



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# Top 10 species groups in global aquaculture 2018

FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department



This factsheet presents the top 10 species groups in global aquaculture 2018 (Table 1) and features one of the fastest growing species groups: *crayfishes* (Table 2). The ranking of all 63 species groups in global aquaculture 2018 is illustrated on the back cover. More information about the top 10 species groups at regional and national level can be found in a more comprehensive factsheet as [Supplementary Materials](#).<sup>1</sup> The comprehensive factsheet also elaborates on the species grouping methodology used in the ranking exercise.

## Top 10 species groups in world aquaculture 2018

In 2018, 438 ASFIS – Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Information System – species items<sup>2</sup> were farmed in 196 countries/territories with 115 million tonnes of world production, an increase of 2.3 million tonnes (2.04 percent) from the 2017 level (Table 1).

There has been no significant change on the top 10 list between 2017 and 2018 (Table 1).<sup>3</sup> The top four items remained unchanged, while *marine shrimps and prawns* moved up from #6 to #5 switching positions with *oysters*. *Scallops* (#10 in 2017) dropped down to #11 in 2018 because of the 2.3 percent decline in its production quantity.

Half of the top 10 species groups grew faster than the average 2.04 percent growth for all species between 2017 and 2018: *freshwater fishes nei* (#10; 16.58 percent), *marine shrimps and prawns* (#5; 5.04 percent), *oysters* (#6; 4.64 percent), *carps, barbels and other cyprinids* (#1; 3.87 percent) and *brown seaweeds* (#3; 3.4 percent).

Three species groups had below-average growth: *salmons, trouts, smelts* (#9; 1.93 percent), *tilapias and other cichlids* (#4; 1.62 percent) and *catfishes* (#7; 1.58 percent).

The production of two species groups has declined: *red seaweeds* (#2; -3.97 percent) and *clams, cockles, arkshells* (#8; -1.13 percent).

**TABLE 1: Top 10 species groups by quantity in world aquaculture, 2018**

Top 10 species groups		World aquaculture production quantity, 2018				2018 production compared to 2017		
Species group	ISSCAAP division	Number of ASFIS species items in the group farmed in global aquaculture	Number of countries farming the species group	World aquaculture production quantity of the species group (live weight; tonnes)	Share of world aquaculture production quantity of all species (%)	Ranking by quantity in 2017 <sup>e</sup>	Change in quantity (tonnes)	Change in percentage (%)
1. Carps, barbels and other cyprinids <sup>a</sup>	Freshwater fishes	40	93	29 225 694	25.52	#1	1 088 872	3.87
2. Red seaweeds <sup>a</sup>	Aquatic plants	10	34	17 343 783	15.15	#2	- 717 260	-3.97
3. Brown seaweeds <sup>a</sup>	Aquatic plants	9	14	14 929 318	13.04	#3	491 484	3.40
4. Tilapias and other cichlids <sup>a</sup>	Freshwater fishes	17	124	6 031 432	5.27	#4	96 028	1.62
5. Marine shrimps and prawns <sup>b</sup>	Crustaceans	14	59	6 004 353	5.24	#6	287 982	5.04
6. Oysters <sup>a</sup>	Molluscs	12	44	5 994 895	5.24	#5	265 786	4.64
7. Catfishes <sup>c</sup>	Freshwater fishes	30	89	5 781 235	5.05	#7	89 974	1.58
8. Clams, cockles, arkshells <sup>a</sup>	Molluscs	30	22	5 577 541	4.87	#8	- 63 544	-1.13
9. Salmons, trouts, smelts <sup>a</sup>	Diadromous fishes	20	82	3 555 880	3.11	#9	67 405	1.93
10. Freshwater fishes nei <sup>d</sup>	Freshwater fishes	1	63	2 545 076	2.22	#11	362 017	16.58
Other species		255	<i>n.a.</i>	17 518 837	15.30	<i>n.a.</i>	316 168	1.84
All species		438	196	114 508 042	100.00	<i>n.a.</i>	2 284 912	2.04

Data source: FAO Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics. Global aquaculture production 1950–2018 (FishstatJ). March 2020. Available at [www.fao.org/fishery/statistics/software/fishstatj/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/statistics/software/fishstatj/en)

Table 1 notes: <sup>a</sup>ISSCAAP group; ISSCAAP = International Standard Statistical Classification of Aquatic Animals and Plants. <sup>b</sup>Same as ISSCAAP group “shrimps, prawns”. <sup>c</sup>Subgroup of the ISSCAAP group “miscellaneous freshwater fishes”, including freshwater fishes of the order Siluriformes. <sup>d</sup>ASFIS species item that represents a group of miscellaneous freshwater fishes. <sup>e</sup>The 2017 rankings here are slightly different from those presented in a previous factsheet on *Top 10 species groups in global aquaculture 2017* ([www.fao.org/3/ca5224en/CA5224EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca5224en/CA5224EN.pdf)) because the FAO aquaculture production statistics have been updated.



