

Gold ETF Commentary

Outflows narrowed in March

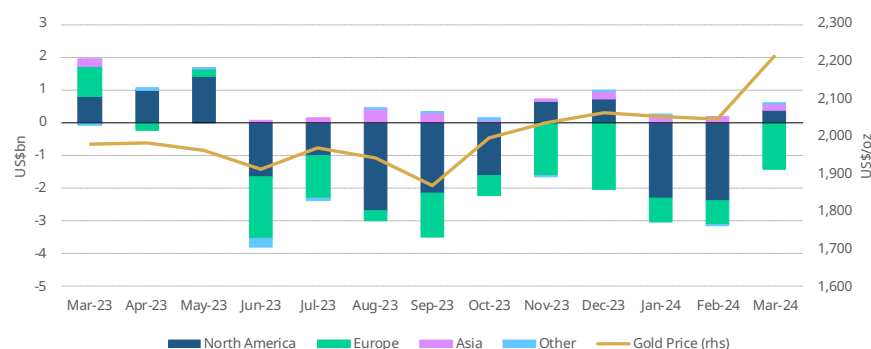
March in review

Global physically backed gold ETFs¹ witnessed their tenth consecutive monthly outflow in March, losing US\$823mn (Table 1, p2).² But by comparison this is far less than February outflows (-US\$2.9bn) and the average of the past nine months (-US\$2.4bn). Collective holdings fell by 14t to 3,112t by the end of March, the lowest since February 2020 and 21% lower than the month-end record of 3,915t in October 2020. However, helped by a jump in the gold price, total assets under management (AUM) rose to US\$222bn, an 8% increase during the month, the highest in 21 months.³

All regions except Europe saw inflows in March. Flows in North America flipped back to positive for the first time in 2024. Asia and the Other region also capped inflows. But these were offset by European losses.

Chart 1: Outflows narrowed significantly in March

Regional gold ETF flows and the gold price*



* As of 31 March 2024.
Source: Bloomberg, Company Filings, ICE Benchmark Administration, World Gold Council

1. We define gold ETFs as regulated securities that hold gold in physical form. These include open-ended funds traded on regulated exchanges and other regulated products such as closed-end funds and mutual funds. A complete list is included in the [gold ETF section of Goldhub.com](#).
2. We track gold ETF assets in two ways: the quantity of gold they hold, generally measured in tonnes, and the equivalent value of those holdings in US dollars (AUM). We also monitor how these fund assets change through time by looking at two key metrics: demand and fund flows. For more details, see our [ETF methodology note](#).
3. Based on the LBMA Gold Price PM.

Highlights

Outflows from global gold ETFs continued in March, but at a much slower pace than previous months as North American and Asian inflows cushioned European losses.

While collective holdings fell further (-14t), total AUM in global gold ETFs rose by 8% thanks to a stronger gold price.

Low-cost ETFs lost US\$469mn in March: North American inflows (+US\$128m) were outpaced by European outflows (-US\$594mn).

During the first quarter global gold ETF outflows piled up to US\$6.5bn, led by North America and Europe while Asia attracted the largest inflows. Low-cost funds saw outflows of US\$893mn in Q1, mainly driven by Europe (-US\$728mn).



March regional overview

North American funds saw a turnaround in March, adding US\$360mn. Inflows were mainly driven by activities in the options market: the gold price rally triggered exercises of in-the-money calls in mid-March, creating sizable inflows. Meanwhile, the market viewed the US Federal Reserve's March comments as dovish, spurring further inflows around the time of the Fed's meeting as yields and the dollar both lowered.⁴ Nonetheless, demand would have been stronger if investors didn't sell their holdings in early and late March, taking advantage of gold price advancements.

March narrowed North American funds' y-t-d outflows to US\$4.3bn. Nonetheless, it remains the region with the largest outflows in Q1. Large and liquid funds suffered the heaviest losses during the period. But supported by a strong gold price the region's total AUM rose to US\$112bn, the highest since June 2022.

