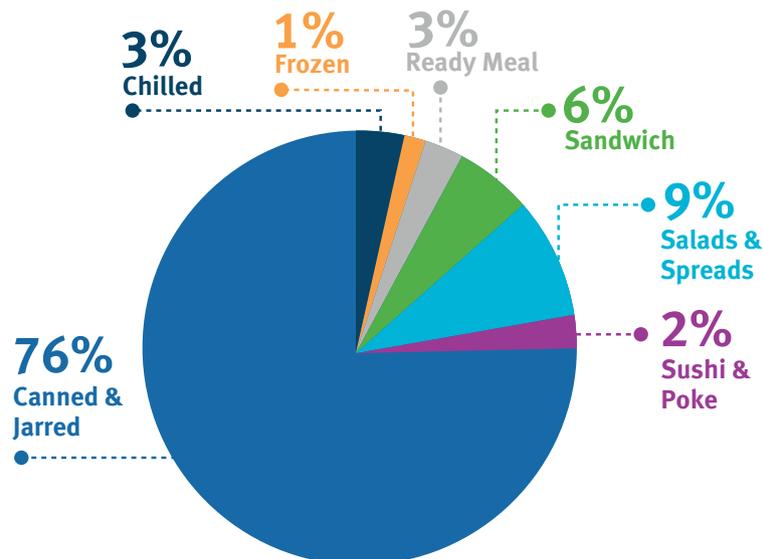


Tuna in UK Supermarkets

For seafood shoppers in the UK, tuna is second only to salmon in popularity when it comes to the amount we buy at the supermarket. Between June 2022 and June 2023, shoppers spent £408.5 million on 61,012 tonnes of tuna products, accounting for 10% of the value and 16% of the volume of all seafood purchases in the UK.⁵ Reflecting broader sector trends being driven by inflation, the volume of tuna products bought by consumers between June 2022 and 2023 dropped by four percent compared to the same period in the previous year, while consumer spend increased by nearly one percent.

In November and December of 2023, a group of shoppers visiting the ten major UK supermarkets, and Amazon Fresh and Whole Foods stores in London, were able to purchase 352 different tuna products. Of these, 59% were sold under a supermarket's own brand, a drop from the 63% sold under a supermarket's own brand when the same research was conducted in October 2021. This reflects some consolidation of own-brand tuna retail ranges and increased availability of product from third party brands, of which John West and Princes account for the vast majority. While most tuna products are sold in either a can or jar, the versatility of the species is reflected in the wide range of formats it can be found in through supermarkets.

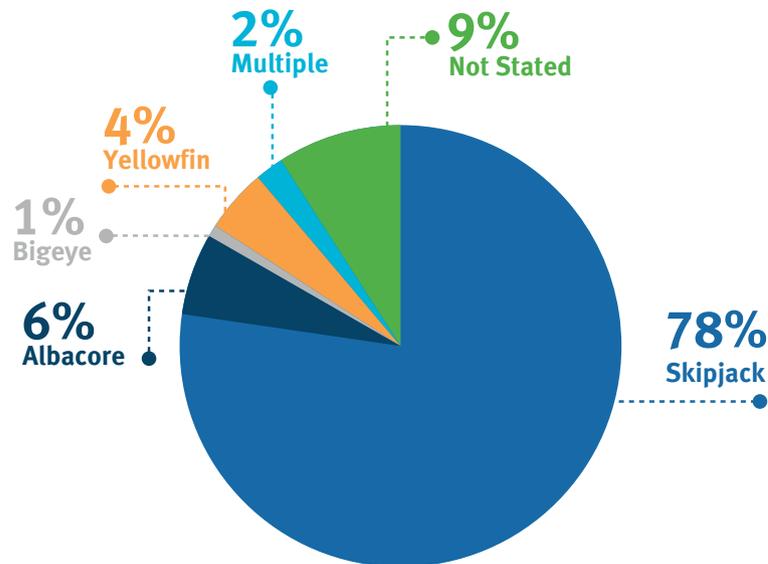
Proportion of Tuna Products in UK Supermarkets by Product Type & Format*



*Canned and jarred products include ambient products sold in pouches and pots. Salads and spreads do not include any ambient products. Ready meals include pasta and pizza.

While skipjack is the most widely sold tuna species in the UK by far, shoppers did find products with four of the five major commercial species in supermarkets. Of the 352 products purchased, 32 did not include specific information on the species of tuna being used.

Number of Tuna Products in UK Supermarkets by Species*

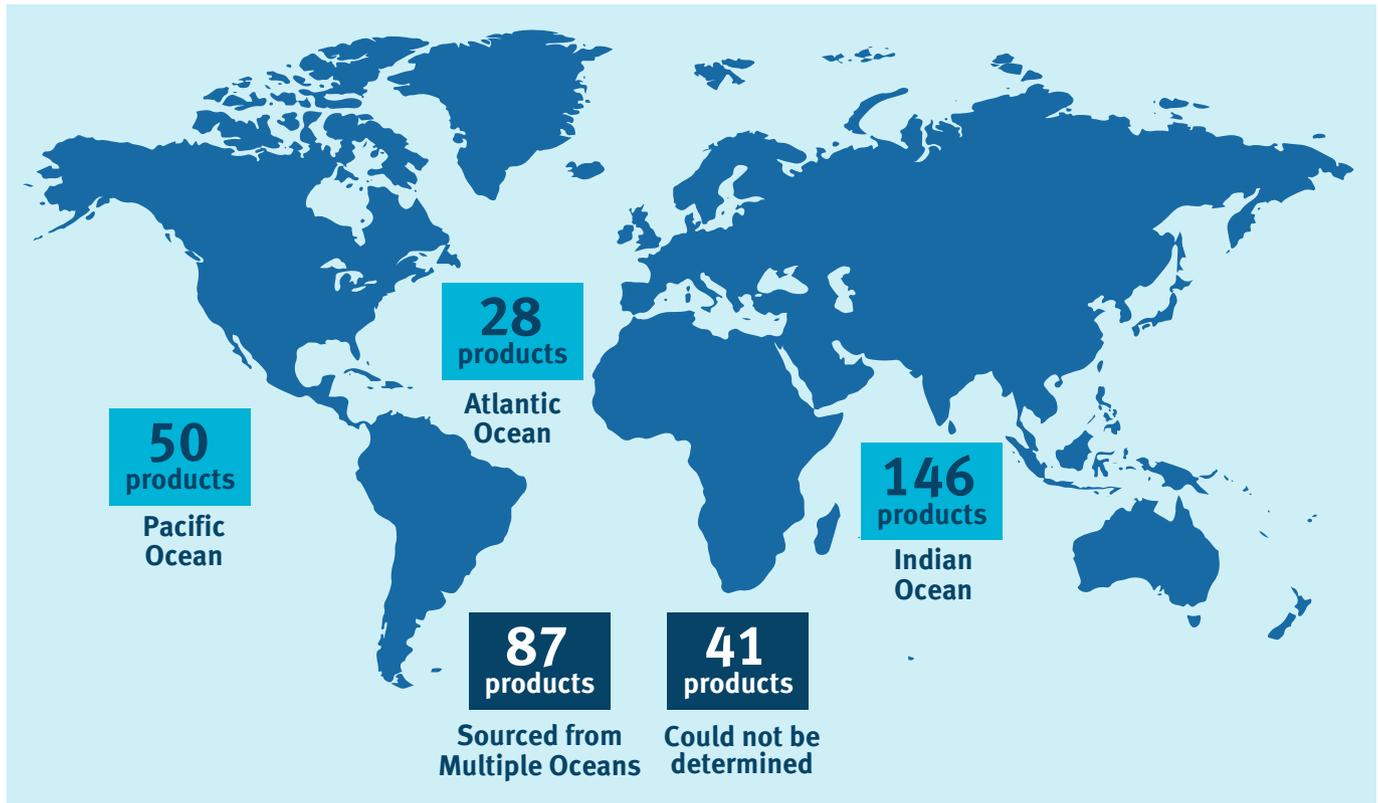


*Multiple indicates where a product (e.g. a can) was found to contain one species of tuna (e.g. skipjack) in some stores and another species (e.g. bigeye) in other stores.

The amount of information available on the origin of the tuna also varied from our previous report, with 88% of products indicating which ocean or oceans it was sourced from, up from 80% when the research was last conducted in October 2021. The greatest shift in the sourcing landscape, compared to the findings published in the [MSC UK Tuna Shopper Report 2021](#), occurred in the Indian Ocean. Our 2023 Tuna Shoppers found Indian Ocean tuna sourcing accounted for 41% of all tuna products on sale, up nine percentage points compared to 2021. 14% of products bought were sourced exclusively from the Pacific Ocean, although few indicated if this was specifically the Eastern Pacific or Western and Central Pacific. The source ocean or oceans could not be accurately determined for 12% of products, while 25% indicated the tuna within was sourced from multiple oceans.⁶ One hundred and ten products included the specific Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) area or areas in which the tuna was caught on the packaging. With over two thirds of consumers who buy tuna in Britain wanting to do their best to buy sustainably caught tuna, providing detailed information on the species of tuna and its origin can help them make more informed purchasing decisions.

⁶Multiple oceans refers to a combination of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Ocean. The Eastern and Western Central Pacific are not differentiated as separate oceans here.