## Featured species group: crayfishes

The 1 711 635 tonnes of world aquaculture production of *crayfishes* – a subgroup of the ISSCAAP group “freshwater crustaceans”, including freshwater decapod crustaceans of the superfamilies Astacoidea and Parastacoidea – made it the #13 largest species group in world aquaculture 2018; see the chart on the back cover.

While the 43 percent production growth between 2017 and 2018 (the highest among the top 50 species groups) has helped it move up one place from #14 to #13 (overtaking *marine perch-like fishes*), *crayfishes* has yet to become one of the top 10 species groups by tonnage. However, *crayfishes* was the #4 species group by value accounting for 5.49 percent of the world aquaculture farmgate value in 2018, following *salmons, trouts, smelts* (8.65 percent), *marine shrimps and prawns* (14.6 percent) and *carps, barbels and other cyprinids* (23.67 percent) – more details can be found in the [Supplementary Materials](#).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) statistics record 12 countries cultivating crayfishes in 2018 (Table 2), yet the production was dominated by only two countries: China (95.74 percent) and United States of America (4.25 percent).

The FAO statistics record seven crayfishes species items being farmed worldwide in 2018, yet red swamp crawfish (*Procambarus clarkii*) accounted for nearly the entire production tonnage; and most of the 12 crayfish farming countries focused on only one species item, with Australia being the only exception (Table 2).

**TABLE 2: Global crayfish aquaculture production, 2018**

Crayfish farming country, 2018	Crayfish aquaculture production, 2018 (tonnes)	Share of world crayfish aquaculture (%)	Share in the country's total aquaculture production (%)	Species item (ranked by production tonnage)
1. China	1 638 662	95.74	2.48	Red swamp crawfish ( <i>Procambarus clarkii</i> )
2. United States of America	72 682	4.25	15.52	Red swamp crawfish ( <i>Procambarus clarkii</i> )
3. Australia	166	0.01	0.17	1. Smooth marron crayfish ( <i>Cherax cainii</i> ; 66 tonnes, 40 percent); 2. Yabby crayfish ( <i>Cherax destructor</i> ; 51 tonnes, 31 percent); 3. Red claw crayfish ( <i>Cherax quadricarinatus</i> ; 49 tonnes, 29 percent)
4. Malaysia	83	0.00	0.02	Red claw crayfish ( <i>Cherax quadricarinatus</i> )
5. Iran (Islamic Republic of)	25	0.00	0.01	Danube crayfish ( <i>Astacus leptodactylus</i> )
6. Singapore	6	0.00	0.10	Yabby crayfish ( <i>Cherax destructor</i> )
7. Bulgaria	5	0.00	0.03	Danube crayfish ( <i>Astacus leptodactylus</i> )
8. South Africa	4	0.00	0.05	Smooth marron crayfish ( <i>Cherax cainii</i> )
9. Sweden	1	0.00	0.01	Euro-American crayfishes nei ( <i>Astacidae, Cambaridae</i> )
10. Estonia	0.58	0.00	0.06	Noble crayfish ( <i>Astacus astacus</i> )
11. Barbados	0.50	0.00	1.96	Red claw crayfish ( <i>Cherax quadricarinatus</i> )
12. Poland	0.34	0.00	0.00	Euro-American crayfishes nei ( <i>Astacidae, Cambaridae</i> )
World	1 711 635	100.00	1.49	1. Red swamp crawfish (1 711 344 tonnes; 99.89 percent) 2. Red claw crayfish (132 tonnes; 0.01 percent) 3. Smooth marron crayfish (70 tonnes) 4. Yabby crayfish (57 tonnes) 5. Danube crayfish (30 tonnes) 6. Euro-American crayfishes nei (1.34 tonnes) 7. Noble crayfish (0.58 tonnes)

Data source: FAO Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics. Global aquaculture production 1950–2018 (FishstatJ). March 2020. Available at [www.fao.org/fishery/statistics/software/fishstatj/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/statistics/software/fishstatj/en)

