



## Domestic Waterborne Freight, 2011

This publication provides information on freight traffic moved within the United Kingdom by water transport, known as 'domestic waterborne freight'. The statistics cover inland waters traffic, traffic carried around the UK coast (Coastwise), one-port traffic to and from offshore installations and sea dredging. These statistics are updated annually.



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### The key findings from 2011 include:

- Between 2010 and 2011 goods lifted for all domestic waterborne freight fell by 2 per cent, the sixth consecutive year of decline. However goods moved for all domestic waterborne freight rose by 3 per cent, the first annual increase since 2005.
- **Coastwise traffic** (i.e. traffic carried around the UK coast) remains the largest component of domestic waterborne freight. Despite a fall in the amount of goods lifted by coastwise traffic, the amount of goods moved increased by 4.5 per cent from 2010 to 2011.
- In 2011 traffic on **UK inland waters** was stable compared to 2010, with 43.9 million tonnes lifted and 1.4 billion tonne-kilometres moved.
- Despite a steady decline since 2002, there was an increase in **one-port traffic** (i.e. to and from offshore installations and sea dredging) in 2011 of 6 per cent, from 20.3 million tonnes lifted in 2010 to 21.6 million tonnes lifted in 2011.

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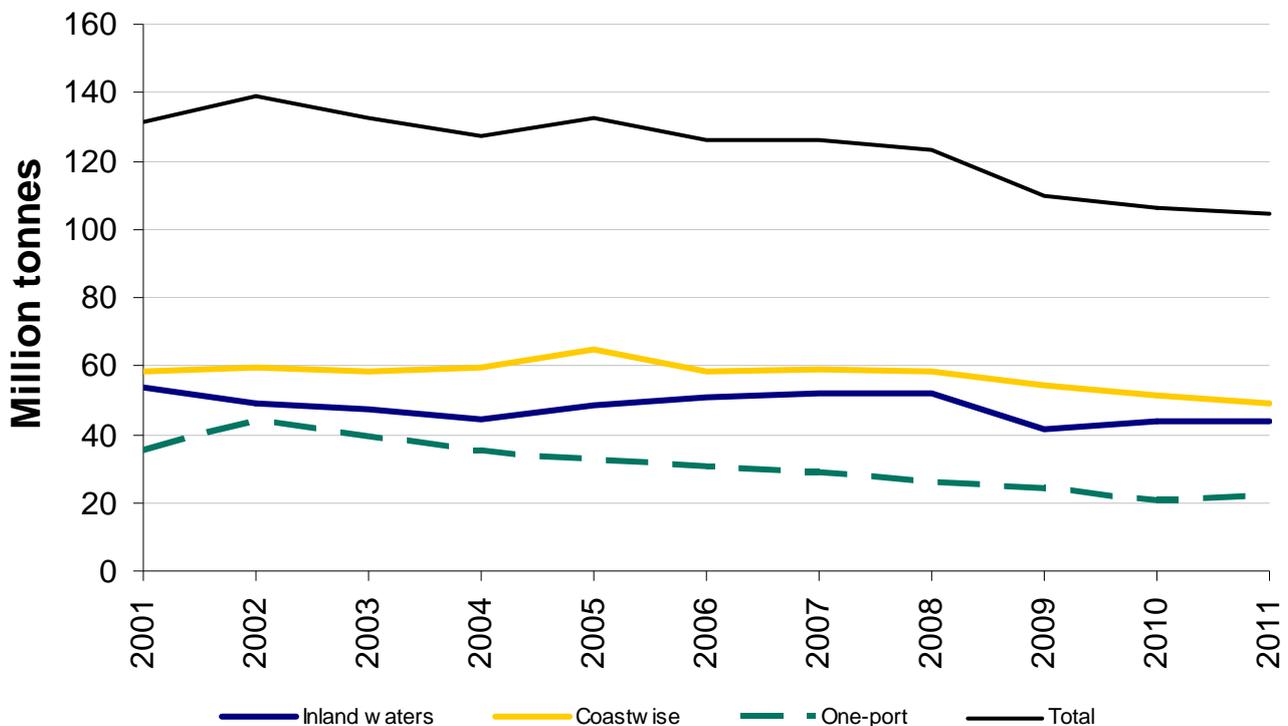
# 1. Overview of Domestic Waterborne Freight