Number of Tuna Products by Ocean of Origin



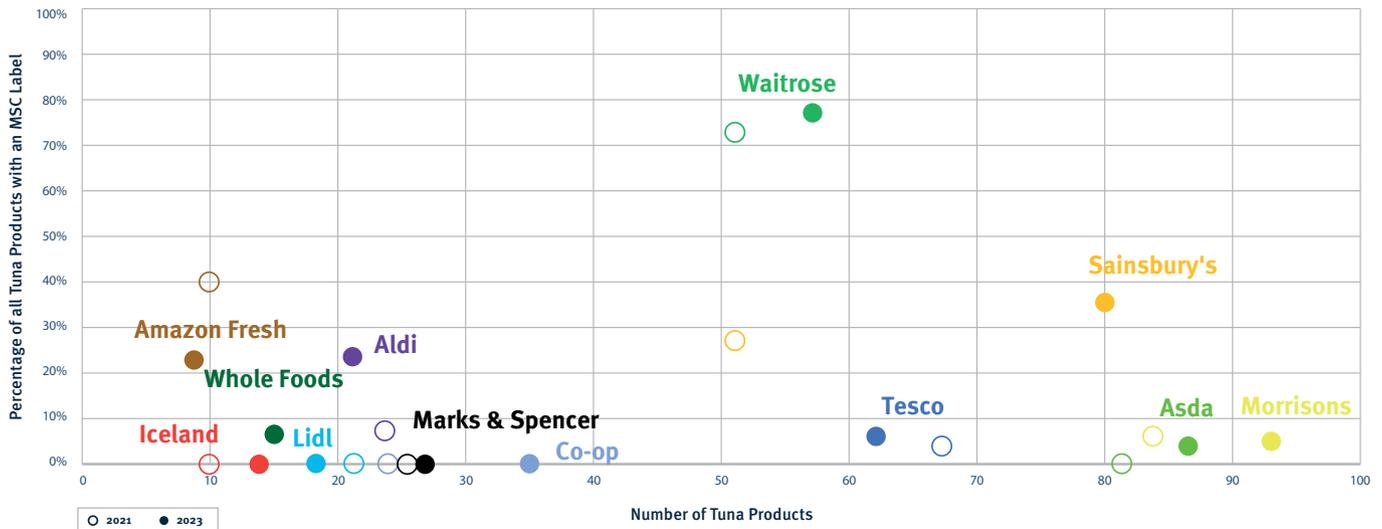
In addition to the species and provenance of the product, shoppers also found that nearly half (164 of 352) of the products purchased included some messaging around the health benefits of tuna on pack. Of these, 143 highlighted tuna as being ‘*high in protein*,’ while others referenced the product being low calorie or low in fat or saturated fat. Our YouGov survey of tuna consumers in Great Britain suggests this messaging resonates well. When asked about their main reasons for choosing to eat tuna, 51% claimed because ‘*it’s healthy*,’ the second most cited reason behind ‘*it tastes good*.’⁷ By contrast, only 15% indicated they choose to eat tuna because ‘*it’s a sustainable fish species*.’ With a growing percentage of the global tuna catch meeting the MSC Standard, indicating the product has been caught sustainably, there is an opportunity to improve consumer perceptions around tuna as a choice that can be both good for their health and the health of our oceans. The following sections of this report examine the availability of sustainably sourced tuna products in supermarkets in the UK, highlighting where progress has been made in recent years in increasing this availability, and where future progress is likely to come from.

⁷In this YouGov survey, 1,423 tuna consumers in the UK were asked to indicate their main reason(s) for choosing to eat tuna among a set list of responses. Respondents were asked to select all answers that applied.

Sustainable Tuna in Supermarkets

Over the past two years, the number of sustainably sourced tuna products available at supermarkets in the UK has grown steadily as retailers and brands have made progress in meeting the expectations of their increasingly environmentally conscious customers. In October 2021, 62 of the 342 (18%) tuna products purchased carried a blue MSC ecolabel. As of November 2023, that figure had climbed to 88 of 352 (25%), with certified products sold under eleven different brands and available in eight supermarkets - Aldi, Asda, Amazon Fresh, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose and Whole Foods.⁸ Waitrose continued to offer the greatest selection of sustainable tuna products and made further progress in expanding its range over the past two years; 79% (45 of 57) of all tuna products in store carried a blue MSC ecolabel, a six percentage point increase from October 2021. Sainsbury's and Aldi also expanded their MSC certified tuna offerings, with their ranges of sustainably sourced products growing to 35% and 24% respectively. Although Amazon sold the fewest tuna products of any retailer, both of its own-brand products, accounting for a fifth of its range, still carried an MSC ecolabel. Despite some progress made by both Tesco and Asda, less than 10% of their tuna ranges were MSC certified, while shoppers were unable to find any MSC labelled products at four supermarkets.

Sustainable Tuna Product Ranges Across the Leading UK Retailers



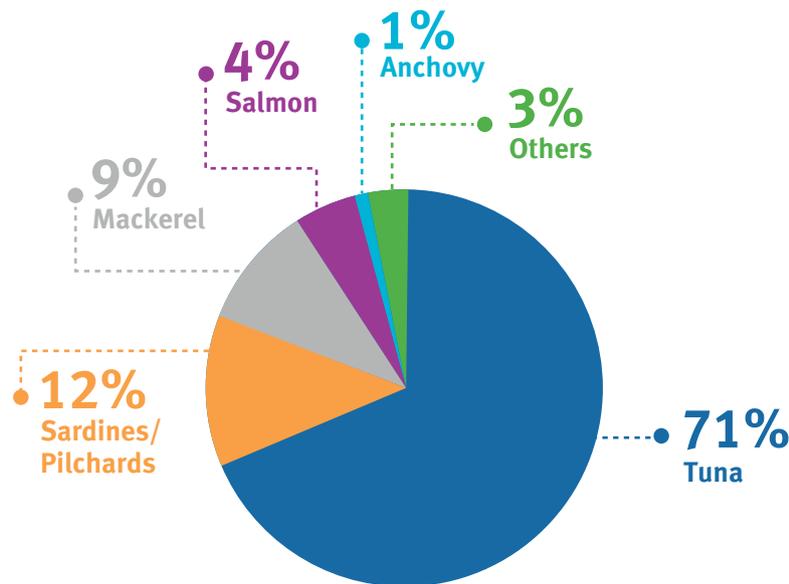
The following sections of this report provide a more detailed analysis of the different types of sustainably sourced products and highlight where progress has been made in increasing the availability of MSC certified tuna for shoppers in the UK.

⁸Whole Foods was not included in the scope of the research presented in the first edition of the [MSC UK Tuna Shopper Report](#) published in January 2022

Cans, Tins and Jars

Tinned fish made headlines as one of the trendiest foods of 2023, thanks in part to the power of TikTok where #tinnedfishdatenight helped glamorise the store cupboard staple. And when it comes to tinned fish, nothing is more popular than tuna. On the canned aisle of the supermarket, this translates to tuna accounting for 66% of the value and 71% of the volume of all ambient seafood purchased last year. According to our YouGov research, nearly 1 in 4 tuna consumers (23%) eat canned tuna at least once a week, with an estimated one million cans consumed across the country every day.⁹

UK Ambient Seafood Sales, by Species, as a Proportion of Total Volume (mt)¹⁰



Between October 2022 and October 2023, shoppers in the UK bought 56,800 tonnes of canned, tinned or jarred tuna in the supermarket, 20% (11,462 tonnes) of which were sold with an MSC ecolabel. While this still only represents one in five cans of tuna sold, it is a substantial increase from 4% of all tuna being sold with the blue MSC ecolabel in 2021.

⁹Estimated using 145g as the average size of a can of tuna

¹⁰Seafish. 2023 Seafish Ambient Seafood in Multiple Retail Factsheet — Seafish. January, 2024.

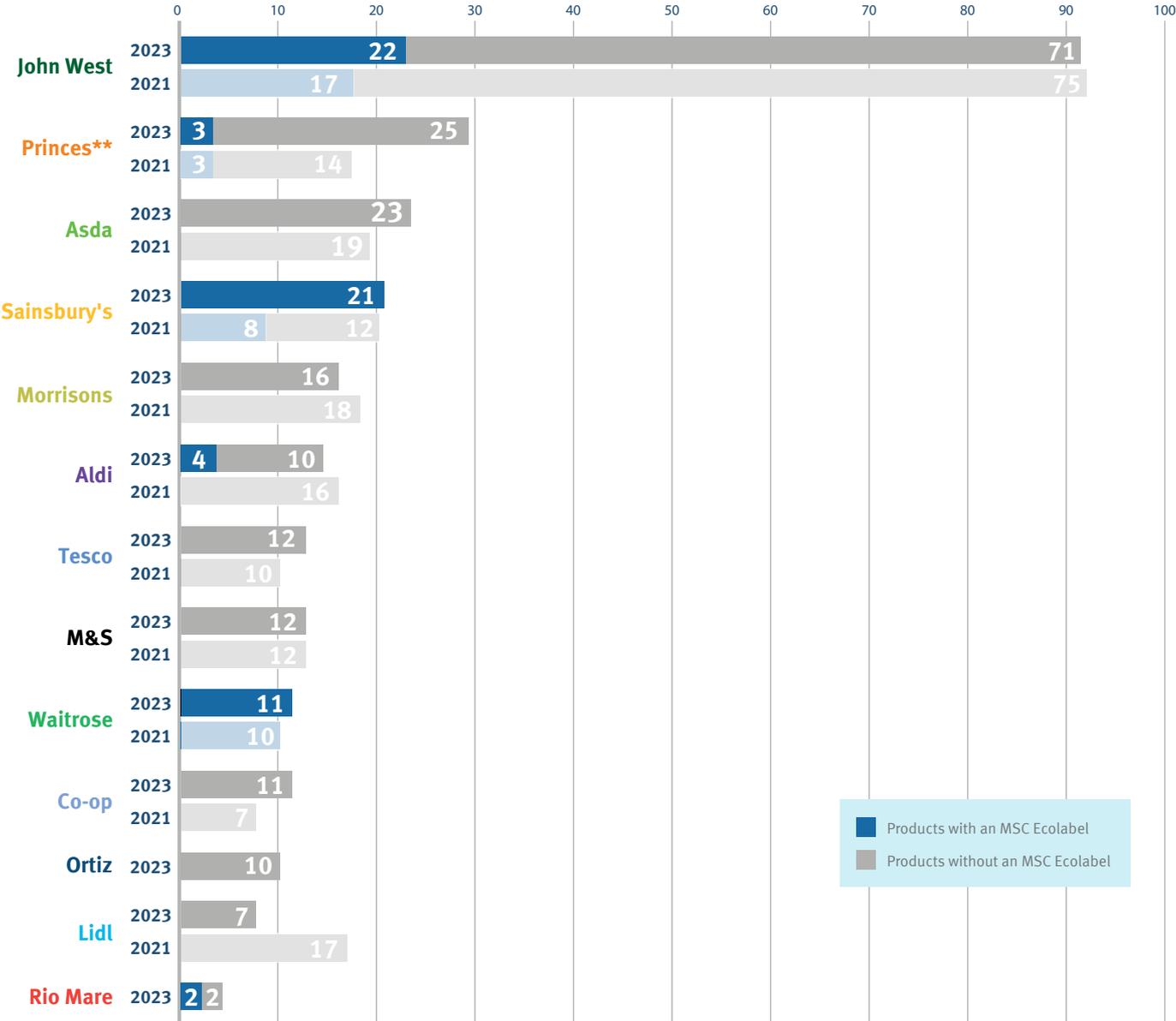
Encouragingly for environmentally-conscious tinned fish lovers, this growth has been driven by increased availability of certified sustainable canned tuna products over the past two years. In October 2021, our Tuna Shoppers were able to choose from 41 MSC labelled canned tuna products, representing 16% of the 250 products available in a tin or jar. When they returned to stores in November and December 2023, 63 of the 264 (24%) tuna products found in the canned aisle carried a blue MSC ecolabel.

