

Mineral Industry Surveys

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ZINC IN DECEMBER 2020

Domestic mine production (recoverable) of zinc in December 2020 was 62,000 metric tons (t) (tables 1, 2). Average daily mine production in December was 2,000 t, essentially unchanged from that in the previous month but 8% more than that in December 2019 (fig. 1). Recoverable zinc mine production in 2020 was 682,000 t, 7% less than that in 2019.

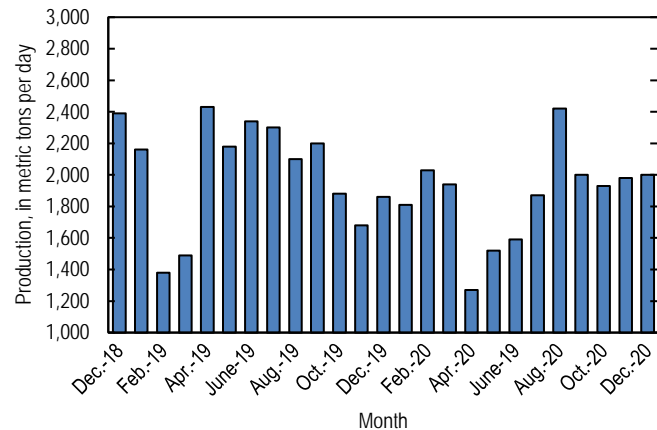


Figure 1. Average daily domestic zinc mine production (recoverable) from December 2018 through December 2020.

Stocks and Prices

Global London Metal Exchange Ltd. (LME) stocks of Special High Grade (SHG) zinc were 202,075 t at the end of December 2020, 8% less than stocks at the end of November but almost four times stocks at the end of December 2019 (fig. 2, table 8). Reported off-warrant stocks of SHG zinc in LME-approved warehouses at the end of December 2020 were 121,281 t, 25% more than reported stocks at the end of November. Approximately 60% of reported off-warrant stocks were held in New Orleans, LA (London Metal Exchange Ltd., 2020, 2021).

The monthly average S&P Global Platts Metals North American SHG zinc price in December 2020 was \$1.34 per pound, 4% more than that in the previous month and 20% more

than that in December 2019. The December 2020 average LME cash price for SHG zinc was \$2,782.36 per metric ton (\$1.26 per pound), 4% more than that in the previous month and 22% more than that in December 2019. The annual average North American and LME cash prices for SHG zinc in 2020 were \$1.11 per pound and \$2,264.42 per metric ton (\$1.03 per pound), respectively, both 11% less than the annual average prices in 2019 (fig. 3, table 7).

The North American premium to the LME cash price in December 2020 averaged 7.9 cents per pound, slightly less than that in November and 8% less than that in December 2019. The North American premium averaged 8.1 cents per pound in 2020, 5% less than that in 2019 (fig. 3, table 7).

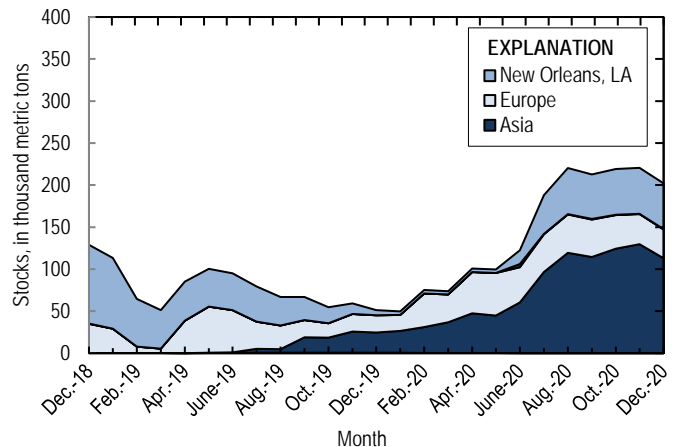


Figure 2. Global LME stocks of Special High Grade zinc, monthend, from December 2018 through December 2020. Source: London Metal Exchange Ltd.

References Cited

London Metal Exchange Ltd., 2020, Off warrant stock reporting November 2020: London, United Kingdom, London Metal Exchange Ltd. (Accessed January 22, 2021, via <https://www.lme.com/en-GB/Market-Data/Reports-and-data/Warehouse-and-stocks-reports/Off-warrant-stock-reporting>.)

