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 HD **China's iron ore imports from Australia shrank in August**
 BY Celestyn Wong, Kenneth Foo
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China imported 47.08 **million** mt of **iron ore** from Australia in August, down a significant 15% on the month, data released Tuesday by the General Administration of Customs showed.

Year on year, however, there was a 35% growth in **China's** Australian **ore** imports, a general trend observed all year as miners have been ramping up on production.

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Sources said the month on month fall follows an increase in the number of countries importing Australian **iron ore** as spot prices have plummeted to levels low enough to make buying conducive, leading to some divergence in Australian material away from **China**. **Chinese** buyers still **purchase** the majority of **iron ore** mined from Australia because of the huge steelmaking industry in the country and the active trading network that exists there.

"We've started observing there are more countries that have started to buy more Australian material as prices are now low enough for buyers there to accept, so Australian miners have started to send more cargoes to countries like India," a steelmaker in central **China** said.

Platts assessed the 62% Fe **Iron Ore** Index at \$80.50/dmt CFR North **China** Tuesday. This means the assessment has lost \$13/dmt, or 14%, since the beginning of August.

Australian **mining** giant Rio Tinto, for instance, has been selling more spot cargoes of its flagship Pilbara Blend fines and lump into India this year. Rebecca Murphy, a Perth-based spokeswoman for the miner, told Platts in mid-July they had been selling some lump cargoes to Indian buyers, but would not comment on "future sales" of such cargoes.

Rio Tinto last sold 62% Fe PB lump at \$95/dmt CFR India on September 19, for a 65,000-mt cargo loading October 13-23. On August 27, it also sold 170,000 mt of 61% Fe PB fines at \$90/dmt CFR India, for a cargo that was to have loaded September 11-20.

For Indian steelmakers, the shutdown of domestic mines has also severely impacted their ability to rely on domestic material, leading to more imports. For example, 26 **iron ore** mines in India's Odisha state were ordered to cease production in May, including seven of Tata Steel's captive mines, pending reviews of their leases.

China's iron ore imports from Brazil, second only to Australia in terms of **ore** volumes imported, also decreased on the month by 5% to 13.48 **million** mt in August. Market sources also earlier said more Brazilian material was finding its way into India as well, with miners like Vale and Companhia Siderurgica Nacional (CSN) starting to send more material there. **China's** August imports from Brazil remained largely rangebound on the year, losing only 0.8% in volume.

China imported a total of 74.88 **million** mt of **iron ore** in August, down 9% from the 82.52 **million** mt imported in July, but up 9% on the year.

Coking **coal** imports plummet

This trend was also mirrored in coking **coal**, somewhat. **China** imported 3.84 **million** mt of coking **coal** in August, down 64% from the same period last year and 32% lower than July, as volume from Australia dwindled, according to the customs data. Australia, the largest exporter to **China**, saw exports decline 55% year on year, and dip 23% month on month, to 1.60 **million** mt.

Mongolia retained its market position as the second biggest supplier, shipping 1.19 **million** mt of **coal** to **China** in August, rising 30% compared to a year ago, and 6% higher than July.

Russia leapfrogged Canada to third place, shipping 0.43 **million** mt in July, up 18.6% from the month before and a 30% gain year on year. Canada exported 406,042 mt in August, down from 755,819 mt in July, and nearly half the volume from a year ago. The US shipped 204,077 mt of coking **coal** to **China**, down from 826,333 mt in August last year.

China's seaborne shipments over January-August totaled 39.92 **million** mt, falling 16.0% from 47.50 **million** mt a year earlier.

Celestyn Wong, Kenneth Foo

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IPD Imports

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