



Shipping Fleet Statistics 2020: notes and definitions

Introduction

Department for Transport statistics on UK and world shipping fleets are published at gov.uk/government/collections/maritime-and-shipping-statistics.

The statistics are not classed as National Statistics as they are derived from a commercial source, the management of which is outside of the DfT's jurisdiction.

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Source

The fleet statistics presented in these tables for 1986 onwards have been derived from information supplied to DfT by IHS Global or its predecessor companies (Lloyds, Lloyds Register Fairplay). Statistics up to 1988 were derived from Lloyd's 'General Ship File'. Statistics from 1989 were derived from Lloyd's 'Ship Particulars File'.

Until the end of 1986, United Kingdom registered fleet figures were derived from DfT records of trading vessels of 500 gross tons or over registered at ports in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. A different ship type classification was also in use. For 1986, for purposes of comparison, table FLE0301 includes figures from both sources giving the composition of the fleet on the basis of both the 'old' and 'new' ship type classifications.

The UK Ship Register (UKSR) is managed by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). However, for consistency with data for other international fleets, the UK registered fleet statistics presented in these tables (except FLE0100) are based on IHS Global data. These figures may differ slightly from, and be less up-to-date than, the definitive UK Ship Register information held by the MCA.

Vessels

The statistics generally include all known sea-going ships (and a few non-seagoing vessels) of 100 gross tons (GT) and above. United States reserve fleet and Great Lakes fleet are included but most naval vessels are excluded.

Data tables

FLE0100-02: special purpose tables

FLE0201-04: UK owned vessels

FLE0301-04: UK & Crown Dependency registered vessels

FLE0401-02: Red Ensign

FLE0501-02: World fleets (by country of registration)

FLE0601: UK beneficial owned vessels

FLE0701: UK managed vessels

Some tables present results for vessels of 500GT and above only. This is generally for consistency with data which has historically been available. Vessels under 500GT are relatively small and so the higher cut-off will only make a modest difference to tonnage totals, but a larger difference in terms of vessel numbers.

Vessel types

From 2009 onwards the vessels have been categorised into a DfT vessel type categorisation using the IHS Statcode5 system. Details of these classifications are set out in **Table 1**.

Prior to 2009, ships were coded using the International Classification of Ship Types (ICST) classification. This method was generally reliable, but in some cases where multiple ship types were recorded for the same vessel, the attribution to an ICST class depended on the order in which the ship types were coded. The ship type classifications used were mainly based on levels 3 and 4 of the 1994 revision of the as set out in **Table 2**.

The IHS Statcode5 classifications used in these statistics are grouped to match the previous ICST as far as possible, but with some slight changes to minimise the sub-division of Statcode categories.

Trading vessels

Trading vessels are those which carry cargo or passengers for commercial purposes. This is an important distinction because while trading vessels account for the vast majority of UK registered or owned shipping tonnage, they account for a much smaller proportion of vessel numbers.

Other vessel types, including dredgers, fishing vessels, offshore

industry vessels, tugs and research vessels are deemed to be ‘non-trading’.

From the adoption of Statcode5 in 2009, ‘trading’ vessels correspond directly to the ‘Cargo carrying’ category A in Level 1 of Statcode. All other categories in Level 1, B through Z, are ‘non-trading’. For more details, see **Table 2**.

Prior to the 2009 revision, there was not always a direct correspondence between DfT ship type and trading status. This is because DfT ship type was based on the ‘Main Ship Type’ recorded by IHS, while trading status was partly based on main ship type, but also took into account the ‘sub types’ also recorded by IHS. Either a non-trading main ship type or a non-trading sub type could result in a ship being classified as non trading.