Domestic Waterborne Freight consists of:

- **Inland** waters traffic carried by barge or seagoing vessel on the inland waterways network (rivers and canals)
- **Coastwise** traffic carried around the coast from one UK port to another.
- **One-port** traffic to and from offshore locations - such as oil rigs - and sea dredging

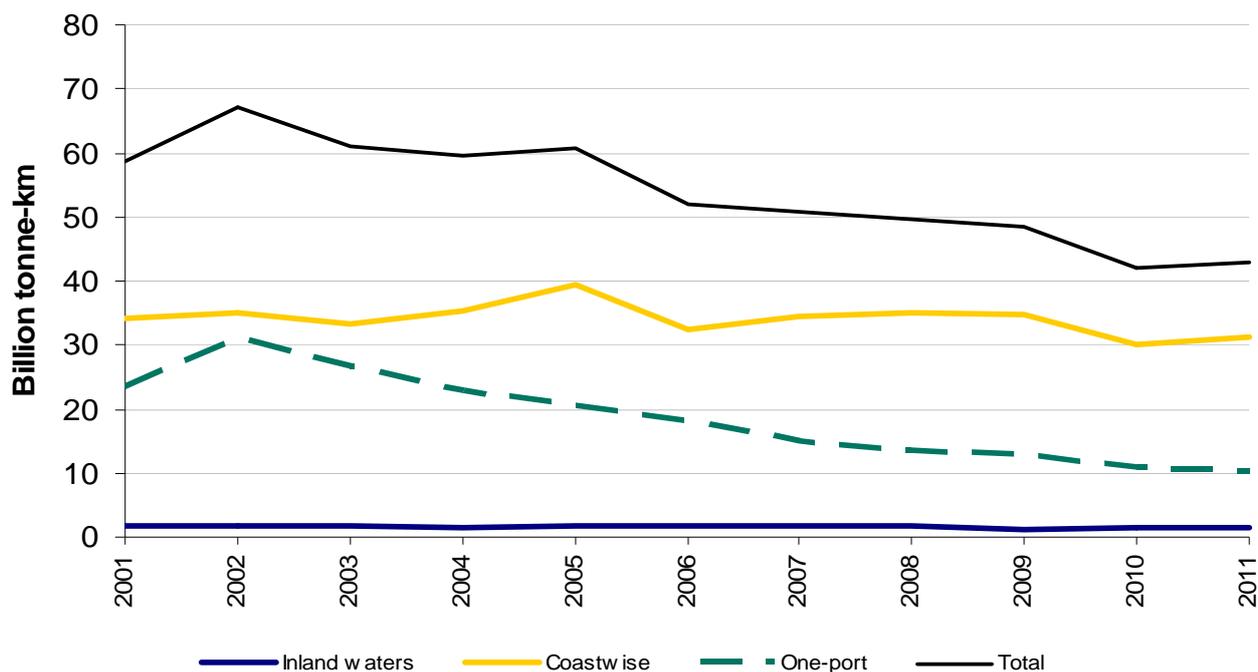
Traffic is measured both in terms of “goods lifted” (the tonnage of goods transported) and “goods moved” (the tonnage of goods lifted multiplied by the distance travelled and expressed as tonne-kilometres).

**Chart 1: Domestic Waterborne Freight, goods lifted, 2001-2011**



- Over the last decade, goods lifted for all domestic waterborne freight fell by 20 per cent (*Chart 1*) and goods moved fell by 27 per cent (*Chart 2*). There have been fluctuations for both goods moved and lifted, particularly before 2005. The general trend since 2005 shows a steady decline in domestic waterborne freight.
- Between 2010 and 2011 goods lifted fell by 2 per cent (*Chart 1*). However goods moved rose by 3 per cent, the first annual increase since 2005 (*Chart 2*). This change in overall domestic waterborne freight can be attributed to the increase in the amount of **coastwise** traffic. Coastwise traffic tends to travel a lot further than inland waters traffic therefore the total amount of goods moved has increased despite a small drop in the amount of goods lifted.