March marked the tenth consecutive monthly outflow from European funds (-US\$1.4bn). The UK accounted for the bulk of the loss despite the Bank of England's dovish tilt in its March meeting, which led to lower government bond yields and a weaker pound.⁵ Taking a closer look, although scattered inflows were evident when the gold price surged, outflows emerged when gold's momentum paused – likely due to profit-taking activities. And as major central banks – including the European Central Bank and the Swiss National Bank – edged towards or actually started rate cuts, investor risk appetite improved and interest in gold diminished.⁶

Gold ETF demand in Germany improved further, attracting inflows for the first time in 5 months. As noted previously, the worsening economic conditions may have pushed up local investor safe-haven demand.⁷

European funds have seen outflows of US\$2.9bn so far in 2024. While collective holdings dropped to the lowest in 51 months, total AUM rose by 6.4% during the quarter in the face of a higher gold price. The UK, Switzerland and Germany lost the most in Q1 (**Table 2, p3**).

Asia registered non-stop inflows for the 13th month, attracting US\$217mn in March. China once again led inflows as the local gold price rally attracted investors. Japan also recorded positive flows. Asian funds led global inflows in Q1 2024 by adding US\$678mn, a 7% rise in holdings and a 14% jump in AUM, again boosted by a higher gold price. The Other region saw a mild US\$23mn gain in March, leading to a US\$7mn inflow y-t-d.

Table 1: March regional flows*

	Total AUM (bn)	Fund flows (US\$mn)	Holdings (tonnes)	Demand (tonnes)	Demand (% of holdings)
North America	112.1	359.7	1,574.3	4.8	0.31%
Europe	94.8	-1,423.4	1,331.3	-22.0	-1.63%
Asia	11.1	217.2	147.6	3.1	2.17%
Other	4.2	23.1	59.2	0.5	0.78%
Total	222.2	-823.4	3,112.4	-13.6	-0.44%
Global inflows / Positive demand		3,973.9		22.4	1.93%
Global outflows / Negative demand		-4,797.3		-36.0	-2.33%

*As of 31 March 2024. 'Global inflows/Positive demand' refers to the sum of changes of all funds that saw a net increase in holdings over a given period (e.g. month, quarter, etc.). Conversely, 'Global outflows/Negative demand' aggregates changes from funds that saw holdings decline over the same period.

Note: Differences between fund flows and changes in holdings (demand) are driven by the mechanics of FX-hedged funds. For more information, see [ETF Flows Data Methodology](#).

Source: Bloomberg, Company Filings, ICE Benchmark Administration, World Gold Council

4. For more, see: [Fed meeting today: Live updates on March Fed rate decision \(cnbc.com\)](#)
 5. For more, see: [European markets live updates: Fed reaction and BoE and SNB decisions \(cnbc.com\)](#)

6. For more, see: [Switzerland becomes first major economy to cut interest rates in surprise move \(cnbc.com\)](#)
 7. For more, see: [Research institutions slash Germany's 2024 GDP forecast down to 0.1 pct | The Star](#)



Gold market trading volumes rose in March

Trading activities across global gold markets increased in March, averaging US\$226mn per day, 53% higher m/m. The over-the-counter (OTC) market volume rose by 28% to US\$124bn/day, and trading activities in London and Shanghai both rose significantly in value and tonnage terms. Volumes jumped at all major exchanges (+103% m/m), led by the COMEX (+96%) and the Shanghai Future Exchange (+133%). And turnovers in tonnage terms also surged as the gold price rally grabbed the attention of tactical traders. While global gold ETFs continued to see outflows, trading volumes improved notably (+39%) in the month.

Total net longs at COMEX surged to 679t as of March, a 232t m/m increase – the largest in 12 months. Money manager net longs rose by 278t to 491t by the end of the month, the highest month-end level since February 2022. This was driven by a jump in longs and a plunge in shorts as the gold price surge pushed investors to take part in the action.⁸

Table 2: March flows by country*

Countries list (by AUM)	Total AUM (bn)	Fund flows (US\$m)	Holdings (tonnes)	Demand (tonnes)	Demand (% of holdings)
US	107.7	419.9	1,512.1	5.7	0.38%
UK	42.6	-1,368.1	597.9	-19.8	-3.20%
Germany	23.9	153.2	335.2	2.2	0.67%
Switzerland	22.6	-263.3	317.4	-5.2	-1.62%
China P.R. Mainland	4.9	163.8	67.0	2.2	3.40%
France	4.6	126.8	64.3	1.8	2.91%
Canada	4.4	-60.3	62.2	-0.8	-1.34%
India	3.6	-24.5	44.7	-0.3	-0.69%
Australia	2.9	-6.6	40.5	0.0	-0.11%
Japan	2.3	76.6	31.9	1.1	3.54%
South Africa	1.1	32.6	15.0	0.5	3.54%
Ireland	0.8	-16.2	10.6	-0.2	-2.23%
Italy	0.4	-54.5	5.2	-0.8	-13.08%
Hong Kong SAR	0.3	0.0	3.9	0.1	3.78%
Turkey	0.3	-3.0	3.5	0.0	-0.37%
Liechtenstein	0.0	-1.2	0.6	0.0	-1.64%
Malaysia	0.0	1.4	0.2	0.0	9.98%
Saudi Arabia	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.00%