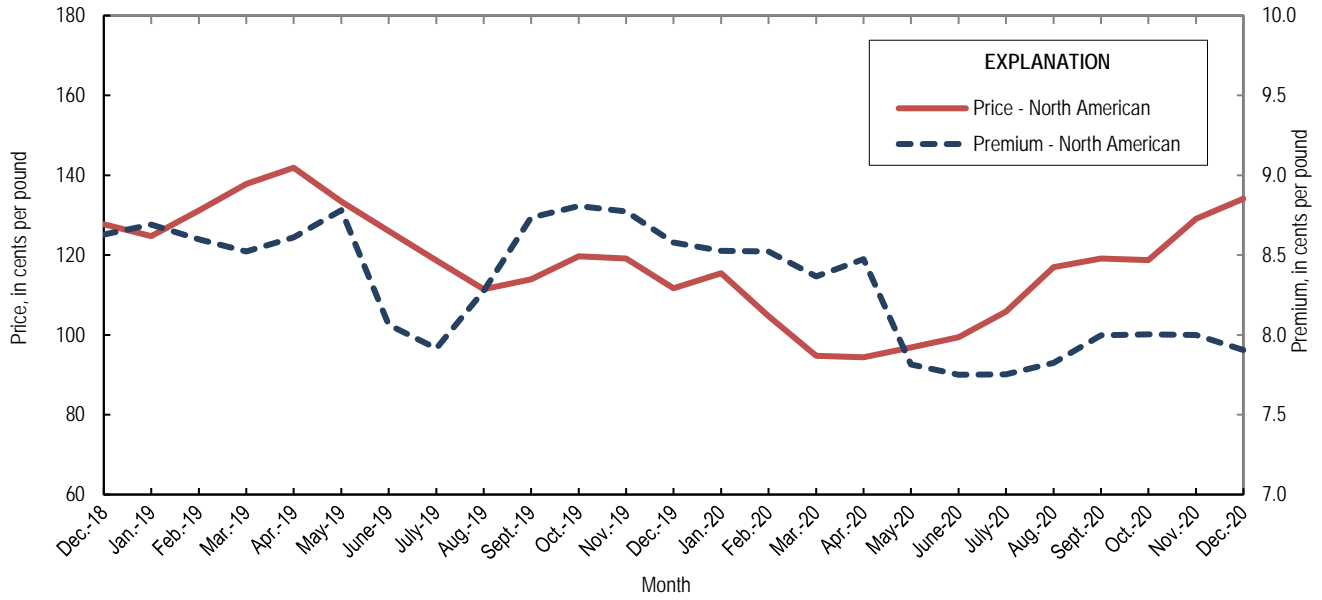


Figure 3. Average monthly North American price and premium for Special High Grade zinc from December 2018 through December 2020. Source: S&P Global Platts Metals Week.

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TABLE 1
SALIENT ZINC STATISTICS¹

(Metric tons, unless otherwise specified)

	2019	2020		
	January– December ^p	November	December	January– December ²
Production:				
Mine, zinc content of concentrate ³	753,000	61,200	63,900	703,000
Mine, recoverable zinc ³	731,000	59,500	62,000	682,000
Smelter, refined zinc ^e	115,000	15,000	15,000	154,000
Consumption of refined zinc, apparent ⁴	939,000	69,100	65,700	852,000
Imports for consumption:				
Ore and concentrate (zinc content)	10	--	(5)	3,170
Refined zinc	830,000	54,300	50,900	700,000
Exports:				
Ore and concentrate (zinc content)	796,000	57,700	11,100	549,000
Refined zinc	5,170	184	197	2,480
Price:⁶				
London Metal Exchange cash, average, dollars per metric ton	2,548.63	2,669.69	2,782.36	2,264.42
S&P Global Platts Metals, average, cents per pound	124.13	129.10	134.11	110.79

^eEstimated. ^pPreliminary. -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except prices; may not add to totals shown.

²May include revisions to previously published data.

³Reported zinc content in both zinc and lead concentrates.

⁴Smelter production plus imports for consumption minus domestic exports.

⁵Less than 1/2 unit.

⁶Special High Grade Zinc.

TABLE 2
MINE AND SMELTER PRODUCTION OF ZINC
IN THE UNITED STATES¹

(Metric tons)

Period	Mine ²		Smelter ^c
	Zinc content	Recoverable	
2019:			
December	59,300	57,600	9,900
January–December	753,000	731,000	115,000
2020:			
January	57,700	56,000	10,000
February	60,600	58,800	10,000
March	61,900	60,100	11,000
April	39,300	38,200	11,000
May	48,500	47,000	12,000
June	49,100	47,600	12,000
July	59,700	57,900	14,000
August	77,300	75,000	14,000
September	61,700	59,900	15,000
October	61,700	59,900	15,000
November	61,200	59,500	15,000
December	63,900	62,000	15,000
January–December	703,000	682,000	154,000

^cEstimated.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Includes the zinc content in both lead and zinc concentrates.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF ZINC¹

(Gross weight, unless otherwise specified)