Shoppers also had greater choice in where to purchase sustainably sourced tuna products with six supermarkets (Aldi, Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose) offering at least one labelled ambient tuna product, compared to just three (Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Waitrose) in 2021. For years, Waitrose has been the market leader in bringing certified sustainable tuna to shoppers in the UK, with all its own-brand canned tuna sold with a label since 2012. In May 2023, Sainsbury's joined Waitrose, with its entire canned tuna range returning to being 100% MSC certified following several years where only part of the range carried a label because of changes in sourcing. Aldi offered the third largest selection of own-brand MSC labelled tinned tuna with 29% (4 of 14) of its range certified sustainable.

In early 2022, Tesco also introduced three own-brand single canned tuna products with an MSC label sourced from Papua New Guinea, although shoppers were not able to find these products with a label in store in November and December 2023. Shoppers were, however, able to find certified tinned tuna under the Rio Mare brand at Tesco, Asda and Morrisons. Rio Mare is also available online on Ocado, which is explored in more detail in the section on Tuna in Online Retail. No MSC labelled canned tuna was found by shoppers at Co-op, Iceland, Marks and Spencer or Lidl, although it should be acknowledged that Lidl has offered MSC labelled tuna in a jar as a seasonal or promotional product for fixed periods over the past few years.



Ambient Tuna Products by Brand*



*only includes brands selling 3 or more products

**Although not available when shoppers went in store in November 2023, newly MSC labelled Princes canned products have already landed in supermarket aisles in January 2024 as the brand has continued to make progress on its commitment to selling MSC tuna (see section on Commitments to Sourcing and Selling MSC Labelled Tuna)

John West continued to offer by far the most extensive range of ambient tuna products of any brand in the UK with 93 different products available across eight supermarkets (Amazon Fresh, Asda, Co-op, Iceland, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose) and online on Ocado (see section on Tuna in Online Retail). However, our shoppers were only able to find John West products with an MSC ecolabel at Waitrose.

Princes offered the second largest canned tuna range of any brand, with shoppers finding 28 unique tuna products between Lidl, Morrisons, Tesco and Sainsbury's. Three of these were tuna salad bowls with an MSC ecolabel introduced at Morrisons at the end of 2023. Although these MSC certified products only represent 11% of the brand's range according to the shoppers, it is a first step in meeting its target of selling 100% MSC labelled tuna by 2025 (see section on Commitments to Sourcing and Selling MSC Labelled Tuna).

Thanks to the 54% increase in the number of MSC certified canned tuna products available over the past two years, shoppers in the UK have more sustainable options to choose from than ever before. With brands and retailers like Tesco and Princes committing to growing their MSC certified ranges to 100% by 2025, consumers should expect to enjoy an even greater variety of choices in the years ahead.



Championing Sustainable Canned Tuna: Waitrose, Sainsbury's and Aldi



Waitrose continues to be the market leader in bringing certified sustainable canned tuna to shoppers in the UK. In addition to all its own-brand canned and jarred tuna skipjack and albacore tuna being MSC certified, Waitrose is also the only brick-and-mortar retailer to carry John West products that bear the MSC ecolabel. That range has also grown from 17 labelled products in 2021 to 22 in 2023 as John West introduced a new range of MSC certified 'No Drain Tuna Chunks' 3 can packs. The expansion of John West's MSC range reflects Waitrose's commitment to offering its customers a wide range of sustainably sourced products from other brands. In May 2023, Sainsbury's rejoined Waitrose as the only other UK retailer to sell 100% MSC labelled own-brand canned tuna. Like Waitrose, this included both its entire canned skipjack range, as well as four canned and jarred albacore products. Aldi, now the UK's fourth largest retailer, also made progress in moving more of its canned tuna range to being MSC certified. Shoppers found four products carrying a blue MSC ecolabel – single cans and 4 can packs of tuna in brine and spring water – although according to MSC's own data, Aldi sold seven different canned tuna products with a label under its own brand at some point during the past year. Together, Aldi, Sainsbury's and Waitrose have been instrumental in driving the substantial growth seen in MSC labelled canned tuna sales in the UK over the past two years.



Catching for Cans

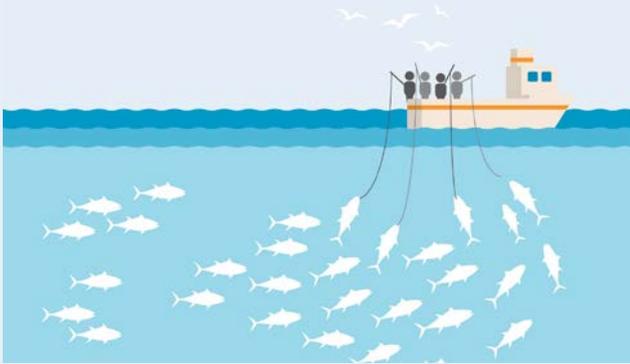
Skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) is the most commonly found species in ambient tuna products in supermarkets in the UK. However, jarred and canned products of albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) and to a lesser extent, yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*) and bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*), are also available to shoppers. The health of tuna populations and the environmental impact of tuna fisheries can vary greatly by ocean and by the fishing gears used. Most of the tuna supplying the canned market in the UK is caught either by pole and line or purse seine net fishing methods, which target tuna, such as skipjack, small yellowfin and albacore, swimming at the surface.

The MSC programme is open to almost all methods of fishing, except the most destructive such as using explosives or poisons. In recent years, the number of tuna fisheries that have successfully met the MSC Standard has grown substantially. This has included fisheries using Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), which are deployed to help fishermen locate and catch the tuna more easily but can be controversial because of their potential impact on the marine environment. MSC certification is based on comprehensive assessment of the impacts of a fishery and the environment within which it operates. Therefore, the MSC does not explicitly exclude vessels that set their fishing gear on FADs from being certified. However, any fishery with high non-target bycatch or impacts from lost FADs will need to make improvements to meet the MSC Standard's minimum criteria for environmental impact (Principle 2) to achieve and maintain certification. More information on the use of FADs is presented below and in much greater detail in the [MSC Sustainable Tuna Handbook](#).



POLE AND LINE

Volume of MSC Certified Pole and Line Caught Skipjack worldwide: 150,843 tonnes
Volume of Pole and Line Caught Skipjack in Assessment worldwide: none currently



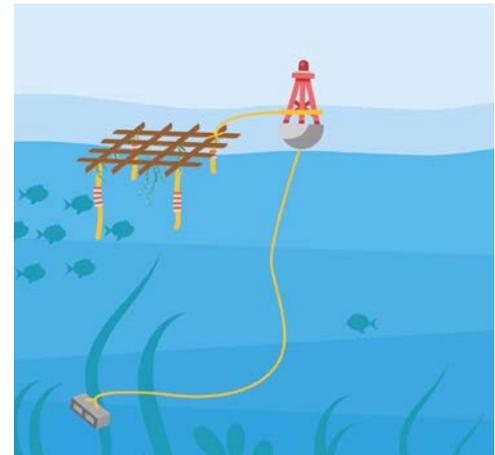
In pole and line fisheries, fishermen locate a school of tuna, then often scatter small live bait fish and spray water onto the sea surface. This creates the illusion of an active school of prey, sending the tuna into a feeding frenzy, where they will bite anything they see. Fishermen then line up, equipped with hand-held poles with barbless hooks. Once a tuna bites, the fisherman flicks it up over their head and onto the deck.¹¹ Like in purse seine fishing, pole and line fishing can also be used to catch fish that congregate around FADs, or on ‘free schools’ of tuna. Pole and line fishing represents 8% of global tuna catches but they are used for catching 28% of North Pacific albacore and 19% of Indian Ocean skipjack.¹² As of December 31, 2023, there are seven MSC certified pole and line tuna fisheries around the world, one in assessment, and several certified handline tuna fisheries.

Anchored FADs

Anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) are rafts – often made of bamboo – fixed to an anchored buoy, usually in coastal waters. Anchored FADs (often referred to as aFADs) can be either non-entangling or entangling. They are used by both commercial and subsistence fisheries and are most commonly associated with pole and line fishing. The FAD stays in the same position and doesn’t drift, reducing the risk of it getting lost or damaging reefs.

Risks: These FADs can be anchored in vulnerable habitats, such as corals and can be associated with catching juvenile yellowfin. Some anchored FADs also include entangling nets which can result in non-target species being caught in the FAD nets.

Mitigation: Anchoring in vulnerable habitats can be avoided. Fishermen can relocate their fishing if too many juveniles are being caught in a particular area.

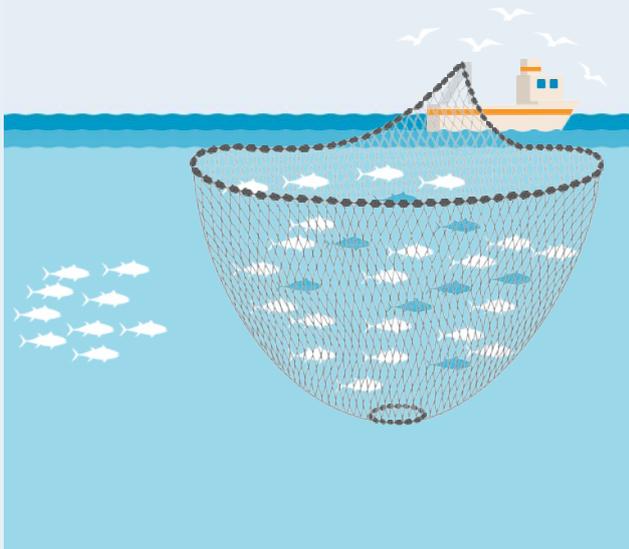


¹¹MSC. 2023. Pole and line. Available at: <https://www.msc.org/what-we-are-doing/our-approach/fishing-methods-and-gear-types/pole-and-line>

¹²ISSF, 2023. Status of the World Fisheries for Tuna: November 2023. ISSF Technical Report 2023-12. International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, Washington, D.C., USA. Available at: <https://www.issf-foundation.org/research-advocacy-recommendations/our-scientific-program/scientific-reports/download-info/issf-2023-12-status-of-the-world-fisheries-for-tuna-november-2023/>

PURSE SEINE

Volume of MSC Certified Purse Seine Caught Skipjack worldwide: 1,563,321 tonnes
Volume of Purse Seine Caught Skipjack in Assessment worldwide: 270,835 tonnes



Purse seine fishers locate a school of tuna and set a net around it in a circle. The bottom of the net is pulled closed – like a purse – and the fish are brought on board. Purse seines can be used to catch fish congregating around fish aggregating devices (FADs) or on ‘free schools’ of tuna.¹³ Purse seine fishing represents 66% of global tuna catches (approximately 36% associated with FADs, 27% ‘free school,’ and 3% dolphin sets).¹⁴ As of December 31, 2023, there are 17 MSC certified purse seine tuna fisheries, including five with components in assessment. There are another eight purse seine tuna fisheries undergoing assessment for the first time. Purse seine tuna fisheries catching free-school tuna and tuna associated with FADs need to seek certification for their entire catch and cannot compartmentalise it. These new requirements applied to new fishery assessments from 25 September 2020, and from 25 March 2023 all certified fisheries needed to meet these requirements. As a result of these requirements and advances in FAD design, monitoring and management, 13 purse seine tuna fisheries are now certified for components using FAD sets, while another 12 have FAD components under assessment either as a scope extension* or as part of their initial assessment.