Registry or ‘flag’

International law requires that every merchant ship be registered in a country, called its flag state. Registry (or ‘flag’) refers to the country in which a ship is registered. The breakdown of flags and flag groups by country is as follows:

UK	Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Crown Dependencies	Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey
Overseas Territories	Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, St Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands, (and, prior to 1997, Hong Kong)
EU15	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom
European Union	3. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom
Canada	Canada (inc. Great Lakes fleet)
Norway	Norway (inc. NIS)
USA	USA (inc. Great Lakes fleet, American Samoa, Virgin Islands of the USA, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico and USA reserve fleet (except for mid-year 1998))

The Red Ensign Group

The Red Ensign Group consists of the United Kingdom, the Crown Dependencies (Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey) and the UK Overseas Territories (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, St Helena and the Turks & Caicos Islands) which operate shipping registers from their jurisdiction.

Any vessel registered in the UK, a Crown Dependency or UK Overseas Territory, is a "British ship" and is entitled to fly the Red Ensign flag.

UK owned (or directly owned) ships

UK owned (or directly owned) ships, wherever the ship is registered, are those for which the nationality of the owner is United Kingdom (not including the Crown Dependencies). Where a vessel is owned by a company, its nationality is deemed to be that of the country in which the company is incorporated.

The owner or direct owner of a ship is also referred to as the 'registered owner' of the ship. This should not be confused with the registration of the ship under a particular flag (see above).

The registered owner of a vessel may be a company set up for administrative convenience, or a bank or finance company from which the vessel is leased back by its operator.

UK parent ownership

UK parent owned ships are those for which the nationality of the company having the controlling interest in the direct owner is United Kingdom. For coding purposes, this is taken to be the 'Country of Control' of the registered owner of the vessel, as identified by IHS.

In cases where the registered owner of a ship is a bank or finance company, the specific measure of parent ownership used here will identify the parent, or controlling interests behind that bank or finance company, rather than the controlling 'shipping' interest (see UK beneficial ownership below).

UK beneficial ownership

This is similar to UK parent ownership described above, except that in cases where the registered owner of a ship is a bank or finance



company, the nationality of the 'group beneficial owner' rather than that of the bank or finance company is used. The 'group beneficial owner' is the organisation with the controlling shipping interest in the vessel, as identified by IHS. The purpose of this definition is to strip out the potentially distorting effect of institutions which are simply financing vessel purchases, but not actively managing them in any operational sense, and which may well be based in a different country from those who are.

UK management

UK managed ships are those for which the nationality of the company responsible for the day to day running of the ship is UK. For coding purposes, this is taken to be the country of domicile of the ship manager, as identified by IHS.

Units of measurement

Under the International Convention on the Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969, gross tonnage (GT) is defined as the following function of the total volume of all enclosed spaces in the ship (V), in cubic metres:

$$GT = K1V$$

$$\text{where } K1 = 0.2 + 0.02\log_{10}V$$

Although the Convention is fully in force, the old 'gross registered tons' measure may still be the measure recorded on Lloyd's Register-Fairplay World Fleet Database in a small proportion of cases. This was directly related to the capacity of the space within the hull, and of the enclosed spaces above the deck, which were available for cargo, stores, passengers and crew, with certain exceptions. In practice, old and new tonnage measures are fairly similar, except for ships with substantial exempt spaces under the old system, such as Ro-Ro vessels.

Deadweight tonnes (DWT) is the weight of cargo, stores, fuel, passengers and crew carried by the ship when loaded to her maximum summer loadline. Up to 1986, statistics were compiled for imperial deadweight but from 1987 metric units are used (one deadweight ton (imperial) = 1.016 deadweight tonnes).

Table 1: DfT Ship Classifications based on Statcode5 (2009 onwards)

