



## COMMON SOLE (*SOLEA SOLEA*)



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### BIOLOGY AND HABITAT

- **Species description** ([Read more](#))

The common sole (*Solea solea*) is one of the largest species of flatfish, belonging to the family of *Soleidae*.

- **Geographical distribution and habitat** ([Read more](#))

Common sole (*Solea solea*) is found on sandy or muddy seabed in saltwater and brakish water. It is broadly distributed in the NE, the Eastern Central Atlantic, and the Mediterranean Sea.

### RESOURCE, EXPLOITATION AND MANAGEMENT

- **Stock and resource status/conservation measures** ([Read more](#))

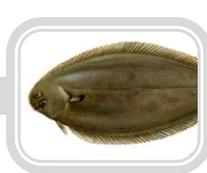
The minimum conservation size for sole is set at 24 cm in every fishing area, except in the Mediterranean Sea where the minimum size is 20 cm. Catches are managed through TACs and quotas.

- **Production methods and fishing gears** ([Read more](#))

The main fishing gears used are bottom trawls, gillnets, and seines.

Source: [Information system on commercial designations](#)

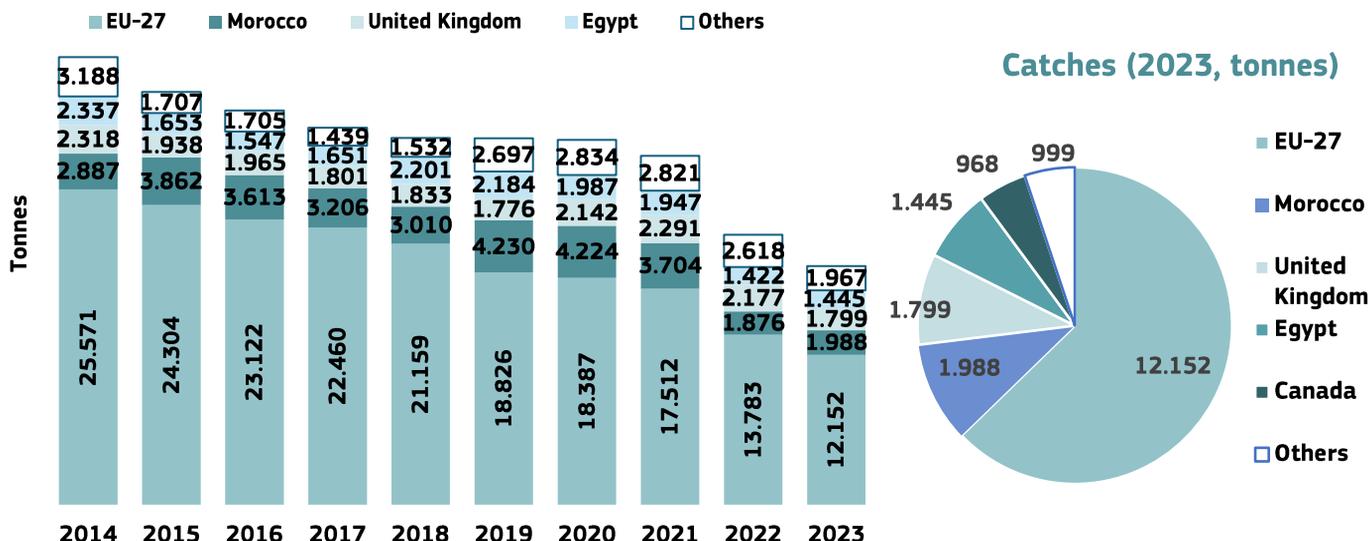
# Common sole



## CATCHES

### Evolution of world catches

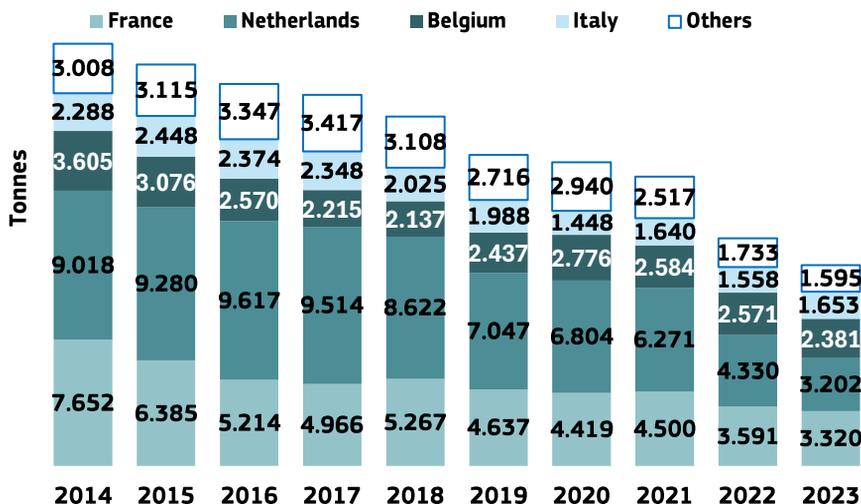
- Common sole catches reached 19.351tonnes in 2023, i.e. **0,02%** of the global catches. The majority of this is caught by the EU fleet (63% of the global catches), followed by the Moroccan (10%) and the British fleets (9%). During the last decade (2014-2023), sole catches have decreased by 47% at global level, related by the decrease in all the fleets targeting the species.