*A scope extension is where an existing MSC fishery certificate is expanded to include another fishery, sometimes with different target species and/or gear types.

¹³MSC. 2023. Purse seine. Available at: <https://www.msc.org/what-we-are-doing/our-approach/fishing-methods-and-gear-types/purse-seine>

¹⁴ISSF, 2023. Status of the World Fisheries for Tuna: November 2023. ISSF Technical Report 2023-12. International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, Washington, D.C., USA. Available at: <https://www.issf-foundation.org/research-advocacy-recommendations/our-scientific-program/scientific-reports/download-info/issf-2023-12-status-of-the-world-fisheries-for-tuna-november-2023/>

Entangling Drifting FADs (dFADs)

Entangling dFADs have nets that hang in the water column from a floating structure.

Risks: The nets serve to attract a greater variety of animals and can result in them being caught. The dFADs can be constructed using a variety of materials. The ones that have open nets hanging from the raft tend to have the highest rates of entanglement.

Mitigation: Entangling dFADs can be modified e.g. by rolling the nets up into 'sausages', to reduce the risk of entangling other animals.

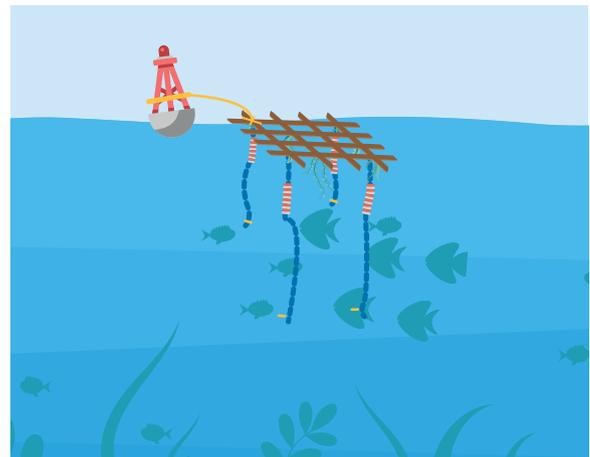


Non-entangling Drifting FADs (dFADs)

Non-entangling dFADs drift with ocean currents and winds. Non-entangling dFADs use ropes or rolled up nets to avoid entangling marine creatures. Each dFAD has a buoy with a reference number and a GPS unit so the fishermen can find them.

Risks: Evidence is still needed to fully determine the impact of lost dFADs.

Mitigation: Non-entangling dFADs can be designed to reduce the risk of entangling animals. The first MSC certified fishery to use dFADs in 2018 uses 100% non-entangling dFADs.



Disclaimer: the risks highlighted in this section of the report are not a comprehensive list of all risks associated with all gear types.

More information on tuna stocks, fishing methods, impacts and individual fisheries is available in the [MSC Sustainable Tuna Handbook](#) and on [Track a Fishery](#).

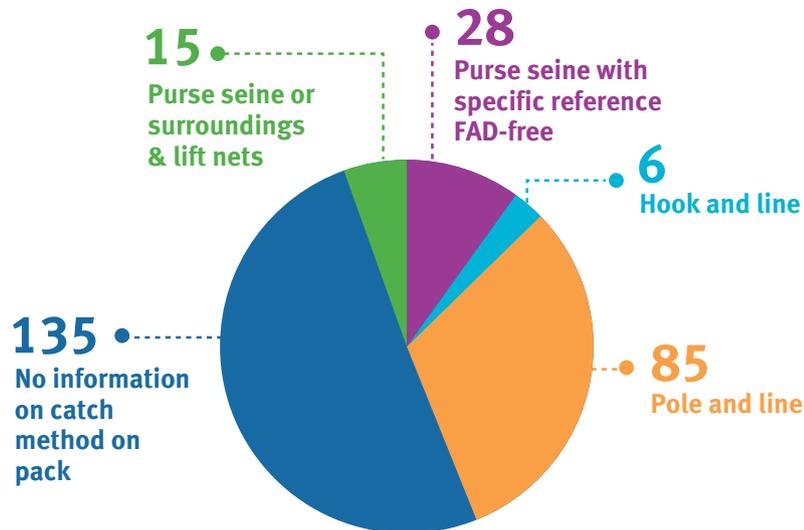
Communicating on Pack

Tuna fisheries are complex due to the species' highly migratory nature and the varying impacts of the fishing gears used to harvest tuna. As a result, tuna is one of the only species of fish or seafood that many supermarkets have developed specific sourcing policies for. In some cases, a retailer may stipulate that they will only buy tuna caught using a certain fishing method, from a fishery that has achieved MSC certification, or that is in a Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) working towards sustainability. Some retailers and brands have also developed specific time-bound targets for their tuna sourcing alongside these policies (see section on Commitments to MSC Tuna).

To better understand how brands and retailers communicated about their tuna sourcing, any information on catch method that was included on pack was recorded by our shoppers. The results, which were consistent with those from the same research in October 2021, found that the availability of information on pack regarding how tuna was caught varied by product and brand. Half of the 266 ambient tuna products on sale (51%) did not have any information regarding method of catch on pack, while 28 products specifically referenced the tuna being caught without FADs. While that is similar to the findings from October 2021, the number of products that referenced pole and line caught tuna increased significantly, from 57 to 85. As a result, the proportion of ambient tuna products with pole and line messaging grew from over a fifth to nearly a third between October 2021 and November 2023.

Information on Catch Method on Pack of Ambient Tuna Products

(units below are number of products)



Tuna to Go

While the can may be king, tuna is an increasingly popular choice for on-the-go meal options, like salads, sandwiches and sushi. According to our YouGov survey of tuna consumers in Great Britain, 16% of respondents eat a tuna sandwich at least once a week, a 5 percentage point increase compared to 2021. Of the ten major supermarkets in the UK, all apart from Iceland offered at least one variety of tuna sandwich. According to our shopper research, of the 20 different tuna sandwiches found at those nine supermarkets, a quarter carried a blue MSC ecolabel. As in 2021, Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Amazon Fresh were the only supermarkets to offer these MSC certified tuna sandwiches, with no new brands offering MSC certified tuna sandwiches to their customers.

Our shopper research also found that eight supermarkets, Aldi, Asda, Amazon Fresh, Lidl, Marks & Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Waitrose, sold tuna in pasta salads or as part of a Mediterranean or Nicoise salad. Well over a third of these products had a blue MSC ecolabel, with Aldi, Amazon Fresh, Sainsbury's and Waitrose all only stocking certified tuna salads.

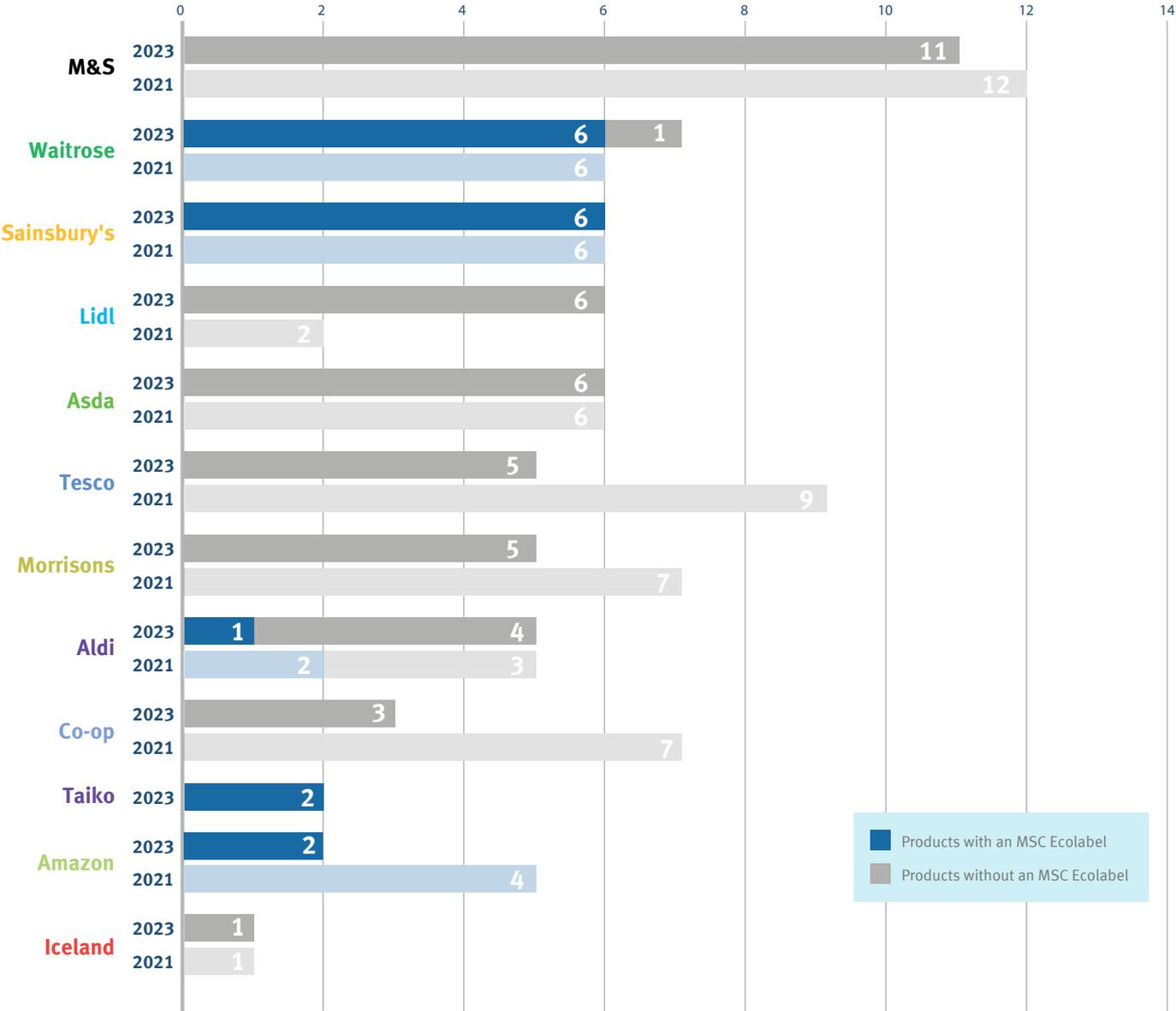
Deli fillers are a core component of the tuna range at most supermarkets, with all ten of the major retailers offering at least one option. Tuna pâté was also found at Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's and Waitrose. Of the 16 tuna deli fillers and pâté products purchased by our shoppers, five were sold with an MSC ecolabel, three at Sainsbury's and two at Waitrose.