Derived DfT classifications		IHS Statcode5 classification system (only minimum detail necessary to identify DfT categories shown)						
Trading status	Summary group	Ship type	Level5	Level4	Level3	Level2	Level1	
Trading	Tanker / liquid	Oil tanker			A13 Oil	A1 Tankers	A Cargo Carrying	
		Oil-chemical tanker		A12B Chemical/Oil Products Tanker	A12 Chemical			
		Chemical tanker			A12 Chemical			
		Liquid gas tanker			A11 Liquefied Gas			
		Other tanker			A14 Other Liquids			
	Dry bulk	Bulk-oil carrier				A22 Bulk Dry / Oil		A2 Bulk Carriers
		Bulk carrier						
	Other dry cargo	Specialised Carrier			A35B Vehicles Carrier	A35 Ro-Ro Cargo		A3 Dry Cargo/ Passenger
		Container [FC]	A33A2CC Container Ship (Fully Cellular)	A33A Container Ship		A38 Other Dry Cargo		
		Refrigerated cargo				A34 Refrigerated Cargo		
		Ro-Ro passenger				A36 Passenger/Ro-Ro Cargo		
		Ro-Ro container	A33A2CR Container Ship (Fully Cellular with Ro-Ro Facility)	A33A Container Ship		A33 Container		
				A35C Container/Ro-Ro Cargo Ship		A35 Ro-Ro Cargo		
		Ro-Ro other cargo				A35 Ro-Ro Cargo		
		General cargo-passenger		A33B Passenger/ Container Ship		A33 Container		
						A32 Passenger / General Cargo		
		General cargo				A31 General Cargo		
	Passenger	Cruise			A37A Passenger (Cruise) Ship	A37 Passenger		
		Passenger			A37B Passenger Ship			
	Non-Trading	Miscellaneous	Bunkering tanker		B35E Bunkering Tanker	B35		B3 Miscellaneous
Fish catching					B11 Fish Catching	B1 Fishing		
Other Fishing					B12 Other Fishing			
Offshore supply					B21 Offshore Supply	B2 Offshore		
Offshore (except supply)					B22 Other Offshore			
Towing/Pushing					B32 Towing / Pushing	B3 Miscellaneous		
Research					B31 Research			
Dredging					B33 Dredging			
Other Work Vessels					B34 Other Activities			
					B35			
			Non-seagoing ships				W Non-Seagoing Merchant Ship	
			Non Merchant ships				X Non Merchant Ship	
			Non Propelled Vessels				Y Non Powered Vessel	
			Non Ship Structure				Z Non Ship Structure	

Table 2: International Classification of Ships by Type (ICST(94))

Level 4		Level 3		Level 2	Level 1	Level 0
Crude oil tanker		Oil tanker	1	LIQUID	MERCHANT SHIP STRUCTURES	MARINE STRUCTURES
Crude/products tanker						
Oil products tanker						
Oil/chemical tanker						
Chemical tanker		Chemical tanker	2			
LNG carrier		Liquefied gas carrier	3			
LPG carrier						
Other liquefied gas carrier						
Single hull		Tank barge	4			
Double hull						
Double-sided						
Double-bottomed						
Other tank barge						
Asphalt, bitumen carrier		Other tanker	5			
Molasses tanker						
Vegetable oil tanker						
Other tanker nei						
Ore/bulk/Oil		Bulk/oil carrier	6	DRY BULK		
Ore/Oil						
Bulk/Oil						
Ore carrier		Bulk carrier	7			
Bulk/container carrier						
Other bulk carrier						
Container (FC)		Container (FC)	9	OTHER DRY CARGO		
Barge carrier		Specialised carrier	8			
Chemical carrier						
Irradiated fuel carrier						
Livestock carrier						
Vehicle carrier						
Other specialised carrier						
Reefer	12	General cargo				
Ro-Ro passenger	10					
Ro-Ro container	11					
Other Ro-Ro cargo						
Gen cargo/passenger	13					
Gen cargo/single deck	14					
Gen cargo/container	15					
Deck barge		Dry cargo barge	16			
Hopper barge						
Lash/seabee barge						
Open dry cargo barge						
Covered dry cargo barge						
Other dry cargo barge						
Cruise	17	Passenger		MISCELLANEOUS TYPES		
Other passenger	18					
Fish processing		Fish processing and catching	19			
Fish catching						
Off-shore drilling		Offshore production and support	20			
Off-shore support						
Tug		Tow-boat (tug in MS)	21			
Push-boat						
Research/Survey	22	Other types				
Dredger	23					
Other nei	24					
NAVAL (MILITARY CRAFT)						
NON-SHIP STRUCTURES						

Note: Shaded cells indicate the main groupings used in this report