Material	2019		2020			
	Quantity (metric tons)	Value (thousands)	December		January–December ²	
			Quantity (metric tons)	Value (thousands)	Quantity (metric tons)	Value (thousands)
Ore and concentrate (zinc content)	10	\$7	(3)	\$2	3,170	\$4,410
Unwrought:						
Refined zinc	830,000	2,190,000	50,900	134,000	700,000	1,600,000
Zinc alloys	1,530	4,480	439	1,140	1,370	3,680
Wrought:						
Bars, rods, profiles, wire	3,020	10,600	259	906	3,260	10,200
Plates, sheets, strip, foil	3,010	12,700	163	738	2,570	11,500
Ash and residues:						
Hard zinc spelter	20	17	--	--	--	--
Zinc dross and skimmings	3,730	5,950	269	431	3,800	5,680
Other (zinc content)	1,320	784	108	62	1,130	717
Other:						
Powders, flakes, dust	25,500	94,900	2,070	7,420	24,600	83,700
Waste and scrap	10,400	18,200	1,350	1,740	11,400	15,800
Chemicals:						
Lithopone	1,170	4,240	179	791	1,150	4,200
Zinc oxide	99,300	272,000	8,040	20,300	102,000	252,000
Zinc chloride	196	1,450	5	69	275	1,640
Zinc sulfate	72,100	64,700	6,950	5,530	92,600	70,900
Zinc sulfide	956	3,590	79	344	964	4,720

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²May include revisions to previously published data.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. IMPORTS OF ZINC, BY TYPE OF MATERIAL AND COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons, gross weight, unless otherwise specified)

Material and country or locality	General imports			Imports for consumption		
	2019	2020		2019	2020	
		December	January–December ²		December	January–December ²
Ore and concentrate (zinc content):						
Canada	10	--	--	10	--	--
China	--	--	1,060	--	--	1,060
Mexico	--	(3)	(3)	--	(3)	(3)
Peru	--	--	2,100	--	--	2,100
Total	10	(3)	3,170	10	(3)	3,170
Refined zinc:						
Australia	--	--	33,000	--	999	2,000
Belgium	--	--	24,100	393	--	1
Brazil	11,300	--	21,900	11,300	--	13,400
Canada	517,000	38,300	489,000	517,000	38,300	489,000
China	49	--	108	5,770	--	108
Korea, Republic of	8,110	--	39,100	8,340	--	21,100
Mexico	142,000	8,890	130,000	142,000	8,890	130,000
Netherlands	--	--	1,470	3,420	--	--
Peru	59,300	2,700	44,400	59,300	2,700	44,400
Poland	268	--	100	268	--	100
Spain	14,500	--	20,000	81,900	--	123
Taiwan	62	--	24	62	--	24
Other	6	(3)	(3)	6	--	(3)
Total	753,000	49,900	803,000	830,000	50,900	700,000
Oxide:						
Australia	394	--	538	394	--	538
Belgium	30	--	1	30	--	1
Brazil	5	--	19	5	--	19
Canada	44,100	2,740	42,600	44,100	2,740	42,600
China	187	12	175	187	12	175
France	18	--	12	18	--	12
Germany	1,300	93	1,160	1,300	93	1,160
Greece	300	59	798	300	59	798
India	74	9	47	74	9	47
Indonesia	103	--	--	103	--	--
Italy	42	--	22	42	--	22
Japan	927	52	868	927	52	868
Korea, Republic of	96	13	73	96	13	73
Mexico	39,000	4,190	43,100	39,000	4,190	43,100
Netherlands	9,270	547	9,030	9,270	547	9,030
Peru	2,990	331	3,850	2,990	331	3,850
United Kingdom	425	1	29	425	1	29
Other	46	--	51	46	--	51
Total	99,300	8,040	102,000	99,300	8,040	102,000

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²May include revisions to previously published data.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
U.S. EXPORTS OF ZINC¹

(Gross weight, unless otherwise specified)

Material	2019		2020			
	Quantity (metric tons)	Value (thousands)	December		January–December ²	
			Quantity (metric tons)	Value (thousands)	Quantity (metric tons)	Value (thousands)
Ore and concentrate (zinc content)	796,000	\$1,320,000	11,100	\$20,200	549,000	\$806,000
Unwrought:						
Refined zinc	5,170	14,300	197	601	2,480	6,810
Zinc alloys	21,600	63,500	1,550	4,680	19,900	54,000
Wrought:						
Bars, rods, profiles, wire	10,200	30,300	962	2,880	9,500	28,900
Plates, sheets, strip, foil	6,190	24,500	572	2,060	5,460	20,300
Ash and residues:						
Hard zinc spelter	9,370	16,700	798	1,030	9,150	12,300
Other (zinc content)	24,900	38,600	2,330	3,410	23,000	30,700
Other:						
Powders, flakes, dust	13,400	48,500	988	3,640	13,600	49,500
Waste and scrap	30,800	40,200	2,690	3,430	25,000	29,600
Chemicals:						
Lithopone	170	905	68	179	522	1,900
Zinc oxide	15,100	30,900	5,690	7,310	44,900	56,000
Zinc chloride	185	316	6	6	419	747
Zinc sulfate	486	648	1	8	507	507
Zinc sulfide	2,070	17,300	143	1,110	1,420	13,000