Sushi also continues to be a popular supermarket offering, with 9,747 tonnes sold in the UK retail last year.¹⁵ Sushi kiosks, such as Sushi Daily and Sushi Gourmet, are now permanent fixtures at several supermarkets, and although this was out of scope of the research for this report, pre-pack tuna sushi selections were found at Aldi, Marks & Spencer and Waitrose. Of these, only a tuna sushi wrap and tuna poke bowl sold at Waitrose under the Taiko brand carried a blue MSC ecolabel.

Across the 59 'tuna to go' products purchased by shoppers, 17 were MSC certified. While this is one fewer than what shoppers were able to find in 2021, label coverage across the category increased from 26% (18 of 70) in 2021, to 29% in 2023.

¹⁵Seafish. [Seafood Segments in the Retail Market](#). [Seafood Segments in the Retail Market](#) – Seafish

'Tuna To Go' Products by Brand



Championing Sustainable Tuna to Go: Taiko Foods and Waitrose



Over the years, Japanese cuisine, particularly sushi, has gained widespread popularity in the UK. The rise of sushi is prominently showcased through its increased availability in supermarkets across the country. Taiko Foods, established in 1997 as the inaugural sushi manufacturer for the UK supermarket industry, has built a reputation as an innovative supplier of Sushi, Bentos, and Snacking products to the likes of Waitrose, Pret a Manger and Costco. Taiko has been a leader in championing sustainable seafood, with the introduction of its first product, an MSC labelled California roll, in 2009. In 2015, Taiko expanded its range at Waitrose with the launch of an MSC labelled tuna sushi wrap. Their commitment to offering sustainably sourced products continued with the introduction of the UK's first and still only MSC certified tuna poke bowl in 2023, also only available at Waitrose.



Fresh, Frozen and Ready Meals

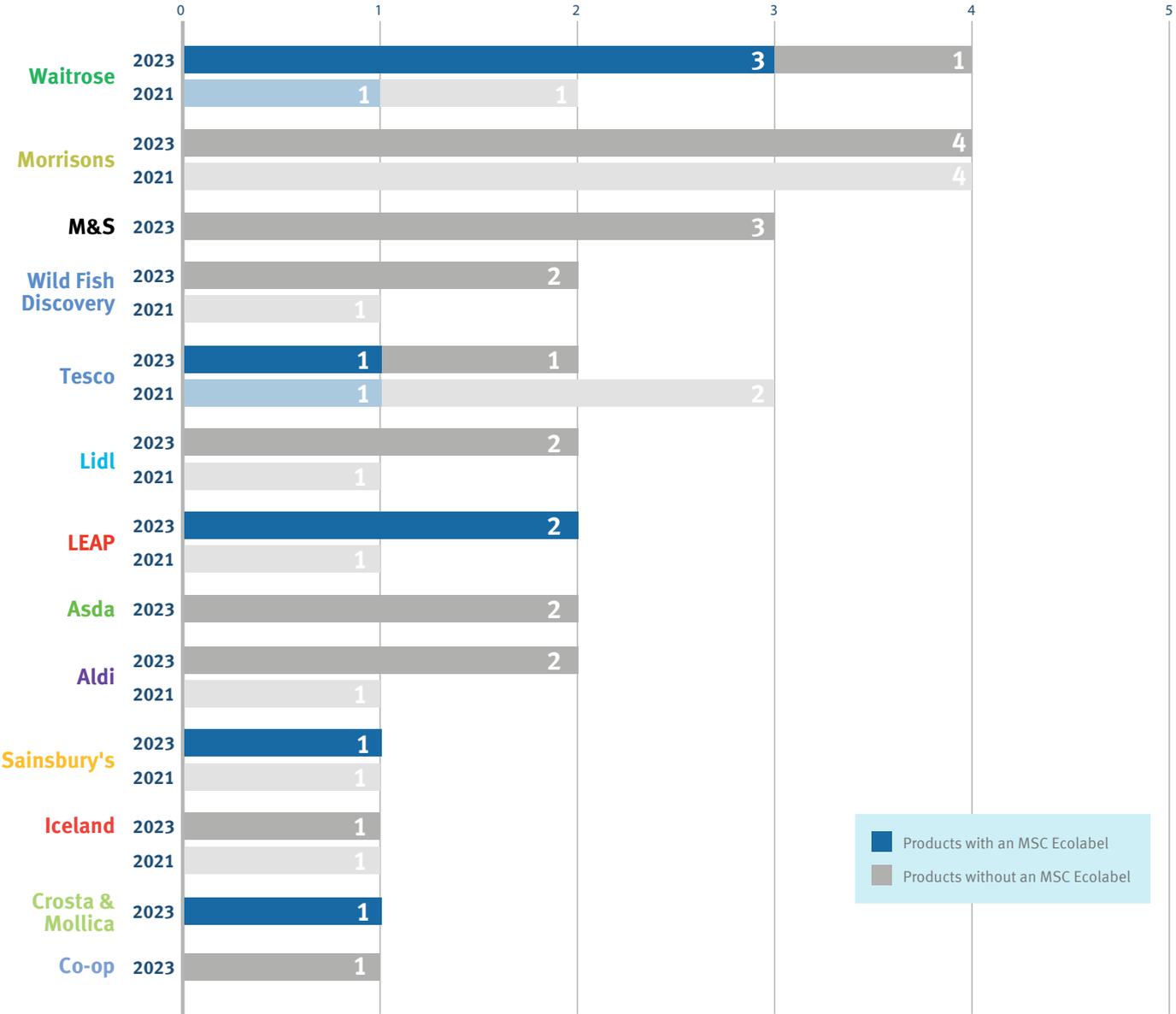
While skipjack is the most commonly found tuna in canned, jarred and on-the-go products, albacore and yellowfin tuna steaks are more prevalent in frozen aisles or chilled, either as pre-packed products or on fish counters.¹⁶ Some skipjack tuna products are still available in frozen or chilled formats, most often in ready meals such as pasta bakes or pizzas.

Although frozen and chilled tuna options are far more limited than those in a can or jar, our shoppers were still able to purchase five frozen yellowfin products, nine chilled yellowfin products and three chilled albacore products. Of these, six were found carrying the blue MSC ecolabel, double the total available to shoppers in October 2021. Waitrose and Tesco continued to lead UK retailers in championing sustainable chilled tuna as the only supermarkets offering it with an MSC label under their own brand as part of their permanent range, while both of the LEAP brand's chilled yellowfin and albacore products also carried a label. Of the five frozen yellowfin products, none were found with an MSC label, although both Lidl and Tesco have sold frozen MSC certified yellowfin in the past.

¹⁶Although often referred to as 'fresh' by shoppers, most tuna on chilled shelves is previously frozen for quality and safety reasons.



Fresh, Frozen and Ready Meal Tuna Products by Brand



Championing Sustainable Fresh Tuna: New England Seafood International (NESI), Tesco and Waitrose



For many years, New England Seafood International (NESI) has worked closely with its customers and tuna supply base to promote the importance of operating sustainably. These efforts have supported several tuna fisheries in successfully meeting the MSC Standard and enabled retailers like Waitrose and Tesco to offer more sustainable tuna options to their customers. In 2019, Waitrose became the first retailer in the UK to sell chilled MSC certified albacore tuna on its fish counters, supplied by NESI, although fresh fish counters were not included in the scope of the research for this report. In March 2021, Waitrose expanded its MSC certified tuna range further, introducing the UK's first MSC chilled pre-pack yellowfin and albacore products. Tesco followed soon after with its own MSC labelled chilled pre-pack yellowfin product. In addition to helping Waitrose and Tesco deliver these products, NESI has also used its own brand, LEAP, to champion chilled sustainable tuna. Following the successful certification of more of its source fisheries, shoppers found NESI has introduced an MSC labelled LEAP brand yellowfin product at Whole Foods and an MSC labelled LEAP brand albacore product at Tesco, as well as several other labelled LEAP products solely available on Ocado (covered separately in the section on Tuna in Online Retail).



Tuna may not often be associated with ready meals, but our shoppers were able to find tuna pasta bakes available at nine of the twelve retailers they visited: Aldi, Asda, Co-op, Lidl, Marks & Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose. While all of these were sold under the retailer's own brand, only Sainsbury's offered the product with a blue MSC ecolabel at the time of purchase. The lack of a label on these products demonstrates the gap between market leaders like Sainsbury's and other retailers, when it comes to trying to provide the most comprehensive ranges of certified sustainable products. With a growing number of certified skipjack fisheries, labelling more niche parts of the range, such as ready meals, is a straightforward opportunity to meet consumer demand that many are not taking up.

Although almost all ready meal products using tuna were pasta bakes, Waitrose recently became the first UK retailer to introduce an MSC labelled tuna pizza from the Crosta & Mollica brand, further expanding its market-leading range of certified tuna products.

Championing Sustainable Tuna in Ready Meals: Crosta & Mollica and Waitrose



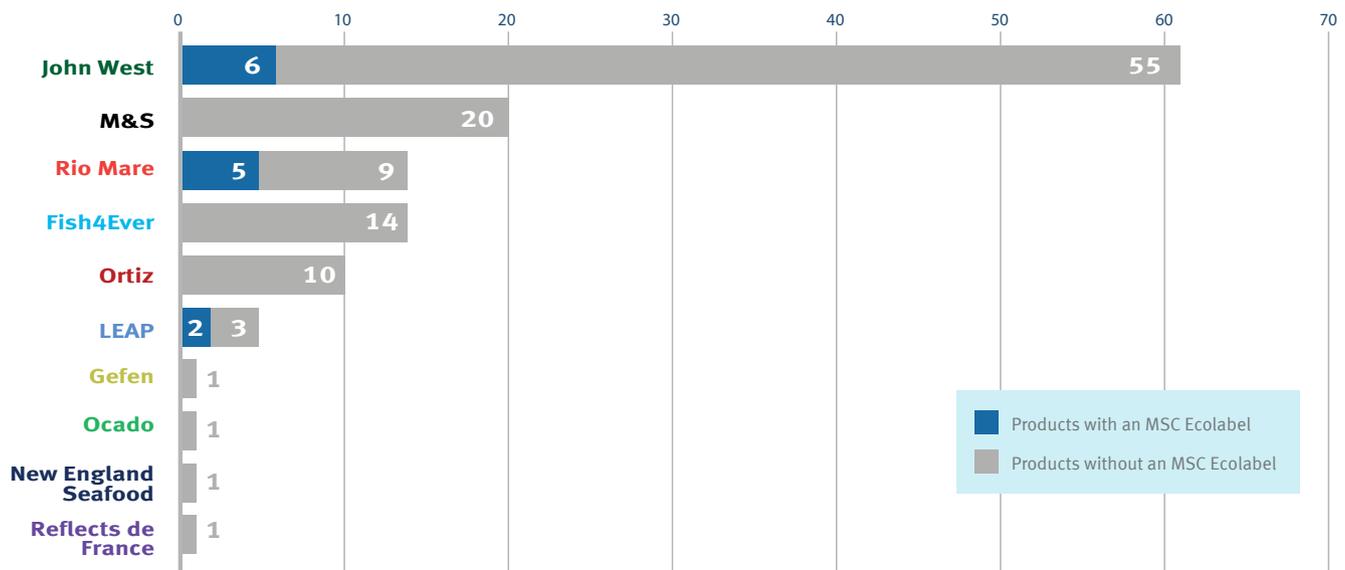
In August 2023, London-based Italian food brand, Crosta & Mollica, launched the first MSC-certified pizza product in the UK. This frozen pizza uses MSC-certified skipjack tuna alongside red onion and Sicilian oregano, on a sourdough base. Sold in a pack of two smaller 'pizzetta' portions, this product can be found in the frozen section of Waitrose supermarkets around the country. In launching this product, Crosta & Mollica have broken new ground in the UK sustainable seafood movement, and in stocking it Waitrose have added yet another sustainable tuna product to their already market-leading range.