Chart 2: Domestic Waterborne Freight, goods moved, 2001 – 2011



Summary statistics (tables and charts) on Waterborne Freight can be found in the web tables, [DWF0101](#) and [DWF0102](#)

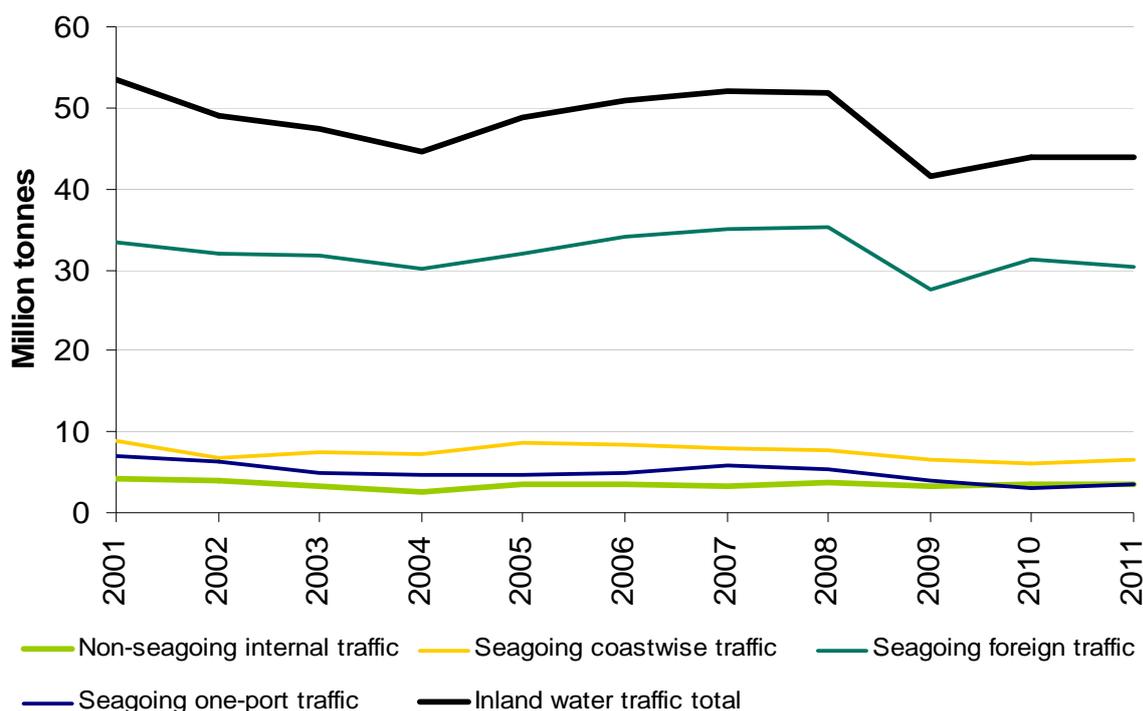
## 2. UK Inland Waters Traffic

### 2.1 Inland Waterways traffic overview

Inland waters traffic is carried by both barges and seagoing vessels along inland waters. It can be further categorised into *non-seagoing traffic* (i.e. internal traffic which is wholly within inland waters) and *seagoing traffic* which crosses into inland waterways from the sea (this can be further classified as coastal, foreign, and one port traffic).

- In 2011 the volume of traffic on **UK inland waters** was stable in comparison with 2010 at 43.9 million tonnes lifted (*Chart 3*) and 1.4 billion tonne-kilometres moved.

