

GENERAL ECONOMIC DATA ON FISHERY - April 2007
 LIBERIA - NATIONAL FISHERY SECTOR OVERVIEW (FROM NFSO)
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NFSO National Fishery Sector Overview - provides a comprehensive overview of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for each country featured, including economic and demographic information, structure of the industry, development prospects, sector management and status and trends.

Area:	111 370 km ²
Water area:	15 050 km ²
Population (2004):	3.3 million
GDP at purchaser's value (2005):	US\$ 548.4 million
GNI per head (2005):	\$US 130
Agricultural GDP (2005):	US\$ 348.8 million
Fisheries GDP (estimate for 2005):	12% of Agricultural GDP

2. Fisheries data (2004)

	Production	Imports	Exports	Total supply	Per capita supply
	'000 tonnes live weight				kg/year
Fish for direct human consumption	11 314	3 536	84	14 766	4.4
Fish for animal feed and other purposes					

Estimated Employment (2004):	
(i) Primary sector (including aquaculture):	2 950
(ii) Secondary sector:	8 300
Trade (2005):	
Value of fisheries imports:	US\$ 3 177 000
Value of fisheries exports:	US\$ 702 000

3. Fishery sector structure

Overall fishery sector

Liberia has a total area of about 111 370 km², of which 96 320 km² (86 percent) is dry land, drained by natural streams and rivers. The vegetation consists of forest and woodland (39 percent), pastures (2 percent) and arable land (36 percent). Freshwater resources cover

15 050 km² (14 percent) of the total area of Liberia, comprising rivers, lakes, lagoons, creeks and streams that drain to the Atlantic coast, bringing nutrients to sustain the primary productivity of the shelf.

With an Atlantic coastline of about 579 km and a continental shelf averaging 34 km in width, the fishing grounds cover 186 322.2 km² within the EEZ.

Fisheries are important for several reasons:

- they provide a means of employment and livelihood for about 11 250 people who are engaged on a full-time basis, and perhaps hundreds of thousands more on a part-time basis;
- they provide a cheap source of animal protein for the population; and
- they are a potential source of foreign exchange and revenue, as tuna, lobsters, shrimp, etc., abound in both fresh and marine waters.

The sector provides about 65 percent of the animal protein needs of the country at the moment, since the livestock programme is still being revitalized. Fisheries contribute about 3.2 percent to the GDP of Liberia, and create job and income earning opportunities, thus generating revenue for government.

National fisheries has three main subcomponents:

- marine fisheries, involving industrial and artisanal activities;
- inland fisheries, mainly artisanal; and
- aquaculture, through subsistence fish farming.

The coastal (marine) fishery comprises both industrial and artisanal. This subsector is more mechanized than the other subsectors, in that it utilizes improved methods of fishing, equipment and gear. It is also the sector most relevant for implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in the Liberian context.

The inland fishery subsector is primitive, but contributes 25 percent of the fish consumed by rural dwellers. The development of this subsector is a focus for supplementing all other sectors of the fisheries.

Aquaculture is largely subsistence. Two fish hatcheries, established at Klay and Douyee Town with assistance from the EU, were left in ruins by the recent hostilities. Culture techniques involve mainly pond-based hatchery and pond management of tilapia.

Fish processing and preservation methods include salting, smoke drying and fermenting, usually involving the use of choker smokers and kilns by artisanal fishers, and freezing by the industrial companies.

There are about 11 250 persons involved in fisheries, including full-time and part-time, sport fishers and fish dealers. There are currently 1050 fish farmers.

About 60 percent of the total domestic fish catch is landed by the artisanal subsector, with landing sites distributed throughout the country, especially along the coastline.

The pre-war estimate of the sustainable yield of the continental shelf of Liberia was about 180 000 t/year, and 40 000 t/year for freshwater. Catch has however ranged between 10 300 and 11 700 t/yr from 2000 to 2004. A research survey in 1986 estimated the total biomass of both pelagic and demersal species at 800 000 t.

2. Inland subsector

Liberia has two kinds of river systems: major basins that drain 97 percent of the territory and originate from the Fouta Djallon highlands in Guinea, and short coastal watercourses, which drain about 3 percent of the country. There is a total of 1800 km of river, most of which is shallow, rocky and with cataracts and fallen logs that render them innavigable. There are also large areas of inland valley swamps and numerous coastal lagoons, including Lake Piso, one of West Africa's largest lagoons. Inland fishery is underdeveloped and traditional in the methods of exploitation, and not monitored. As such, there is no information on its level of production.