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²May include revisions to previously published data.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6
U.S. EXPORTS OF ZINC, BY TYPE OF MATERIAL AND COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons, gross weight, unless otherwise specified)

Material and country or locality	2019	2020	
		December	January-December ²
Ore and concentrate (zinc content):			
Australia	64,100	--	63,300
Belgium	107,000	--	40,000
Brazil	7,030	--	--
Canada	268,000	11,100	287,000
Finland	29,400	--	15,700
Germany	29,700	--	21,100
Italy	33,800	--	5,290
Japan	38,500	--	38,500
Korea, Republic of	69,200	--	59,200
Mexico	10,700	--	2
Peru	5,000	--	120
Spain	116,000	--	18,400
Switzerland	17,500	--	--
Other	83	--	28
Total	796,000	11,100	549,000
Refined zinc:			
Australia	46	--	34
Canada	928	105	962
China	502	--	--
Colombia	98	--	124
Guatemala	17	--	10
India	132	10	297
Indonesia	375	--	--
Malaysia	625	--	--
Mexico	1,800	80	833
Panama	39	--	50
South Africa	438	--	--
Vietnam	40	--	164
Other	135	3	5
Total	5,170	197	2,480
Oxide:			
Australia	127	--	503
Belgium	90	2	63
Brazil	453	2	282
Canada	4,860	169	3,290
China	457	5	232
France	14	21	253
Germany	131	60	201
Guyana	124	2	40
India	825	12	385
Israel	30	20	102
Mexico	7,140	5,370	38,500
Poland	177	--	112
Thailand	123	(3)	15
United Kingdom	127	1	218
Other	476	26	675
Total	15,100	5,690	44,900

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²May include revisions to previously published data.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 7
AVERAGE PRICES FOR SPECIAL HIGH GRADE ZINC

Period	North American		London Metal Exchange	
	Premium	Price ¹	cash ²	
	¢/lb.	¢/lb.	¢/lb.	\$/t
2019:				
December	8.6	111.70	103.12	2,273.40
January–December	8.5	124.13	115.60	2,548.63
2020:				
January	8.5	115.42	106.89	2,356.60
February	8.5	104.68	96.16	2,119.90
March	8.4	94.79	86.42	1,905.33
April	8.5	94.39	85.91	1,894.08
May	7.8	96.87	89.06	1,963.40
June	7.8	99.40	91.65	2,020.61
July	7.8	105.83	98.08	2,162.24
August	7.8	117.00	109.17	2,406.83
September	8.0	119.15	111.15	2,450.50
October	8.0	118.75	110.75	2,441.55
November	8.0	129.10	121.10	2,669.69
December	7.9	134.11	126.21	2,782.36
January–December	8.1	110.79	102.71	2,264.42

¹Platts Metals Week North American price. Based on the London Metal Exchange cash price plus the North American premium.

²Average of the cash buyer price and the cash seller and settlement price.

Source: S&P Global Platts Metals Week.

TABLE 8
LONDON METAL EXCHANGE (LME) STOCKS OF SPECIAL HIGH GRADE ZINC, END OF PERIOD

(Metric tons)

Period	United States			Asia	Europe	Other	Total LME
	Baltimore, MD	New Orleans, LA	Total				
2019:							
December	--	6,125	6,125	24,350	20,350	375	51,200
2020:							
January	--	4,150	4,150	25,950	19,300	375	49,775
February	--	4,100	4,100	30,750	40,000	350	75,200
March	--	4,000	4,000	36,650	32,950	200	73,800
April	--	4,200	4,200	47,325	49,225	100	100,850
May	--	4,175	4,175	44,700	50,675	25	99,575
June	3,825	16,675	20,500	60,425	41,625	--	122,550
July	475	46,075	46,550	96,525	44,900	--	187,975
August	475	54,650	55,125	119,300	45,700	--	220,125
September	475	52,950	53,425	114,575	44,575	--	212,575
October	475	54,500	54,975	124,200	40,025	--	219,200
November	475	54,500	54,975	129,700	35,825	--	220,500
December	475	54,500	54,975	113,025	34,075	--	202,075

-- Zero.

Source: London Metal Exchange, Ltd.