

Nintendo first-half sales leap on strong demand for Switch games

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Nintendo said sales were given a lift by demand for the cheaper, smaller version of its popular Switch console

Japanese gaming giant Nintendo said Thursday its first-half sales were boosted by demand for its a smaller, cheaper version of its popular Switch console.

Sales for April-September gained 14.2 percent from a year earlier to 444.0 billion yen (\$4.1 billion) while operating profit surged 53.4 percent to 94.2 billion yen.

The firm unveiled the Switch Lite, a pocket-sized, strictly [handheld device](#) costing \$200, in September.

"Sales of Switch consoles remain steady as the launch of Switch Lite gave an extra boost," said Hideki Yasuda, an analyst at Ace Research Institute in Tokyo.

Brisk demand for its popular software also contributed to its overall sales.

"Super Mario Maker 2," "The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening" and "Fire Emblem: Three Houses"—all released during the first half—became multi-million-unit sellers.

"Powerful titles of Nintendo's popular characters, including Mario, are helping sustain overall sales," Yasuda told AFP.

But net profit for the period fell 4.0 percent to 62 billion yen "as a result of foreign exchange losses of 20.5 billion yen and other factors", Nintendo said in a statement.

The Kyoto-based firm kept full-year forecasts unchanged. It still forecasts a 7.2 percent decline in bottom-line profit with a 4.1 percent gain in sales for the [fiscal year](#) to March.

"A real battle for Nintendo is set for the third quarter," Yasuda said. "The prospect for Nintendo's annual figures will heavily depend on results of its Christmas sales."

The Switch has become a huge global seller, helped by innovative, family-friendly titles that have wowed critics and gamers alike.

Rival Sony on Wednesday reported half-year net [profit](#) fell nearly 15 percent, but it upgraded its annual forecast on solid growth in its image-sensor and music sectors.

The PlayStation manufacturer has seen a slowdown in its games and network businesses, expecting revenue from the core sector to sag owing to a continued fall in game hardware sales, and the cost of developing a next-generation console.

The firm has said its next-generation PlayStation 5 console, which will be equipped with new immersive features, would launch for the 2020 holiday season.

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