Chart 3: UK Inland waters traffic, good lifted, 2001 - 2011



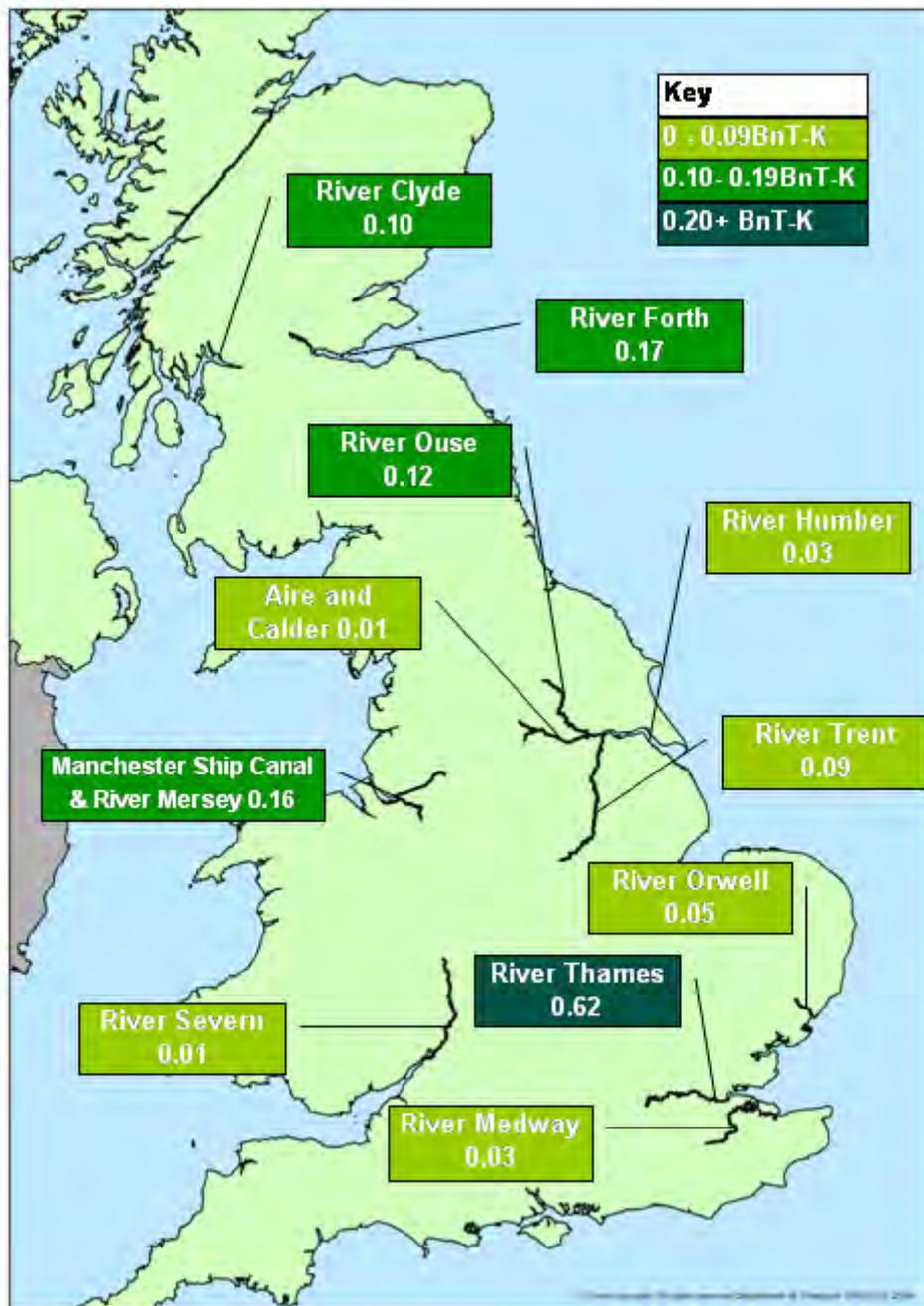
- **Seagoing foreign** traffic is the largest component on all UK inland waters traffic (*Chart 3*). Seagoing foreign traffic accounted for 30.3 million tonnes lifted and 0.9 billion tonne-km moved. However both goods moved and goods lifted fell by 3 per cent compared to 2010.
- The small decrease in seagoing foreign traffic on inland waterways was largely offset by an increase in seagoing coastwise and seagoing one-port traffic that crosses into inland waterways.
- **Seagoing coastwise** traffic on inland waters totalled 6.4 million tonnes lifted (7 per cent higher than in 2010) and 0.2 billion tonne-km moved (*Chart 3*).
- After a steady decline in recent years **seagoing one-port** traffic on inland waters increased to 3.6 million tonnes lifted; up 19 per cent on 2010 but still below levels in 2009 (4.1 millions tonnes lifted). (*Chart 3*).