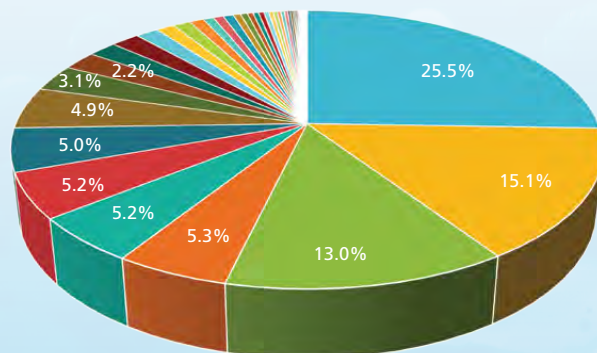
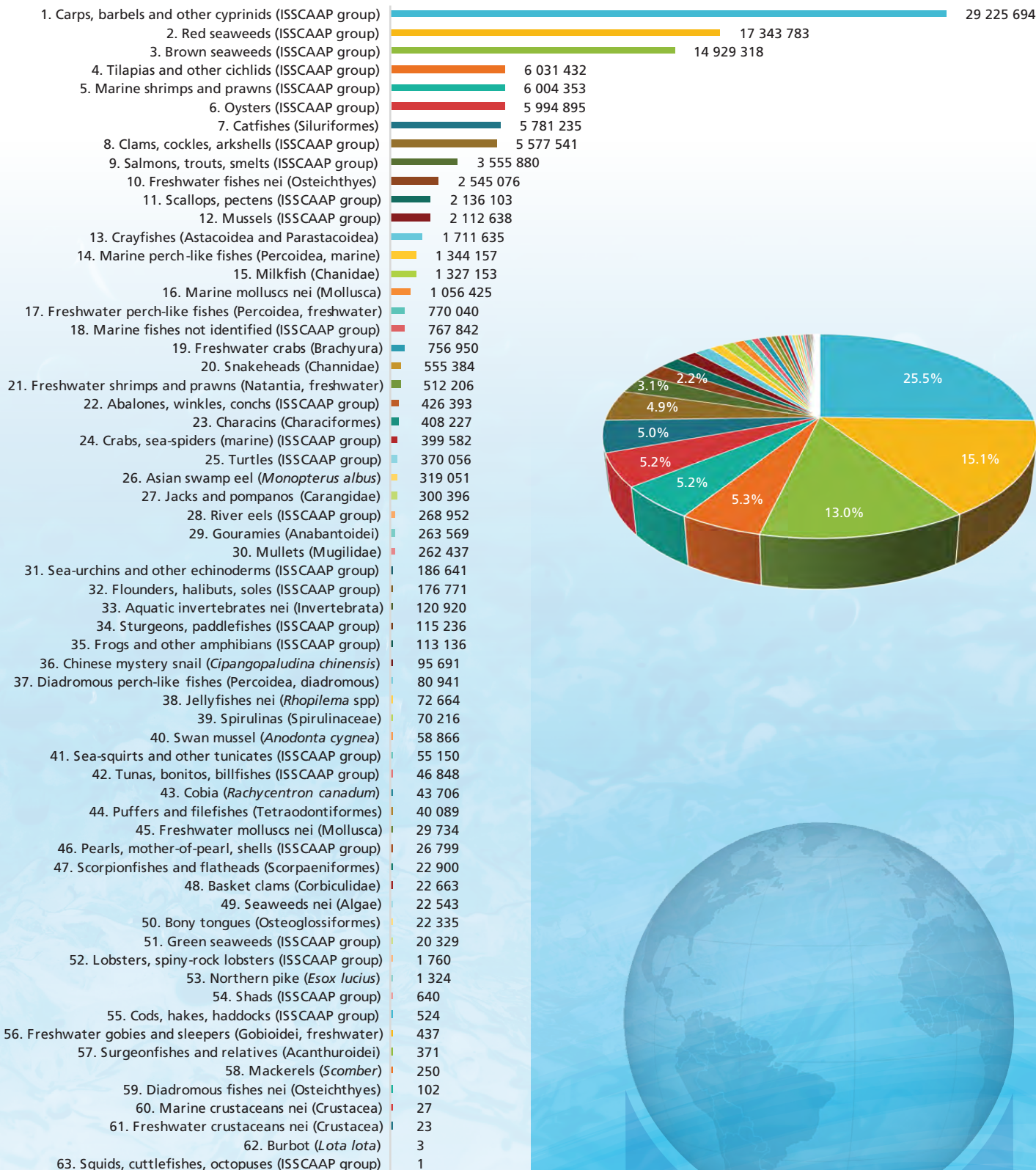
### Notes

- The comprehensive factsheet is available at [www.fao.org/3/ca9245en/ca9245en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca9245en/ca9245en.pdf)
- ASFIS species items could refer to either individual species, hybrids or groups of related species, such as families (when identification to species is impossible). More information about the ASFIS list of aquatic species can be found at [www.fao.org/fishery/collection/asfis/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/collection/asfis/en)
- See Note (e) in Table 1.





## World aquaculture production (2018): 114 508 042 tonnes



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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The factsheet was prepared by Junning Cai, Giulia Galli and Xiaowei Zhou.  
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