*As of 31 March 2024. Note: Differences between fund flows and changes in holdings (demand) are driven by the mechanics of FX-hedged funds. For more information, see [ETF Flows Data Methodology](#).

Source: Bloomberg, Company Fillings, ICE Benchmark Administration, World Gold Council

8. Based on net longs on 26 March 2024.



Table 3: March individual top and bottom flows*

Top 15 flows	Country	Fund flows (US\$m)	Holdings (tonnes)	Demand (tonnes)	Demand (% of holdings)
SPDR Gold Shares	US	520.2	829.9	7.2	0.88%
Xtrackers IE Physical Gold ETC	DE	167.7	51.0	2.4	5.01%
Amundi Physical Gold ETC	FR	126.8	64.3	1.8	2.91%
SPDR Gold MiniShares Trust	US	95.7	98.2	1.3	1.39%
Xtrackers Physical Gold ETC EUR	DE	80.3	30.9	1.2	3.93%
Japan Physical Gold ETF	JP	76.6	31.9	1.1	3.54%
Huaan Yifu Gold ETF	CN	66.0	30.5	0.9	2.98%
Xtrackers Physical Gold Euro Hedged ETC	DE	50.5	18.8	0.7	3.79%
E Fund Gold Tradable Open-end Securities Investment Fund	CN	49.2	11.7	0.7	6.11%
Guotai Gold ETF	CN	48.0	5.3	0.7	14.45%
Invesco Physical Gold EUR Hedged ETC	DE	33.0	7.9	0.5	6.10%
iShares Gold Trust Micro	US	22.5	15.4	0.3	2.16%
1Invest Gold ETF	ZA	22.3	1.1	0.3	42.63%
Kotak Gold ETF	IN	19.2	5.3	0.2	4.85%
WisdomTree Core Physical Gold	GB	18.9	10.1	0.3	2.74%
Bottom 15 flows	Country	Fund flows (US\$m)	Holdings (tonnes)	Demand (tonnes)	Demand (% of holdings)
Invesco Physical Gold GBP Hedged ETC	GB	-590.6	9.2	-8.4	-47.77%
Invesco Physical Gold ETC	GB	-516.1	211.1	-7.4	-3.41%
iShares Physical Gold ETC	GB	-207.8	203.2	-3.0	-1.47%
ZKB Gold ETF ‡	CH	-180.1	163.7	-3.0	-1.81%
Xetra-Gold	DE	-170.2	181.5	-2.5	-1.33%
iShares Gold Trust	US	-117.8	387.0	-1.8	-0.46%
Sprott Physical Gold Trust	US	-101.9	95.9	-1.5	-1.51%
CSIF CH II Gold Blue DB USD ‡	CH	-85.7	21.0	-1.5	-6.66%
WisdomTree Physical Gold EUR Daily Hedged	IT	-54.5	5.2	-0.8	-13.08%
Sprott Physical Gold & Silver Trust	CA	-44.5	41.9	-0.6	-1.50%
Gold Bullion Securities Ltd	GB	-28.8	39.0	-0.4	-1.08%
ICICI Prudential Gold iWIN ETF	IN	-27.3	7.4	-0.3	-4.45%
WisdomTree Physical Gold GBP Daily Hedged	GB	-26.9	18.5	-0.4	-2.10%
WisdomTree Physical Swiss Gold	GB	-26.4	35.8	-0.4	-1.07%
iShares Gold Bullion ETF ‡	CA	-18.9	10.0	-0.3	-2.54%