Tuna in Online Retail

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the use of e-commerce platforms for grocery shopping. Although online grocery’s market share has dropped somewhat as the world returned to normality, it remains far higher than what it was before the pandemic (see Focus on E-Commerce in MSC UK and Ireland Market Report 2023). For the seafood industry, online platforms offer new ways to communicate with customers and promote opportunities for making environmentally positive purchasing decisions. Unlike brick-and-mortar retail, e-commerce platforms are also not limited by shelf space, giving them an opportunity to promote products from smaller brands that might otherwise not be able to compete for a spot in the supermarket aisle. For consumers in the UK, most tuna products on offer at supermarkets are sold either under the retailer’s own brand, or by John West or Princes.

As part of the research for this report, while Savanta conducted in store visits, MSC analysed the tuna offerings available on two e-commerce retailers: Ocado and Amazon Fresh. The results presented below offer a comparison of their ranges, and the availability of sustainably sourced tuna within them, to those found at brick-and-mortar retailers, presented in the section on Sustainable Tuna in Supermarkets.¹⁷

Tuna Products, by Brand, Available on Ocado

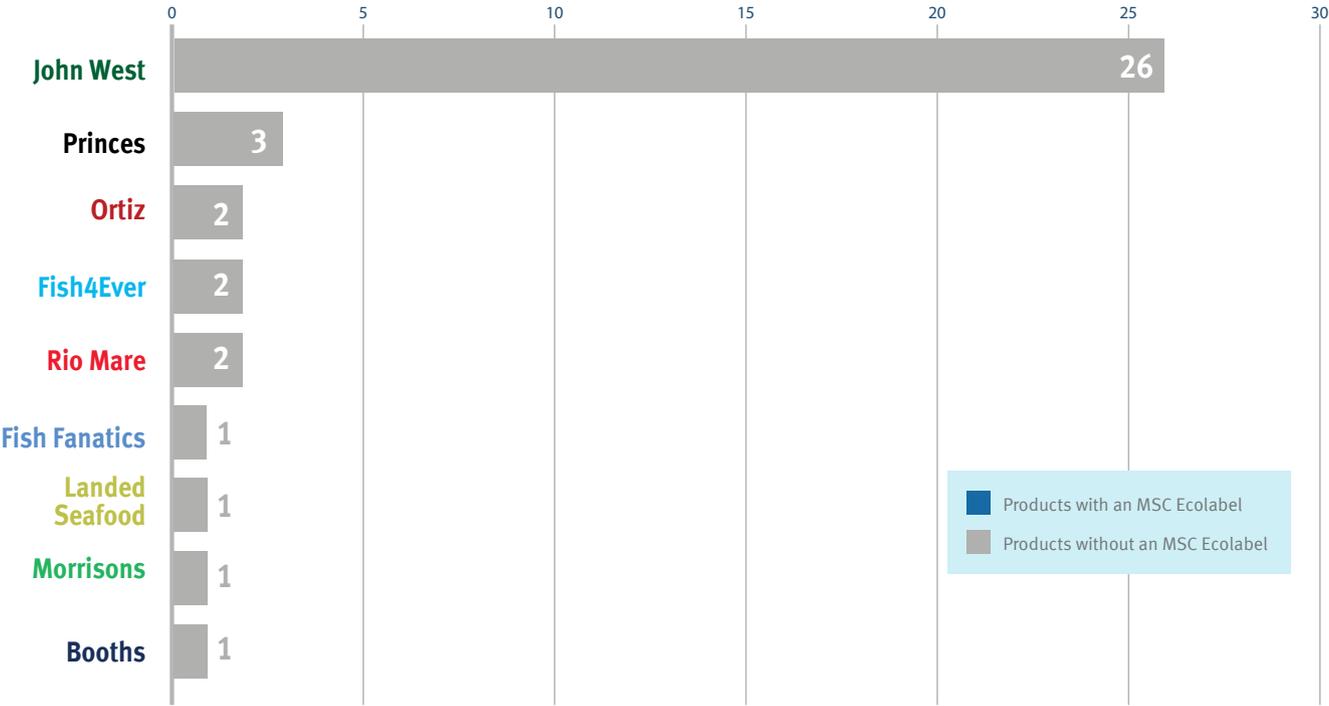


¹⁷MSC’s analysis was conducted simultaneously to Savanta’s research during November and December 2023. MSC certified products refer to products which were seen online with an MSC label on the product packaging. Although products were not purchased to confirm the presence of a label, the analysis is meant to reflect the options available to environmentally-conscious consumers looking to buy certified product(s).

With 128 products to choose from, Ocado offered the largest tuna range of any UK retailer. While the business’s joint venture with Marks & Spencer played a part in this, with M&S branded tuna products representing nearly a sixth of the range and not bearing any MSC ecolabels, Ocado also stocked the largest selection of John West, Rio Mare and LEAP branded tuna of any grocery outlet. Thirteen products on the platform were shown to be carrying an MSC ecolabel, including a number not available at any other retailer. However, with none of the 24 products under the Fish4Ever and Ortiz brands carrying a label, only 10% of the entire tuna range available on Ocado was MSC certified.

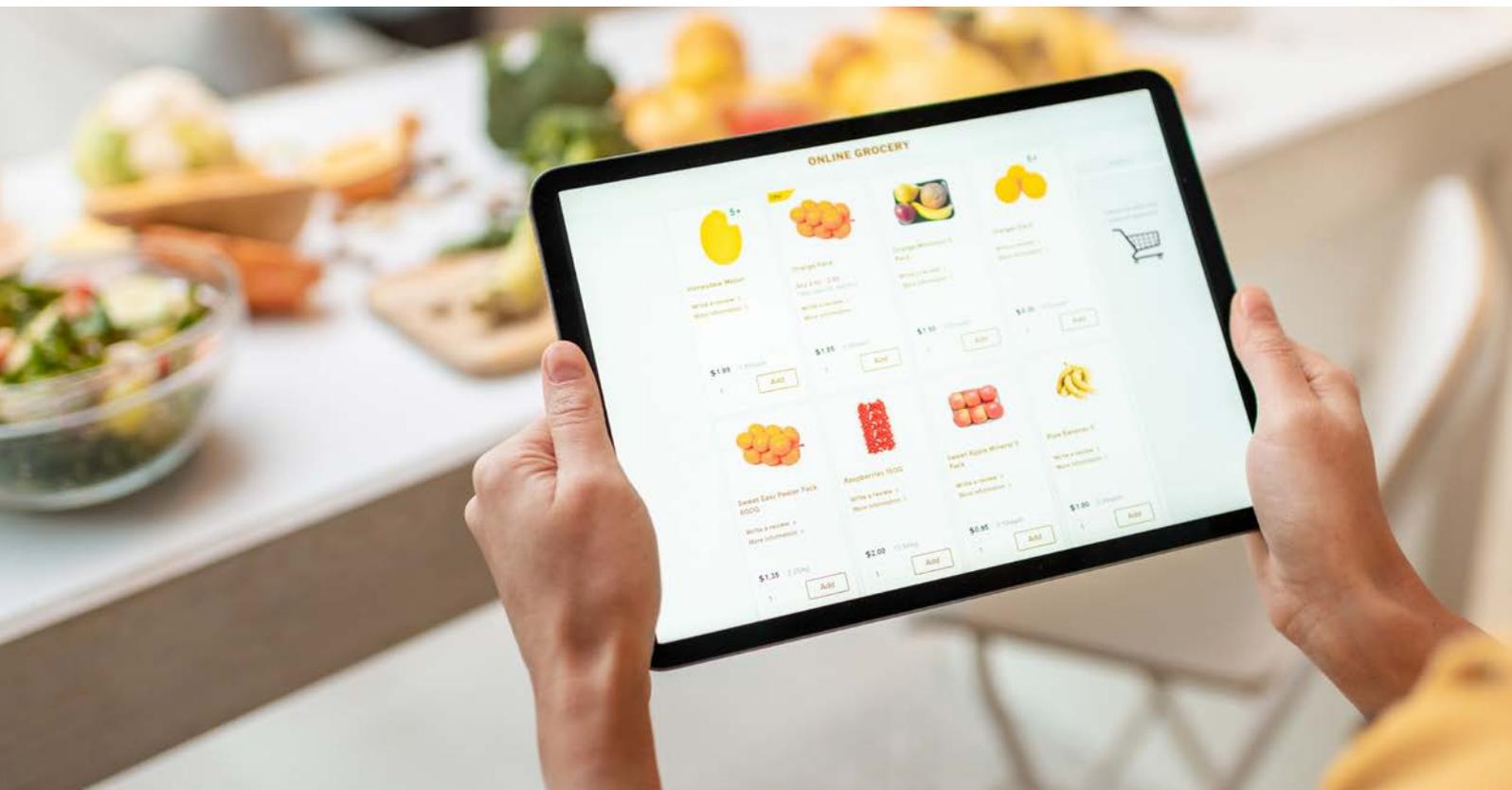
Although the availability of certified tuna products on Ocado was limited, of the 39 products sold on Amazon Fresh, none appeared to carry a blue MSC ecolabel online.

Tuna Products, by Brand, Available on Amazon Fresh Online



Product pages on online platforms provide an opportunity to give consumers more information about the provenance, catch method, and sustainability credentials of fish and seafood. However, of the 167 tuna products found on Ocado and Amazon Fresh, 96 (57%) did not include any information on the catch method on the product page, 122 (73%) did not include any information on the ocean or oceans where the tuna was caught, and 61 (37%) did not include any information on the species of tuna in the product. While this information may be available on the product packaging, it was not available at the point of purchase online.