## 2.2 Inland Waterways traffic by region and inland waterway

- Thames and Kent is the region with the most domestic traffic in the UK. This is largely due to the River Thames which remains by far the busiest inland waterway in the country.
- There were 17.3 million tonnes of freight lifted on the River Thames for **all inland waterways** traffic, just over twice as much as the next busiest waterway, the River Forth, which had 8.0 million tonnes of goods lifted.

- There were 1.85 million tonnes of **non-seagoing internal** freight lifted on the River Thames in 2011, twice as much as any other inland waterway. However, this was down 22 per cent from 2.37 million tonnes in 2010.
- The River Thames also accounts for the highest volume of good moved (0.62 billion tonne-kilometres), more than three times as much as any other inland waterway. (*Map 1*).

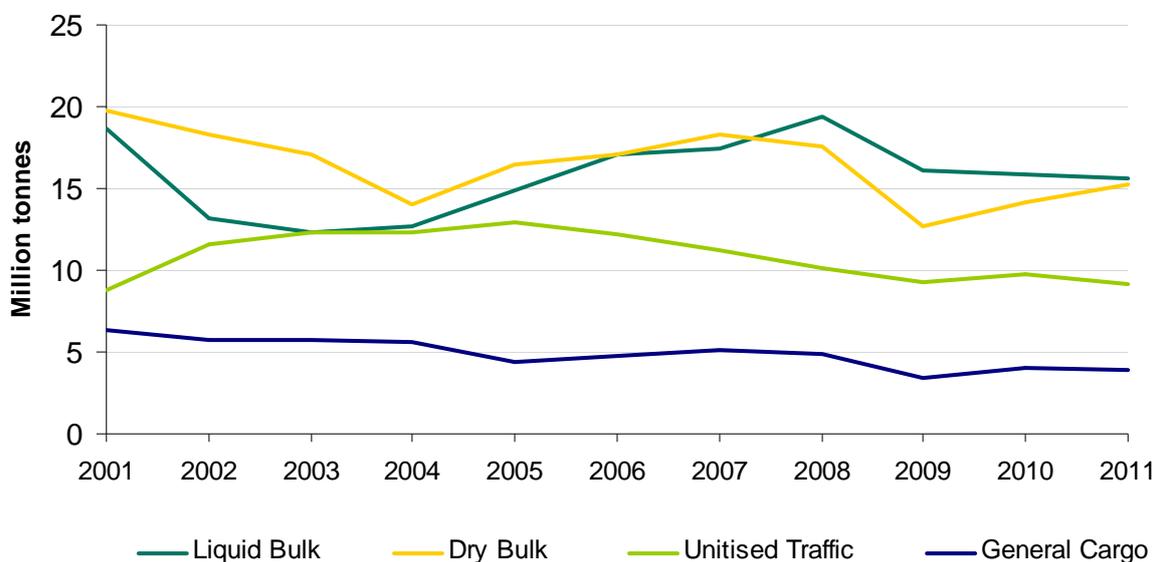
**Map 1: Major Inland Waterway Routes- total goods moved 2011**



## 2.3 Inland Waterways traffic by cargo

- The most common type of cargo for **all inland waters** in 2011 was 'liquid bulk' (15.6 million tonnes goods lifted) of which 'petroleum and petroleum products' accounted for the majority (13.3 million tonnes, good lifted). The majority of 'petroleum and petroleum products cargo came from **seagoing foreign** traffic (11.1 million tonnes, good lifted) (*Chart 4*).
- The second largest cargo category for **all inland waters** in 2011 was 'dry bulk' (15.2 million tonnes, good lifted), followed by 'unitised traffic' (9.1 million tonnes, goods lifted) and 'general cargo' (3.9 million tonnes, goods lifted). A similar distribution of cargo has been seen for the past ten years. The tonnage of 'liquid bulk' goods lifted on inland waterways exceeded 'dry bulk goods' from 2008 onwards. (*Chart 4*).

