

Bucking this mini-trend toward breaded seafood is the steep decline in breaded shrimp consumption. The production of breaded shrimp in 2007 was XX xxxx pounds valued at \$XX xxxx, representing a significant XX% decline from the 2006 production of XX xxxx pounds valued at \$XX xxxx. (Table 2-5)

**Table 2-5
Production of Value-Added Fish Products, in Thousand Pounds 2002-2007**

Year	Fish Sticks	Fish Portions	Breaded Shrimp

Source: NMFS.

Packaged Facts believes that the increase in fish stick and portion production is a direct response to deteriorating economic conditions in 2007, because it reverses the longer-term trend away from value-added fish products like breaded fish sticks Pound for pound, breaded fish products are cheaper than fresh fillets and steaks, and the price hasn't risen nearly as fast. Take the popular species tilapia, which is at the lower end of the price spectrum for fresh fillets. Suppliers have seen retail prices that are up \$XX to \$XX a pound over the same time last year, reaching up to \$XXX a pound in the summer of 2007, according to *Seafood Business* magazine. By contrast, a box of breaded fish sticks at Wal-Mart (store brand, 24.7 oz.) was \$XXX at the Wal-Mart Supercenter in Rosemead, California, in October 2008.

Grocery Seafood Sales Grow Slower Than Other Items

Sales of refrigerated seafood, shelf stable (canned) seafood, and frozen seafood grew slower than many other supermarket items such as dry pasta, flour and refrigerated canned ham. (Table 4-5) This is further evidence of consumers shifting to cheaper, easier-to-prepare foods. It is also a sign that consumers tightened their belts throughout 2008; shelf-stable seafood, cheaper pound-for-pound than refrigerated seafood, saw its first significant increase in five years while refrigerated seafood saw its first drop in five years. (Table 2-6)

Pescatarians Unite

In the 2008 edition of the Collegiate Dictionary Merriam-Webster Inc. added a new entry, **pescetarian**, which it defined as a vegetarian whose diet includes fish. Pescatarians are also called aquataqrians or fishitarians, or "pesco-vegetarians" to emphasize that pescetarians eat vegetables, fruit, and grains as well as fish (although the Vegetarian Society balks at the term pesco-vegetarian because it implies that pescetarianism is a type of vegetarianism).

For some, becoming either vegan or vegetarian is a long-term goal for various health, environmental, and ethical reasons, and the pescetarian diet is sometimes seen as a way to transition toward that long-term goal without having to switch overnight from the western pattern diet to a vegan or vegetarian diet.

Just as vegetarians or vegans have a variety of reasons for their dietary lifestyle, pescetarians also vary in their reasons for choosing fish over other animal proteins. Some do it for health reasons, citing the fact that non-lean red meats contains high amounts of saturated fats, and that certain kinds of fish raise HDL and are a convenient source of omega-3 fatty acids. Other pescetarians believe that killing more primitive (non-mammalian) sea creatures is more ethical (many believe that fish cannot feel pain), or that the environmental impact of farming sea-dwelling creatures is smaller.

A 2008 study entitled *Vegetarianism in America*, published by Vegetarian Times (vegetariantimes.com), shows that XX percent of U.S. adults, or XX xxxx people, follow a vegetarian-based diet. To date there are no reliable demographic studies of pescaterians in the U.S., and fish-only eaters have no society or publication dedicated to them (some, in fact, have never heard of the term). Packaged Facts believes that the number of pescatarians, while smaller than for vegetarians, is significant enough to merit a study, or at least some good social networking venues and blogs.

Food Safety Fears Not Keeping Many Consumers From Seafood

Although there is much discussion about the safety of seafood, especially the mercury levels of tuna, fears of contamination are not keeping consumers away from seafood, at least not in large numbers, according to a 2007 *U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends* report. Only XX% of consumers said they stopped purchasing seafood temporarily or altogether due to safety concerns, way down from XX% who did so in 2005. (Table 3-8)