For tuna consumers in the UK, this lack of information and limited availability of sustainable options is at odds with their expectations of retailers. A YouGov survey of tuna consumers commissioned by the MSC found that only 42% were satisfied with the range of sustainably caught tuna available in the UK and 32% found it difficult to make the right choice when looking for which tuna because they were confused about what to look for. Without the limits of shelf space and with product pages that can convey more information than product packaging in-store, online retail platforms, and the brands selling product on them, have an opportunity to champion sustainable tuna and address consumer concerns in ways which may be more challenging for the brick-and-mortar environment.

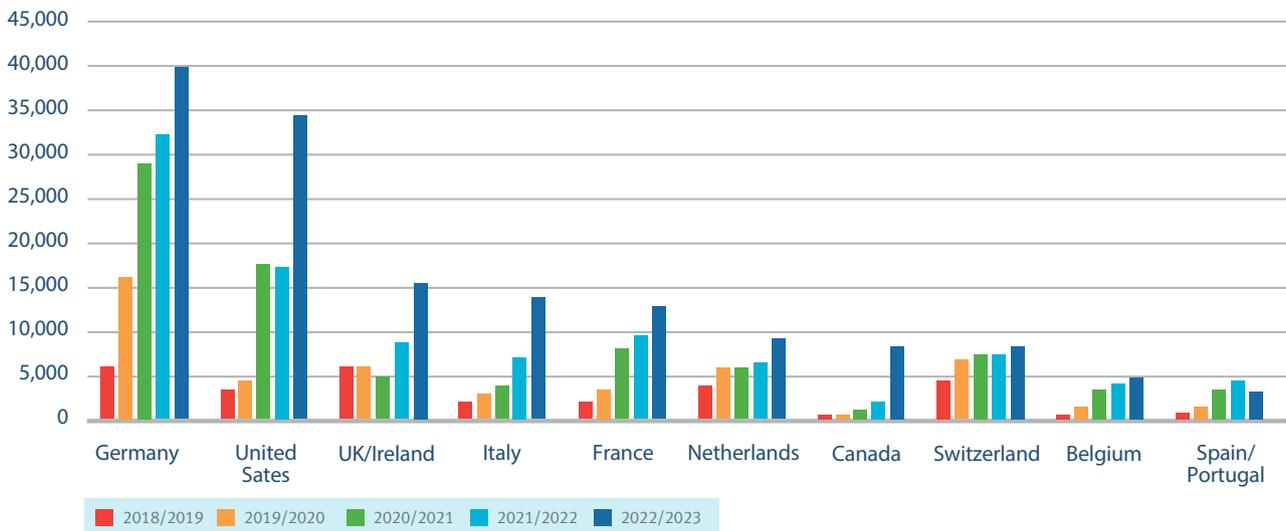


Certified Sustainable Tuna in the UK

Over the past two years, the UK re-established itself as one of the leading markets in the world for certified sustainable tuna, following a period in which availability to shoppers had been on the decline. Between 2020/21 and 2022/23, consumers in the UK tripled the amount of MSC certified tuna they purchased as more labelled products became available in stores. The 15,360 tonnes bought in the last year was the highest figure to date and accounted for an estimated 25% of all tuna sold by UK retailers.¹⁸ Despite this growth, and comparing it to the global landscape, the UK still only accounted for 8% of all MSC certified tuna sold worldwide, as progress has been made in many other markets as well.

Globally, sales of MSC labelled tuna hit 198,000 tonnes last year, a 44% increase from the previous year. As more sustainably caught tuna has become available, businesses, particularly in Europe and North America, are increasingly offering a greater range of MSC certified tuna products, and as a result, recognising and rewarding tuna fisheries that have committed to certification. Germany remained the largest market for certified tuna, while Canada, the United States and Italy saw the largest growth across Europe and North America last year. This growth has been driven by several brands and retailers that made strong progress in their commitment to sourcing tuna caught by MSC certified fisheries, including Walmart, Bumble Bee, Clover Leaf, Ocean’s, Aldi Süd, Aldi Nord and Bolton-owned Rio Mare.

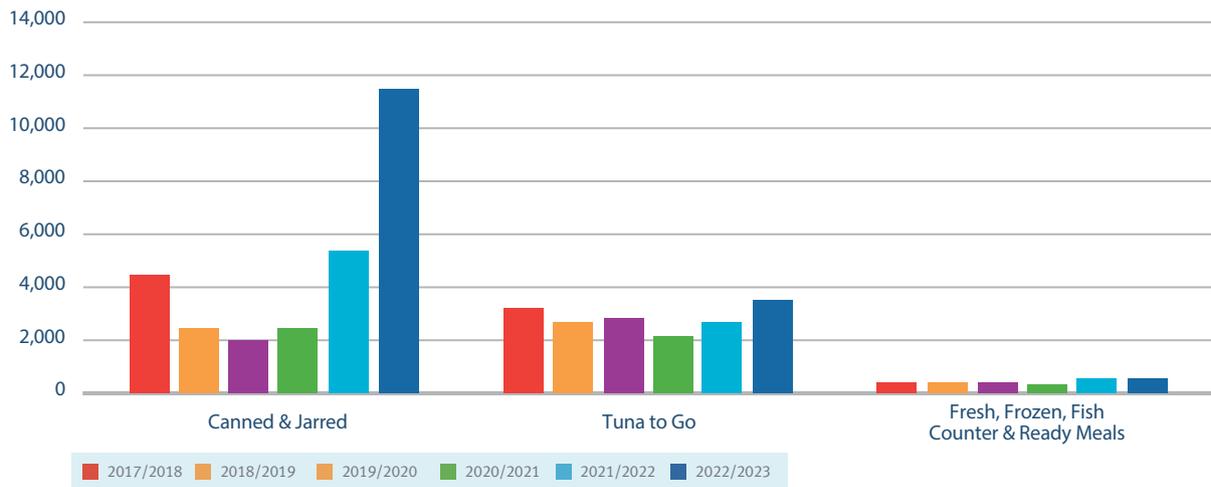
MSC Labelled Tuna Product Sales, by Volume (mt), in the United States and Europe



¹⁸Estimate determined using Seafish data on seafood sales in UK retail ([Seafood in multiple retail \(2023 update\) - Seafish](#)) as the baseline and comparing it to MSC volumes sold.

The growth in MSC certified tuna product sales in the UK over the past two years has been driven primarily by increased availability of labelled ambient products, although progress has been made across most formats. Between 2021/22 and 2022/23, the volume of MSC labelled canned or jarred tuna more than doubled, from 5,380 to 11,460 tonnes, while products in a ‘to go’ format, such as salads, sandwiches, sushi or deli fillers, grew by just over 30%. This was the result of both retailers and brands increasingly recognising and rewarding sustainable tuna fisheries, as well as changes in consumer purchasing behaviour. ‘To go’ products such as sandwiches and sushi likely benefited from people returning to the office more consistently following the Covid-19 pandemic, while high inflation and the cost-of-living crisis pushed shoppers to spend more on more affordable options, such as tinned fish.

Although found less commonly in other formats, there has been growth in the availability of MSC certified tuna across fish counters, ready meals and in chilled and frozen pre-pack products. In 2021/22, the volume of certified tuna sold across those formats passed 500 tonnes for the first time, a 70% increase on the previous year. While that figure dropped by 10% in 2022/23, with new fisheries becoming certified in the last year that supply tuna suitable for these formats, there is opportunity for growth in the year ahead.



MSC Labelled Tuna Sales in the UK by Product Format (mt)

The progress made over the past two years in increasing the amount of sustainably sourced tuna sold in UK retail looks set to continue. According to data projected by the MSC based on current sales figures for this financial year (2023/24), the volume of MSC labelled tuna purchased by consumers in the UK is on course to surpass 25,000 tonnes for the first time. With brands and retailers looking to make further progress in meeting their commitments and expanding their MSC certified ranges this year, shoppers in the UK are likely to have more sustainable tuna options to choose from than ever before. However, in order to truly satisfy consumer expectations for affordable and widely available sustainable tuna products, new commitments and progress are needed from brands and retailers currently not offering the same degree of coverage as the market leaders.

Commitment to Sourcing and Selling MSC Labelled Tuna

The MSC has set a target of engaging more than a third of the world's marine catch in our programme by 2030. This ambitious but necessary target can only be achieved with the support of a global network of committed partners, who can help drive the sustainable seafood movement forward and deliver real, positive impacts and change on the water. As one of the most commercially valuable, ecologically important and widely caught fish on the planet, tuna is a critical component of that target.

Tremendous progress has been made by tuna fisheries around the world to meet the MSC Standard in recent years, and brands and retailers have a crucial role to play in both recognising those fisheries for their commitment to sustainability, as well as making more certified sustainable products available to consumers who want to buy it. For years, Waitrose and Sainsbury's have led the UK market in offering MSC certified tuna, but recent time-bound commitments to sourcing and selling sustainable tuna from Tesco and Princes are critical steps in realising the goal of improving the sustainability of tuna fisheries worldwide.



In March 2021, Tesco, the UK's largest supermarket, announced a new sourcing approach for tuna which included a target of moving towards 100% MSC certified and labelled tuna by 2025. Since this announcement, the retailer has made progress towards that goal. It became the first UK retailer to offer MSC certified yellowfin tuna on a fish counter (although these have now closed) and introduced MSC labelled frozen and pre-pack chilled yellowfin products. Although they were not found with a label in the stores our shoppers visited, Tesco also introduced three single tuna cans with an MSC label in early 2022, which contributed significantly to the growth in MSC labelled tuna sales last year.



In August 2022, international food and drink group, Princes, announced a commitment to source and sell 100% of its UK Princes branded tuna from MSC certified sustainable fisheries by the end of 2025. Achieving this 100% milestone would represent 75 million cans (11,000 tonnes) of MSC certified tuna on the market each year, and Princes has already made progress in meeting that goal, introducing three new labelled tuna salad bowls at the end of 2023. Although not available when shoppers went in store in November 2023, newly MSC labelled Princes canned products have already landed in supermarket aisles in January. While ambitious, Princes' target is achievable thanks to several of the business' source fisheries transitioning from Fishery Improvement Project (FIPs) to MSC certification in recent years.