### Evolution of EU catches

Source: FAO

- In 2023, the EU catches of common sole reached over 12.000 tonnes. The EU catches have decreased by 52% during the last decades due to quota reductions. France, the Netherlands and Belgium were the main EU producer accounting for 27%, 26%, and 20% of EU volume in 2023. All EU fleets experienced strong decreases of their catches over the last decade (2014-2023): -57% for France, -64% for the Netherlands, and -34% for Belgium.



Source: FAO

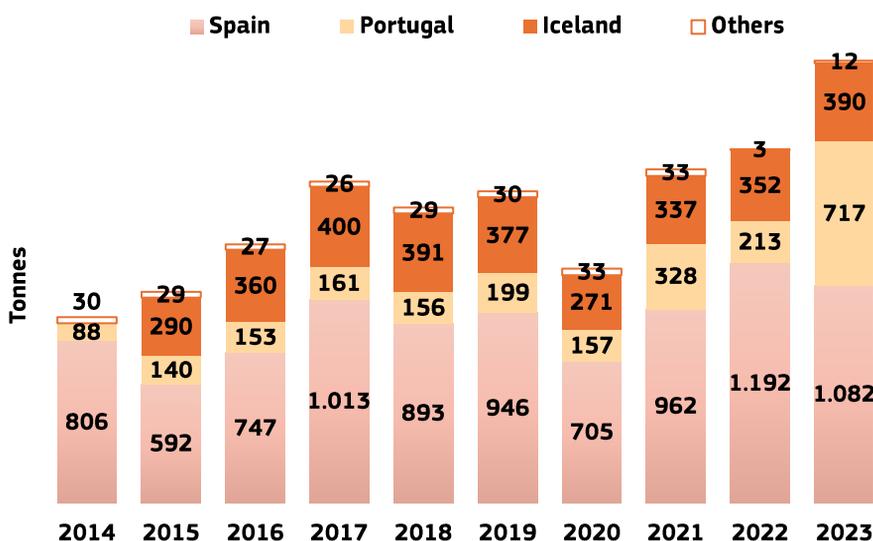


## AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION

### Evolution of world aquaculture

There is no aquaculture production of common sole. Data on aquaculture below concerns other sole species.

- The world aquaculture production of sole increased by 138% in the last ten years (between 2014 and 2023), but remained marginal, reaching 2.201 tonnes in 2023. The EU was the main producer of sole, accounting for 82% of the global production, followed by Iceland (17%). Sole aquaculture consist almost exclusively of Senegalese sole (99% of the world production in 2023).

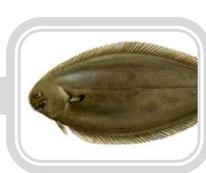


Source: FAO

## PROCESSING

There is no [PRODCOM](#) code referring to sole processed products. Additionally, common sole is mainly sold fresh. Some volumes are frozen but this represents a niche market as it targets the premium segment (only a few specialised retailers propose frozen sole).

## Common sole



## TRADE

- [Combined nomenclature](#)

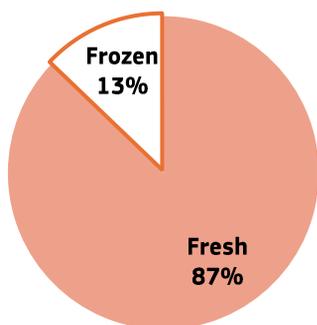
### EU trade of sole products (tonnes – 2024)

Data concerns common sole and other *solea* species

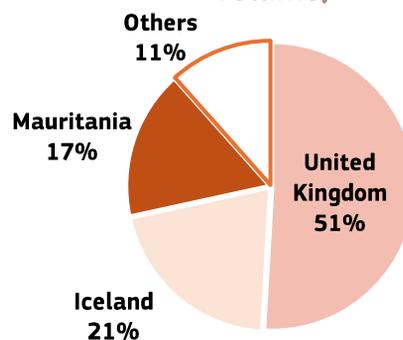
CN code	Product	EU imports	EU exports
03 02 23 00	Fresh or chilled sole "Solea spp."	2.420	424
03 03 33 00	Frozen sole "Solea spp."	358	606
<b>Total</b>		<b>2.778</b>	<b>1.030</b>

- Extra-EU imports** reached 2.778 tonnes in 2024, of which 87% were fresh and 13% were frozen sole. In 2024, EU imports originated mostly from the United Kingdom (51% of the volume imported; 1.414 tonnes) and to a lesser extent from Iceland (21%) and Mauritania (17%). The main importing countries within the EU in 2023 were France, the Netherlands, and Spain, which together imported 89% of the volume.

