



# Market Report

A Snapshot of your Market Sector

## Shellfish Production

This pack has been designed to provide information on setting up a business in the **Shellfish Production** industry in Scotland, as well as helping to inform the market research section of your business plan. You can find more information on how to write a business plan from the Business Gateway website ([www.bgateway.com/businessplan](http://www.bgateway.com/businessplan)), including an interactive template and tips to get you started.

This market report was updated by Business Gateway in **June 2024**. If you find the information contained in this document useful, tell us about it! Send us feedback [here](#); we will use your comments to help improve our service.

## What do I need to know about the Shellfish Production market?

The following summary statistics have been taken from market research reports and reliable resources that the Information Service uses to compile industry information. They should give you an indication of how your industry is faring at present and whether there is demand for your type of business:

- ◆ The current cost-of-living crisis in the UK has significantly dampened sales of fish and seafood as consumers choose more affordable alternatives. The Aquaculture industry's **revenue is estimated to fall by 6% in 2023-24 to £1.4 billion**, while the average industry profit margin is set to be 11%. (IBISWorld, *Aquaculture in the UK*, September 2023)
- ◆ **Prawns** are the most popular shellfish by a considerable margin, **72% of fish/shellfish users eating them compared to 32% eating crab**, the second most popular type. Prawns are more affordable than other types of shellfish, as well as being more approachable, taste and texture-wise. (Mintel, *Fish and Shellfish UK*, January 2022)
- ◆ Rising health consciousness has pushed up seafood consumption in spite of rising prices. Thanks to the well known benefits of omega-3 fatty acids (which are mainly found in oily fish) like reduced risk of heart disease, health-conscious Britons are willing to spend more on this food group. According to Defra's Family Food 2022 report, the average seafood consumption in the UK stood at 162.98g per person per week or just above one portion (140g) per week. This represented a 1% growth from the previous year but remains under the NHS recommended level of two portions per week. (IBISWorld, *Marine Fishing in the UK*, April 2024)
- ◆ **In 2022, 9,092 tonnes of mussels** were produced for the table market. This is the highest level of mussel production recorded in Scotland. There was an increase in the production of native oyster from **8,000 to 109,000 shells** in 2022. Employment levels decreased by **16% from the previous year with 255** full, part-time and casual staff being employed in 2022. The Scottish Shellfish farming industry is estimated to be worth approximately **£10.4million** at first sale value, an increase of **6% on 2021**. (Scottish Government, [Scottish Shellfish Farm Production Survey 2022](#), May 2023)
- ◆ The national organisation for this industry is [Shellfish Association of Great Britain](#). Other industry bodies include [Scotland's Aquaculture](#), [Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers](#), [Scottish Fishermen's Federation](#), [Marine Scotland](#), [Sea Fish Industry Authority](#) and [Seafood Scotland](#).



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## Where can I find more information on my market?

The Information Service has access to a number of databases which can offer more detail on this industry. Some of these reports are listed below - if you would like to be sent extracts from any of these reports, please contact us on **0300 013 4753** or email [info@bgateway.com](mailto:info@bgateway.com).

- ◆ **IBISWorld – Marine Fishing in the UK (April 2024):** Scotland is the largest marine fishing area in the UK, accounting for most of the seafood caught in the country. Scotland consistently accounts for around half of the total landed value of the UK. A significant amount of low-margin fish is caught in Scotland; however, the volume of caught seafood is higher than vessels from other countries in the UK.
- ◆ **Mintel – Fish and Shellfish – UK (January 2022):** 61% of fish/shellfish users only eat one or two types of shellfish. Repertoires of shellfish usage are highest amongst higher earners, 53% of those whose household income is £75,000 or overeating at least three types of shellfish, compared to just 18% of those with a household income of under £15,500. This demonstrates how the higher cost of shellfish is prohibitive for many, with usage of most shellfish types rising among higher-income households, prawns being the only exception.
- ◆ **Euromonitor – Fish and Seafood in the United Kingdom (December 2023):** Fish and seafood is traditionally considered one of the more expensive protein options in the UK, and this perception is taking a toll on volume sales. As the cost-of-living crisis persists, local consumers are seeking ways to stretch their budgets, leading to a notable shift away from fresh fish and seafood. Many have opted for more affordable sources of protein across the broader food industry. For consumers who remain committed to enjoying fish and seafood, preferences have shifted, where instead of indulging in pricier, fresh seafood options, they are increasingly turning to processed formats such as fish fingers and other cost-effective segments within processed foods.

There are also a number of online resources you may find helpful:

- ◆ [Scottish Government Marine Scotland Science, Scottish Shellfish Production Survey 2023](#). This report is based on the return of an annual survey questionnaire sent to all active authorised shellfish farming business in Scotland. Statistics on employment, production and value of shellfish from Scottish shellfish farms are also included.
- ◆ [DEFRA – Fish, Shellfish or Crustacean Farm Authorisation](#). This site contains information on the necessary authorisations and regulations for setting up a shellfish or crustacean farm which may be useful for you at the start of your business.
- ◆ [Seafish – Insight and research](#). This website provides information on a range of topics and sectors in the seafood industry including fishing, processing, trade and retail data.

