

# **Temperate tuna imports to Thailand during 2020-2024**

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## **Abstract**

Thailand is a major producer of tuna products in the world, with most of the tuna imported from both the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Temperate tuna is one of the raw materials in the tuna industry, with frozen bluefin tuna mostly imported by sea and air. During 2020-2024, the highest import volume in 2020 was 89,563,791.26 tons, with the highest import volumes by fishing area in the Indian Ocean are EEZ Malaysia, EEZ Indonesia and FAO 51, respectively. This study examines the trends in the import of temperate tuna in Thailand, the import volume and value, and the tuna fishing grounds in the Indian Ocean.

**Key words:** Temperate tuna, bluefin tuna, Indian Ocean

## **Introduction**

Thailand is the world's leading exporter of tuna products. In 2024, canned tuna exports grew by 20.73% to 1.85 billion USD, and export markets grew in all regions, especially in North and South America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The Americas were the highest export market at 632 million USD. Due to the growth of the export market, the Thai tuna industry has limited raw materials, so it has to rely on importing fresh and frozen tuna from abroad. There are 5 species of imported tuna: Skipjack Tuna, Yellowfin Tuna, Albacore or Longfin Tuna, Bigeye Tuna, and Bluefin Tuna. Most tuna is imported from fisheries in both the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Temperate tuna is one of the raw materials in the tuna industry, with frozen bluefin tuna and albacore or longfin tuna mostly imported by sea and air. Tuna is landing through port inspection offices, where vessels are inspected at ports using Thailand's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for vessel control and inspection under Port State Measures (PSM) in compliance with the Port State Measures Agreement to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

This paper describes the trends in Temperate tuna imports to Thailand during 2020 - 2024, particularly Bluefin Tuna and Albacore, including the value of Thailand's imports over the past 5 years, as well as the proportions of import volume and catch area in the Indian Ocean.

## **Material**

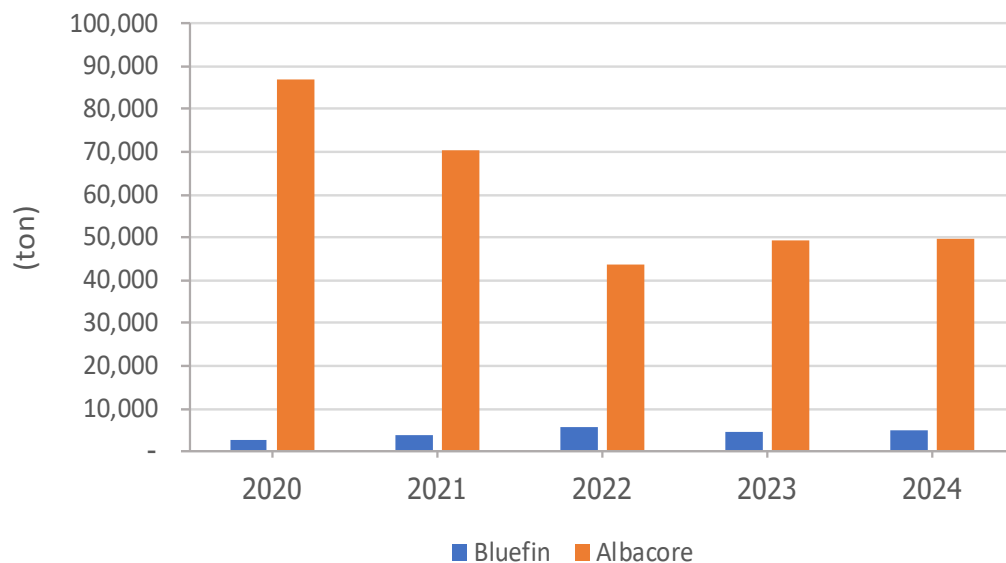
The data used in this study included the collection of volume (tons), value (million USD), and Catch areas from 2020 - 2024, which were recorded and compiled by the port inspection Office, Department of fisheries Thailand.

The main port inspection offices for tuna landings include: Suvarnabhumi Airport Fishery Inspection Office, Ladkrabang Fishery Inspection Office, Fishery Inspection Regional Center 2 (Bangkok), Fish Quarantine and Inspection Regional Center 3 (Bangkok) Chonburi Fishery Inspection Office, Fish Quarantine and Inspection Regional Center 3 (Songkhla), and Fishery Inspection Regional Center 8 (Songkhla).

## Result and discussion

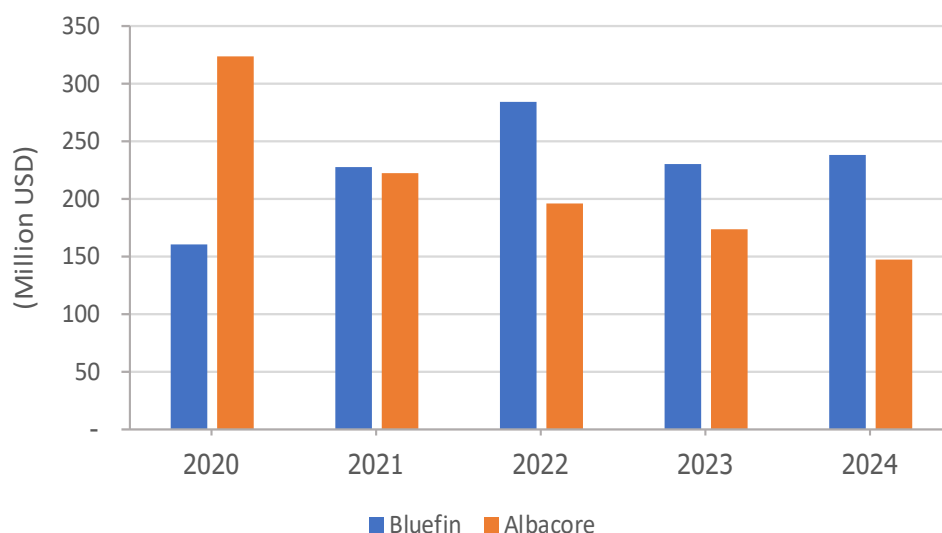
### 1. Statistics on imports of Temperate tuna