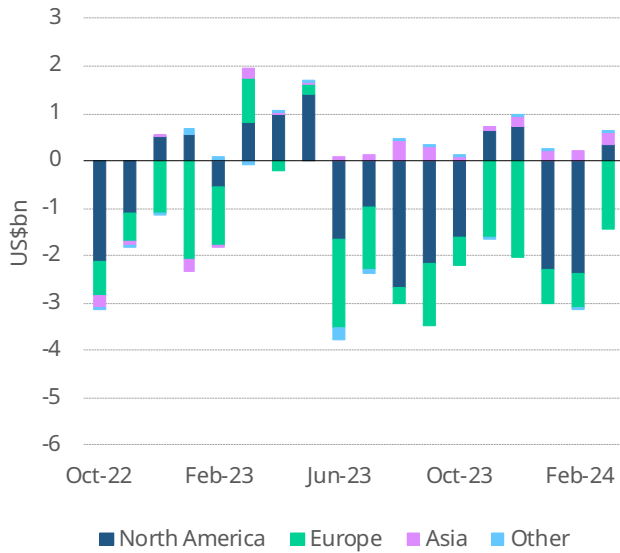
*As of 31 March 2024. Note: Differences between fund flows and changes in holdings (demand) are driven by the mechanics of FX-hedged funds. For more information, see [ETF Flows Data Methodology](#).

Source: Bloomberg, Company Filings, ICE Benchmark Administration, World Gold Council



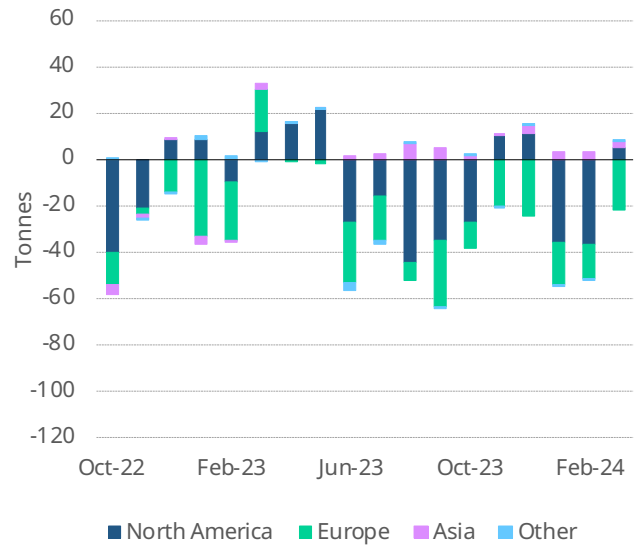
Relevant charts

Chart 2: Physically backed gold ETFs (and similar) fund flows by month*



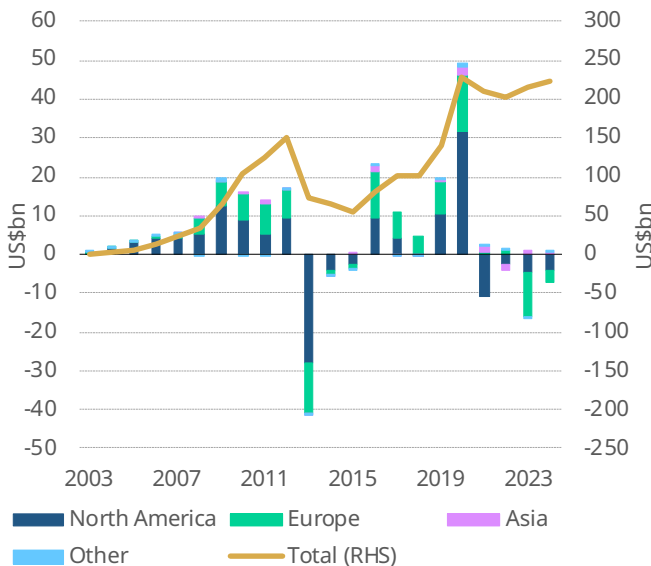
*As of 31 March 2024. Source: Bloomberg, Company filings, ICE Benchmark Administration, World Gold Council