Imports by product type (2024, % in volume)



Main EU suppliers (2024, % in volume)



- Extra-EU exports:**

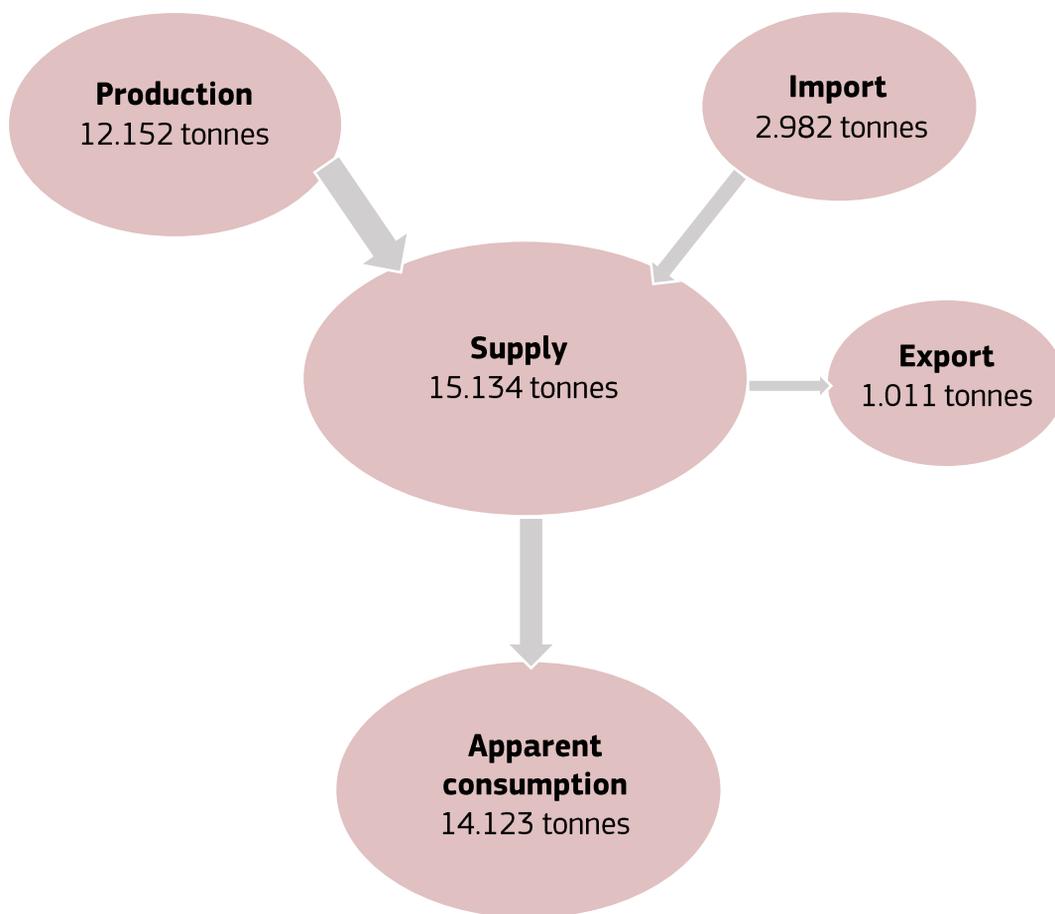
In 2024, export volumes of sole totaled over 1.000 tonnes. The majority exports (59%) were frozen and 41% of were exported fresh. The Netherlands was the largest exporter within the EU, representing 55% of the exported volume, followed by Spain (33%). In 2024, the United States was the main destination market, representing 75% of EU exports.

# Common sole



## Supply balance

**EU supply balance (2023<sup>1</sup>) – Tonnes of live weight equivalent<sup>2</sup> – Common sole:**



Source: FAO/ EUROSTAT-COMEXT

<sup>1</sup> Supply balance is provided for the year 2023 (trade data for 2023 were taken into account). Detailed trade data provided in the slide 5 concern the year 2024.

<sup>2</sup> The [conversion factors](#) were used to convert net weight of imports and exports of fishery and aquaculture products into live weight equivalents.

