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# Seafood Sector Poised to Benefit from Rising UK Demand for High-Protein Foods

04 May 2026 | News

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With 20 per cent of UK consumers now following a high-protein diet, the seafood industry is in a strong position to capitalise on the fast-growing protein category. Insights from the Norwegian Seafood Councilâ??s (NSC) latest research highlight a significant opportunity to better align seafoodâ??s natural nutritional strengths with evolving consumer expectations.

NSC UK says the ongoing â??protein boomâ? presents a clear pathway for growth â?? particularly through more convenient formats, stronger protein communication and clearer positioning within the wider protein landscape.

Protein is now one of the most influential drivers of food choice, with 62 per cent of consumers actively prioritising it in their diets. Unlike previous health trends that focused on eliminating certain nutrients, protein carries a positive association with strength, longevity and overall well-being. Yet despite offering complete protein alongside key nutrients such as omega-3, vitamin D and B12, seafood remains underleveraged compared to other categories. While sports nutrition, dairy and protein bars have achieved double-digit growth, processed seafood has grown at a more modest 3 per cent.

According to NSC UK, the way in which seafood is brought to market, and the narrative around it, are not being fully maximised.

NSC UK Country Director BjÃ¸rn-Erik Stabell explains: â??Seafood has a very strong protein story, but it isnâ??t always being told in a way that resonates with todayâ??s consumer.â?

â??Success in the protein category is increasingly driven by convenience, clarity and accessibility. That means formats that fit modern lifestyles, and clear messaging that makes nutritional benefits immediately obvious.â?

Convenience is a critical factor. Research shows that 78 per cent of consumers are drawn to meals featuring visibly healthy ingredients such as seafood. Added to this, approximately 7 per cent of British consumers are now using GLP-1 weight loss medication and consequently are changing their diets to focus on low-fat, protein and nutrient-dense meals. Yet despite these lifestyle shifts, the category remains underrepresented in ready-to-eat and portable formats â?? areas where demand is growing fastest.

At the same time, changing eating habits are creating new opportunities. Snacking is now a dominant behaviour, with 88 per cent of consumers snacking daily and younger generations leading the shift towards high-frequency, high-protein eating occasions.

NSC UK believes that unlocking growth will depend on aligning with these behaviours â?? particularly through the development of ready-to-eat, snackable and on-the-go products and dishes that position seafood alongside other protein-rich options. McKinsey & Company at SfNâ??s recent Seafood Summit echoed the key to growth: â??To win the protein battle, seafood must win on formatâ?•.

Clearer labelling will also play a central role. Strong, clear front-of-pack protein messaging, in particular, is seen as essential in helping consumers quickly recognise seafood as a high-protein choice and would allow them to compare it more directly with competing categories.

Norwegian seafood offers a strong foundation for this repositioning. As a natural, whole food source of protein that is low in fat, it aligns closely with evolving consumer expectations. Norwegian cod, both farmed and wild, is one of the leanest protein options available, is rich in vitamins A, D and B12, selenium, antioxidants and omega-3, with a single portion covering daily omega-3 requirements. Norwegian haddock also provides high-quality protein as well as iodine, vitamin B12, potassium and selenium.

Alongside its health credentials, sustainability remains a cornerstone of the Norwegian seafood proposition â?? something which is attractive to many consumers. The Norwegian fisheries model is grounded in science-based quotas and long-term ecological stewardship, with a strong focus on maintaining ecosystem health. Aligned with global sustainability goals, it assures buyers and industry stakeholders that Norwegian seafood is a responsible and future-facing choice.

Stabell added: â??There is a clear and significant opportunity to reposition seafood within the protein landscape, but it requires a more deliberate approach. That means making protein content more visible, and ensuring products are designed for the way people eat today â?? not just for the traditional three-day part meal occasions.â?•

Category performance data reinforces the opportunity. Salmon continues to drive growth, while shellfish is gaining traction across demographics and channels, highlighting its versatility and broad consumer appeal.

NSC UK believes the seafood industry is well placed to benefit from the protein boom â?? but only if it adapts to meet evolving expectations around convenience, format and communication.