

## Fish and Shellfish: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - August 2020

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“The lockdown helped boost the sales of frozen and ambient as people sought out long-life products. As incomes come under pressure, fish/shellfish’s relatively high price means cutbacks are on the cards. The segment’s healthy image should see it benefit from the increased health focus in the wake of the pandemic, including meat reduction.”  
**– Alice Baker, Research Analyst**

This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the fish and shellfish market
- The buying factors that would win over shoppers to new products
- How shoppers expect to change their buying behaviours as incomes are squeezed
- Key new product trends and opportunities in 2020

Fish/shellfish guaranteed to be sourced from unpolluted waters appeal to 74% of people who eat and buy the category, providing stark evidence of the reach of the media coverage around ocean plastic in recent years.

The lockdown to combat the spread of COVID-19 helped boost the sales of frozen and ambient as people sought out long-life products. Fish/shellfish’s relatively high price means cutbacks are on the cards as incomes come under pressure during the recession triggered by the outbreak. Trading down within the category is also anticipated, including from chilled to frozen or tinned products. Heightened health and environmental concerns are, however, expected see people reduce their meat intake, creating opportunities for fish/shellfish.

A third of buyers would buy less fish/shellfish if they had less money to spend on groceries, underlining the potential for the coming recession to have a significant impact on volume sales. Meanwhile 38% of buyers would wait to buy on promotion, dialling up the pressure on margins. Consumer openness to alternative species to familiar favourites could offer a means for operators to meet the demand for accessible prices.

A renewed focus on health among consumers has emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fish/shellfish category is in a good position to benefit from this, but has yet to realise its full potential. For example, flagging up certain species’ status as a source of selenium and zinc and the related immune health claims would be timely, such claims appearing on just 1% of category launches in 2019.

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Nine in 10 adults eat fish or shellfish

Over half of people stick to only a few fish types

Ease of cooking appeals widely

New species suggestions interest two in three

29% of fish/shellfish non-users have eaten plant-based fish alternatives

A third of buyers would buy less fish/shellfish if they had less money

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