**Chart 4: UK Inland waters traffic, by cargo category, good lifted, 2001 – 2011**



- In terms of just **non-seagoing internal** traffic the most common cargo type was 'dry bulk', accounting for 2.5 of the 3.5 million tonnes of traffic lifted. Much of the 'dry bulk' cargo is aggregates and building materials carried on the River Thames and some of it is waste.
- 'Dry Bulk' was also the most common cargo type for **seagoing coastwise** traffic and **seagoing one-port** traffic, whereas 'liquid bulk' was the most common cargo type for **seagoing foreign** traffic.

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on Inland waterways traffic can be found in the web tables, [DWF0201 – DWF0210](#)

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## 3. Coastwise Traffic between UK ports

### 3.1 Overview

- There were 49.0 million tonnes of goods lifted in 2011 for **coastwise** traffic between UK ports, down 4.5 per cent on 2010 and 16 per cent on 2001. However, **coastwise** traffic remains the largest component of domestic waterborne freight (*Chart 1*).
- Despite a fall in the amount of goods lifted by **coastwise** traffic, the amount of goods moved actually increased by 4.5 per cent from 30 billion tonne-kilometres in 2010 to 31.3 billion tonne-kilometres in 2011. This is because the average distance travelled has increased (*Chart 2*).
- Longer term, goods moved by **coastwise** traffic has fallen by 8 per cent in the last 10 years. In particular there has been a sharp fall of 20 per cent since 2005, largely as a result of the recession.

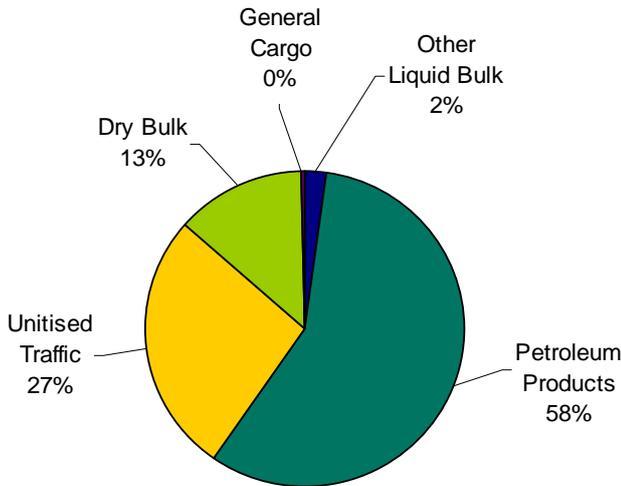
### 3.2 Coastwise traffic by region

- The regions where the most **coastwise** traffic was *loaded* were the East coast of Scotland and North East England, with 11.4 and 10.8 million tonnes of freight respectively.
- There has been very little change in the regional split of coastwise traffic from 2010.
- More **coastwise** traffic is *unloaded* in 'Lancashire and Cumbria' than any other region (9.7 million tonnes), this is up 4.3 per cent on 2010 and up 15.0 per cent in the 10 years since 2001.

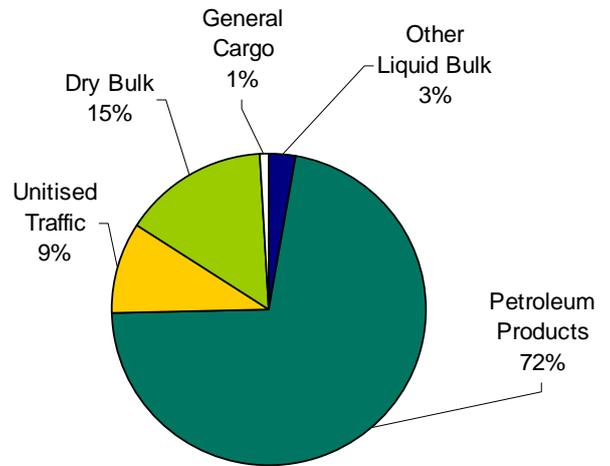
### 3.3 Coastwise traffic by cargo

- The most common type of **coastwise** traffic in 2011 was 'crude petroleum and petroleum products' accounting for 58 per cent of the goods lifted and 72 per cent of the goods moved. The rest of the **coastwise** freight was mainly unitised traffic. (*Charts 5 & 6*).