Chart 3: Physically backed gold ETFs (and similar) demand by month*



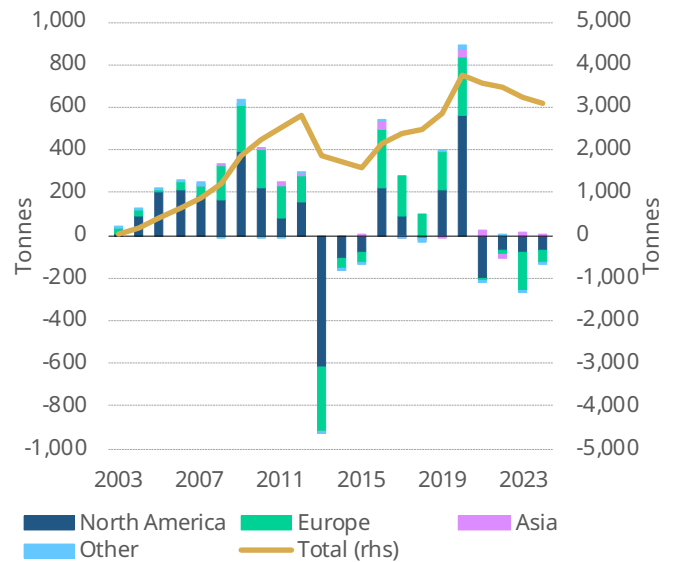
*As of 31 March 2024. Source: Bloomberg, Company filings, ICE Benchmark Administration, World Gold Council

Chart 4: Physically backed gold ETFs (and similar) fund flows and AUM by year*



*As of 31 March 2024. Source: Bloomberg, Company filings, ICE Benchmark Administration, World Gold Council

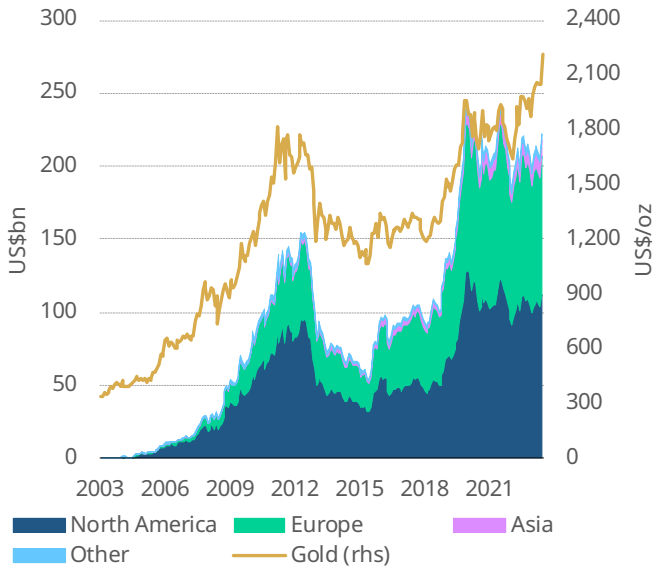
Chart 5: Physically backed gold ETFs (and similar) demand and total holdings by year*



*As of 31 March 2024. Source: Bloomberg, Company filings, ICE Benchmark Administration, World Gold Council

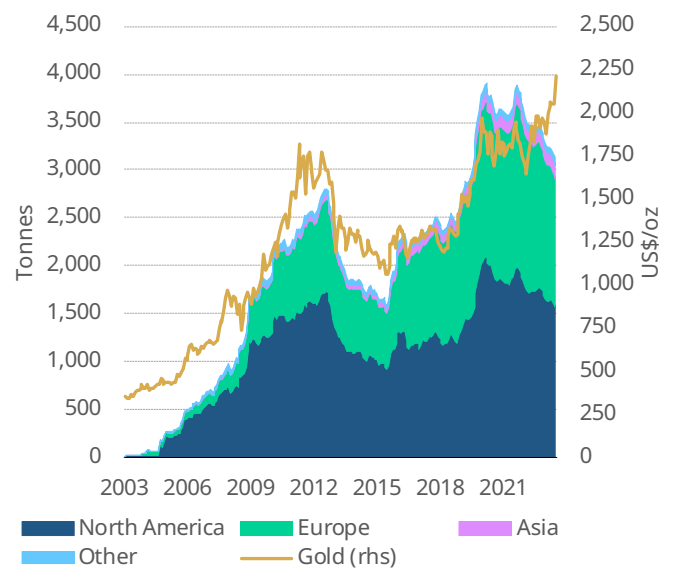


Chart 6: Physically backed gold ETFs (and similar) AUM and the gold price*



*As of 31 March 2024.
Source: Bloomberg, Company filings, ICE Benchmark Administration, World Gold Council

Chart 7: Physically backed gold ETFs (and similar) holdings and the gold price*



*As of 31 March 2024.
Source: Bloomberg, Company filings, ICE Benchmark Administration, World Gold Council



World Gold Council

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We drive industry progress, shaping policy and setting the standards for a perpetual and sustainable gold market.

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