Sustainable Tuna Around the World

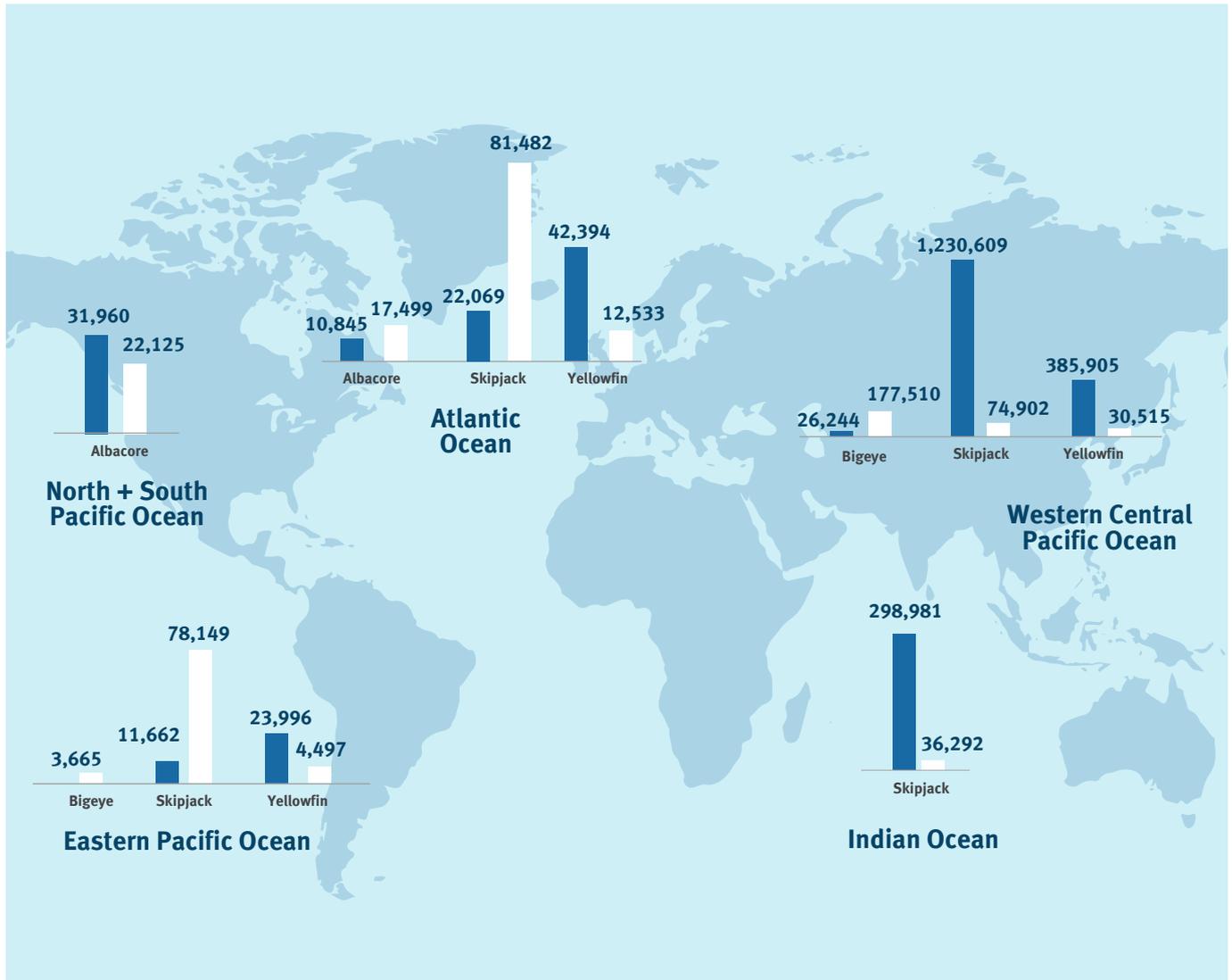
The growing number of brands and retailers, both in the UK and around the world, making commitments to sourcing and selling MSC labelled tuna is only possible because the availability of certified raw material has continued to increase, as more tuna fisheries have successfully met the MSC Standard. As of January 16, 2024, an estimated 42% (2,085,200 tonnes) of the global tuna catch is MSC certified, with a further 11% (539,179 tonnes) in assessment.¹⁹ This reflects significant progress in tuna fisheries achieving certification compared with figures published in the first edition of the MSC UK Tuna Shopper Report in 2022, where certified catch was 34% of global landings and in assessment was 19%. Skipjack fisheries were a major contributor to this shift.

In what is a crucial milestone, MSC certified skipjack is now available from all four oceans (Atlantic, Indian, Eastern Pacific and Western Central Pacific) whereas two years ago, there were only certified sources in the Indian and Western Central Pacific Oceans. Brands and retailers looking to make new commitments to sourcing and selling MSC labelled tuna can be more confident in meeting their targets with certified tuna now being available from multiple fisheries and across all oceans.

¹⁹Estimates are derived from catch data published on tuna fishery profiles in [Track a Fishery](#) compared to UN FAO data (2021) for total global tuna landings. Note: not all fisheries currently [in assessment](#) have catch data listed.



Volume (mt) of MSC Certified and In Assessment Tuna by Species and Ocean



■ MSC Certified (mt) ■ In Assessment (mt)

As conditions of their certification, many MSC tuna fisheries are required to make improvements to maintain their certified status. In October 2022, the MSC announced the launch of its new global standard for sustainable fishing, MSC Fisheries Standard version 3.0, following four years of research, public consultation and testing. Among the changes made to the new Standard, which came into effect May 1, 2023, included a new definition of, and greater protections for, endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species. It introduced a new policy to increase confidence that shark finning is not taking place within certified fisheries and puts greater responsibility on certified fisheries to prevent and reduce the impact of lost fishing gear, known as ghost gear, including FADs. It also sets stronger requirements for effective monitoring and surveillance of fishing operations, particularly those on the high seas, and for international agreements on harvest strategies to safeguard shared fish stocks. These new requirements will drive progress in sustainable fishing, helping to address the urgent need to conserve our ocean while also feeding a growing global population. Implementing the changes needed to meet the higher bar for sustainability set by version 3.0 of the MSC Fisheries Standard will require additional funding for science, research and innovation. The MSC is supporting that work and rewarding fisheries for their long-term commitment to sustainability through a new initiative, the Ocean Stewardship Fund.

More information on the implication of version 3.0 of the MSC Fisheries Standard for tuna fisheries is available in this [briefing document](#).



Ocean Stewardship Fund: Supporting Improvements in Tuna Fisheries

The MSC's [Ocean Stewardship Fund \(OSF\)](#) was launched in 2018 with the ambition of driving positive change in our marine ecosystems and supporting fisheries at all stages of their sustainability journey. By providing grants for fishery improvements and funding crucial research in areas like bycatch reduction, marine habitat protection, and the impacts of climate change, the OSF is making significant strides in promoting and supporting sustainable practices around the world.

Now entering its fifth year, the MSC has committed 5% of annual royalties from sales of certified products into the OSF, in addition to pursuing contributions from third-party philanthropic donations, with the aim of mobilising \$100 million in the next decade. Tuna fisheries have successfully accessed various strands of the fund, with over £450,000 allocated to 10 different projects since the fund's inception.

As part of the OSF's [Science and Research Fund](#), researchers from AZTI in the Indian Ocean tagged 28 silky sharks with satellite tags after a successful trip around the Seychelles in October 2020. The tagging data was used to monitor post-release mortality as well as migratory patterns, which could be used to support new management measures in order to help close conditions in the [MSC certified Echebaster skipjack tuna fleet](#). As part of the project, researchers also explored the design and construction of biodegradable FADs and investigated what damage derelict FADs do to corals.

In Indonesia, the International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) received two grants as part of OSF's [Transition Assistance Fund](#), to improve transparency in the Indonesian tuna supply chain. OSF funding was also used to facilitate the training of fishery observers and map the location of over 100 previously unrecorded anchored FADs and fishing nets to better understand the range of fisheries active in the region. In South Africa, WWF and the albacore pole and line fishery received support from the same funding strand to review any endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species that may interact with the fishery and investigate effective harvest control rules and fishery management plans. The fishery, which was part of the In-Transition to MSC (ITM) programme, became the first ITM fishery to enter full assessment to the MSC Standard in December 2023.

A full list of projects supporting tuna fisheries and funded by the Ocean Stewardship Fund can be found on the following page and more detail on the scope of each is available on our Ocean Stewardship Fund website.



Tuna Fishery Projects Supported by the Ocean Stewardship Fund

Science and Research Fund

- Echebatar Fleet and Purse Seine Skipjack Tuna fishery (2020)
- Tuna Australia and Australian Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (2021)
- SATHOAN French Bluefin Tuna Artisanal Longline and Handline Fishery (2022)
- Papua New Guinea (PNG) Fishing Industry Association's Purse Seine Skipjack & Yellowfin Tuna Fishery: Safina Center (2023)
- Eastern Pacific Ocean tropical Tuna Purse Seine Fishery: TUNACONS Foundation (2023)

Transition Assistance Fund

- International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) and the Kendari Pole and Line Skipjack and Yellowfin Tuna Fishery (2020)
- International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) and the Kendari Handline Yellowfin Tuna Fishery (2020)
- South African Albacore Tuna Pole and Line Fishery and WWF South Africa (2020)

Recertification Assistance Fund

- Canada Highly Migratory Species Foundation (CHMSF) British Columbia Albacore Tuna North Pacific (2021)

Innovation Fund

- On-board Social Accountability (OSA) International and Global Tuna Fisheries (2021)

Conclusion

Following several years during which the availability of MSC certified tuna became scarcer, shoppers in the UK now have more sustainable options to choose from than ever before. This is possible thanks to several supermarkets and brands investing in and committing to growing their MSC labelled tuna ranges over the past two years. As a result, the UK is once again one of the world's leading markets for certified sustainable tuna. We hope this second edition of our MSC UK Tuna Shopper Report offers a positive reflection of the progress that has been made and encourages others to do their part to increase these achievements further. To summarise some of key findings of the report:

- There continues to be strong growth in the number of tuna fisheries meeting the MSC Standard, increasing the availability of raw material available to brands and retailers in the UK looking to selling labelled products
- While most consumers in Great Britain want to do their part by buying sustainably caught tuna, there is still confusion about what to look for when trying to make the right choice
- Encouragingly, the availability of MSC labelled tuna products in UK supermarkets has grown considerably over the past two years and supports consumers in making trusted, sustainable choices
- With a number of major commitments to selling 100% MSC labelled tuna by 2025, shoppers in the UK can expect to see even more sustainably sourced tuna options in the years ahead
- The new version of the MSC Standard will require tuna fisheries to make significant improvements in several areas. While the market is increasingly rewarding tuna fisheries for achieving certification, further support will be critical to incentivise these fisheries to invest in making the progress required by the new Standard

While this report offers a snapshot of the tuna landscape in the UK retail market at a moment in time, the MSC's quarterly newsletter, [Sustainable Tuna News](#), provides a way of staying regularly updated on global tuna developments within the programme. We are grateful for the leadership many of our partners have shown in rewarding tuna fisheries that have committed to operating sustainably and providing shoppers across the UK with a great variety of certified tuna options. We are looking forward to seeing how the market continues to build on the progress of the past two years in the year ahead.





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All data in this report is correct as of 31 December 2023, unless otherwise stated.
The reporting year is 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Find out more:

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