## Common sole



# PRICES ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN (EUR/kg)

## First-sale (fresh)

First-sale prices are provided for the main EU producers.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
<b>France</b>	14,52	14,02	14,58	15,39	14,98	16,03	18,40	18,50	19,08	19,66	EUMOFA
<b>Netherlands</b>	12,36	12,23	13,22	14,40	12,85	13,84	18,33	18,76	19,50	19,26	EUMOFA
<b>Belgium</b>	12,94	12,78	13,90	14,82	13,21	14,55	18,48	18,91	19,83	19,32	EUMOFA

(\*) From January to October 2025

## Wholesale (fresh)

Wholesale prices are reported for Rungis (France) and Mercamadrid (Madrid, Spain).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
<b>France - whole fresh, size 1</b>	24,33	20,87	25,91	26,97	24,71	28,66	35,07	38,00	30,24	36,35	Rungis (RNM)
<b>France - whole fresh, size 2</b>	22,39	19,59	22,41	25,73	23,32	26,29	29,05	31,78	28,00	28,08	Rungis (RNM)
<b>France - whole fresh, size 3</b>	19,61	17,03	18,98	21,94	21,12	21,96	25,53	25,79	22,65	22,68	Rungis (RNM)
<b>France - whole fresh, size 4</b>	15,68	14,18	16,79	16,47	16,67	17,95	23,21	22,36	19,19	20,23	Rungis (RNM)
<b>Spain - whole fresh</b>	19,76	22,40	21,03	19,76	19,66	21,85	24,84	22,75	24,49	23,80	Mercamadrid
<b>Spain - whole fresh, farmed</b>	13,26	13,46	14,02	15,60	17,48	n.a.	n.a.	22,05	22,50	22,09	Mercamadrid

(\*) From January to October 2025

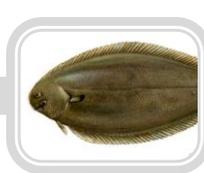
## Retail/Consumption

Retail prices are reported for Spain and France.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
<b>France - fresh</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	21,1	21,3	21	24	24,6	25,4	n.a.	FranceAgriMer
<b>France - fresh, portion</b>	22,42	22,26	23,65	23,57	22,22	23,54	27,59	27,84	28,80	30,38	Rungis (RNM)
<b>Spain - fresh</b>	9,66	9,85	9,67	10,09	10,31	12,03	12,6	14,12	14,02	n.a.	MAPA
<b>Spain - frozen</b>	9	9,21	9,5	10,33	10,28	10,57	11,68	14,49	14,17	n.a.	

(\*) From January to October 2025

## Common sole



## PRICES ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN (EUR/kg)

Data concerns common sole, and other *solea* species

### Extra-EU import (whole)

EU imports from third countries concern fresh and frozen whole sole. Main importers were France, the Netherlands, and Spain in 2024.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
<b>France - fresh whole</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	10,81	12,36	13,12	13,93	14,93	14,40	EUMOFA
<b>Netherlands - fresh whole</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	12,79	10,38	15,92	16,98	17,63	18,74	EUMOFA
<b>Spain - fresh whole</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	8,15	9,26	10,58	11,55	10,88	11,31	EUMOFA
<b>Spain - frozen whole</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4,09	3,93	4,48	4,75	4,14	4,38	EUMOFA

(\*) From January to September 2025

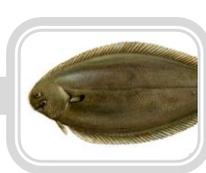
### Extra-EU export (whole)

The Netherlands and Spain were the main EU exporter of sole to third countries. EU exports are composed of fresh and frozen whole soles.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
<b>Netherlands - frozen whole</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	14,41	15,20	23,20	22,42	24,45	25,06	EUMOFA
<b>Spain - fresh whole</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	12,22	16,17	19,07	20,92	20,47	19,25	EUMOFA

(\*) From January to September 2025

## Common sole



## MARKETING

- National lists of commercial designations ([Read more](#))
- Information system on commercial designations and scientific names in all EU languages ([Read more](#))
- Applicable marketing standard for sole (*Solea solea*) ([Read more](#))
- There is no name protected under **Protected Geographical Indication** (PGI) for sole

## CONSUMPTION

- Common sole is not among the 15<sup>th</sup> most consumed species in the EU (source: [The EU Fish Market – 2025 edition](#), EUMOFA)
- Apparent consumption per capita of common sole in 2023: **0,03 kg** live weight equivalent (source: [Supply balance - 2023](#) EUMOFA)
- Nutritional value (Sole, nutrition values per serving 100g) ([Read more](#))

Nutrition values	Sole
Energy (kcal)	86
Total fat (g)	2,3
Saturates (g)	0,55
Carbohydrate (g)	0
Sugars (g)	0
Protein (g)	14,9
Salt (mg)	0,36