The Volume of Temperate tuna imports during 2020 - 2024 totaled 321,449 tones, with Albacore being the largest. The highest total import volume was 89,564 tones in 2020, of which 2,764.71 tones were bluefin tuna and Albacore 86,799.08 tones. In 2024, Albacore imports reached 49,684.08 tones, followed by 4,782.21 tones of bluefin tuna (Figure 1)



**Figure 1** Volume of temperate tuna imports in Thailand during 2020 – 2024

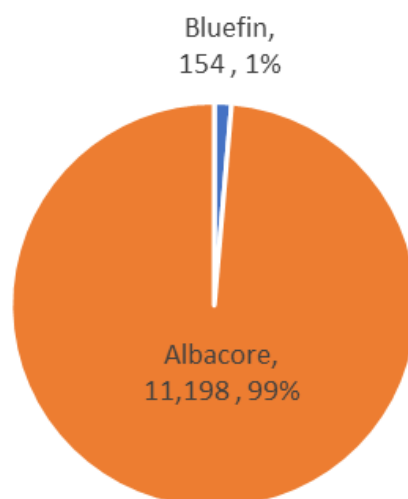
Total imports of temperate tuna over the past 5 years have been on a significant downward trend towards 2022 and are currently on an upward trend. Meanwhile, the imported value of bluefin tuna is trending in different directions. The total value of Albacore tends to continuously decrease. The highest total import value of bluefin tuna was 284.33 million USD in 2022. The highest total import value of Albacore was 323.94 million USD in 2020. In 2024, the value of Albacore imports reached 238.19 million USD, followed by 147.07 million USD of bluefin tuna (Figure 2)



**Figure 2** Value of temperate tuna imports in Thailand during 2020 – 2024

## 2. Proportion of imports temperate tuna

In 2024, a total of 11,352.14 tones of temperate tunas caught in the Indian Ocean were imported to Thailand. Albacore was the main species accounting for 154 tones followed by bluefin tuna, 11,198.14 tones (Figure 3). Most of the imported tuna were unloaded from carrier vessels at Thai fishing ports was 11,347.54 tones following by airplane was 4.6 tons.



**Figure 3** Proportion of imported temperate tuna in 2024

The chart showed that in 2024 only 1 percent of bluefin tuna will be imported, a very small amount compared to 99 percent of imported Albacore. The value of bluefin tuna imports was 3.04 million USD and Albacore 31.16 million USD.

The catch of temperate tuna in the Indian Ocean imports are mainly fished by hook and line and Purse seine. The total volume of tuna imports from the Indian Ocean reached 11,277.14 tones in 2024, of which 154 tones were bluefin tuna and 11,123.14 tones were Albacore. In 2024, the highest import volume of bluefin tuna was in FAO 57 at 135.09 tones and Albacore was in EEZ Malaysia at 4,923.31 tones. (Table 1)

Table 1 Temperate tuna import volumes by source during 2020 - 2024

Source	Volume: tones									
	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Bluefin	Albacore	Bluefin	Albacore	Bluefin	Albacore	Bluefin	Albacore	Bluefin	Albacore
EEZ SC	-	537.79	-	144.20	-	198.51	-	216.27	8.62	1.50
EEZ TH	-	0.01	-	0.15	-	0.01	-	0.00	-	5.61
EEZ MY	-	3,141.41	-	2,606.72	-	2,998.20	-	4,126.23	-	4,923.31
EEZ AU	0.10	812.09	0.67	1,181.10	-	975.97	2.58	702.60	8.24	1,439.47
EEZ ID	4.01	1,468.16	98.53	2,359.07	138.23	4,786.24	63.65	1,741.97	2.05	2,037.27
EEZ OM	-	-	-	-	-	96.22	-	96.99	-	-
FAO 51	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	89.60	-	2,464.15
FAO 57	0.22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	135.09	251.83

The table shows that the catch of tuna in the temperate Indian Ocean has been increasing continuously, especially Albacore in the EEZ Malaysia.

## Conclusion

Thailand imports 2 main types of temperate tuna are bluefin tuna and Albacore. Bluefin tuna import volumes are small, which is not consistent with the high import value. All imported tuna is frozen tuna used as raw materials in the processing industry. The main import proportions of temperate tuna caught from the Indian Ocean are albacore, accounting for 99%, and bluefin tuna, accounting for 1%. In 2024, the highest import volume of temperate tuna was albacore. However, at the same time, bluefin tuna has the highest import value. The temperate tuna fishing area in the Indian Ocean with the highest import volume in Thailand is EEZ Malaysia.

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