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## How can I find out about my competitors?

Business Gateway's online guide to [Competitor Analysis](#) explains how to find your competitors, how to research what they're doing and how to act on what you learn about them.

Immediate competition will be from other businesses in your local area. There are several online directories which can be used to find company information and generate lists easily and at no expense. Many Local Authorities also publish local business directories on the web. Below are some key web resources:

- ◆ General business directories such as [Yell](#) ,[Thomson Local](#) or [Google Maps](#)
- ◆ Trade specialists like [EuroPages](#) (European directory), [The Wholesaler](#) or [Free Index](#)
- ◆ Business to business (B2B) specialists such as [Kompass](#)

Likewise, your local Chamber of Commerce may publish a members' directory; find your local Chamber on the [Scottish Chambers](#) website.

Once you've identified who your competitors are, the next step is to gather information on the way they do business. Which services do they provide? How do they market themselves? How much do they charge?

To learn about your competitors:

- ◆ Look for articles or adverts in local newspapers, trade press and directories.
- ◆ Try to read their marketing material; if the company has an online presence, visit the company's website as a first port of call. Not only does it give you a better understanding of the company's activities, it can also offer a wealth of information such as a company history or staff biographies, as well as the company's partners or suppliers
- ◆ Search for information on limited UK companies via the [Companies House](#) website
- ◆ Gain an insight into your competitor's performance using credit checks and the accounts that limited companies are required to submit to Companies House each year.

We can provide credit checks free of charge; if you are interested in using this resource, or looking for us to help you find relevant publications, please contact us by emailing [info@bgateway.com](mailto:info@bgateway.com) or by calling **0300 013 4753**



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## What about suppliers?

[Choosing and Managing Suppliers](#) can help you decide what you need from a supplier, how to identify one and how to choose one to deal with.

Trade associations or industry specific organisations may also be able to recommend suppliers or contacts. You can also use the aforementioned resources for finding competitors to find suppliers.

Once you have decided on a supplier, we can run a credit check on the company to help assess their financial stability. We provide credit checks free of charge; if you are interested in using the resource please [info@bgateway.com](mailto:info@bgateway.com) or by calling **0300 013 4753**.

## Who are my customers?

Your business plan should include information about the customers you would expect. Business Gateway's guides on [Market and customer research](#) will help you to identify new trends, opportunities, customers and competitors.

It can be useful to group your customers by geographical location, age or lifestyle. The websites listed below are freely available and can provide most of this information. If you can't find what you're looking for from these websites, please contact us and one of the team will be happy to help:

- ◆ Access the latest population estimates from the [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#). NRS also offers demographic factsheets for each council area in Scotland, which can provide summary statistics for the area you will be based in.
- ◆ Information from the most recent census in 2011 is released via the official website. See in particular the [Census Area Profiles](#). Clicking on your area of interest will give the latest population figures, including estimates by age.
- ◆ [Understanding Scottish Places](#) has interactive profiles of towns and cities across Scotland. It can be useful for understanding the interrelationships and flows between towns, and also gives comparisons between two or more places.
- ◆ [Scottish Government Statistics](#) provide accurate and up-to-date statistics on Scotland, covering population, health, education and housing.
- ◆ [The Scottish Household Survey](#) provides information on the structure, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of Scottish households, both at a national and local level.
- ◆ [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) is the recognised national statistical body for the UK. ONS covers a wide range of demographic, economic and social issues at a UK level.

## How can you help me with other aspects of starting my business?

The Business Gateway website has guides, videos, online tutorials and tips on all aspects of starting up a business in Scotland. Follow the links below to explore each resource:

### Accountancy

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland's (ICAS) "[Find a Chartered Accountant](#)" tool

### Funding

[Practical information](#) on finance and funding for starting and growing your business

### Insurance

[Business insurance guide](#)

### Legal Help

Gov.uk "[Licence Finder](#)" tool

Law Society of Scotland's "[Find a Solicitor](#)" tool

### Pricing

Business Companion [Pricing & payment guide](#).

**Please note:** the most effective way to research pricing is to conduct your own research – visit wholesalers or suppliers to obtain price lists, find quotes from similar companies and work out what other businesses in your area are charging

### Promotion

[BG guides to Marketing](#)

### Training

[Skills Development Scotland's My World of Work](#)

[Funding for training](#)

[Small Business Bonus Scheme \(Scotland\)](#)

Your local Business Gateway can offer events, workshops and 1:2:1 support on all aspects of starting and developing your business. Call the helpline on **0300 013 4753** to find out what is available in your area.

We hope you find this Market Report useful and we'd love to hear your feedback [here](#).

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You must not rely on the information in the report as an alternative to advice from an appropriately qualified professional. If you have any specific questions speak to your Business Gateway Advisor or consult an appropriately qualified professional.

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**Updated by: Rosie**

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