**Chart 5: Coastwise traffic by cargo, good lifted, 2011**



**Chart 6: Coastwise traffic by cargo, good moved, 2011**

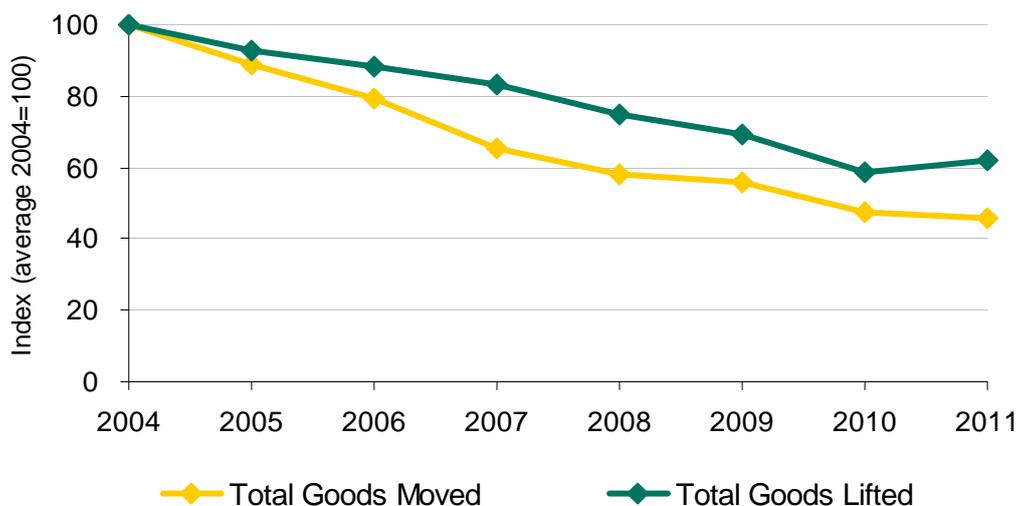


Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on Coastwise Traffic can be found in the web tables, [DWF0301 – DWF0311](#)

## 4. One-Port Traffic of UK ports

- In 2011 the goods lifted by one-port traffic increased for the first time since 2002, from 20.3 million tonnes lifted in 2010 to 21.6 million tonnes lifted (an increase of 6%). The amount of goods moved has been falling over the same period. (*Chart 7*).

**Chart 7: One-port traffic, good lifted and goods moved, 2004 – 2011 (Index, 2004=100)**



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- In terms of goods moved, **one-port** traffic fell by 5 per cent between 2010 and 2011. This is due to an increase in the amount of freight dredged from the sea (e.g. sand) and a decrease in the amount of traffic coming from oil rigs. Traffic from oil rigs tends to travel a lot further than sea dredged traffic and therefore the goods moved figures have gone down.
  - The amount of **one-port** traffic coming from rigs fell 9.2 per cent between 2010 and 2011. This is a continuation of the trend which has seen a 63.5 per cent decrease in the 7 years since 2004.

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on One-port traffic can be found in the web tables, [DWF0401](#) and [DWF0402](#)

## 5. European Inland Waterborne Freight

Compared with certain European nations, the UK has a relatively small amount of traffic on inland waterways. There were 3.5 million tonnes of internal traffic in the UK in 2011 compared with 105 million tonnes in the Netherlands, nearly 55 million tonnes in Germany and nearly 50 million tonnes in Belgium. However, being an island, the UK has a large amount of coastwise traffic.

A full EU breakdown can be found in the web table [DWF0503](#).

## 6. Comparing these statistics with DfT's port freight statistics

Port freight statistics includes all traffic that either arrives at or leaves UK sea ports. Details are given by weight and number of units loaded and unloaded. The statistics are based on returns from ports and shipping agents.

The statistics in this publication cover freight moved by water in the UK. They are based on re-analysis of the domestic element of the Port Freight Statistics, combined with a survey of inland waterway operators.

Both coastwise and one port traffic will contribute towards the port freight statistics as can be seen in table [PORT0105](#).

However, inland waters traffic does not appear in the port freight statistics where it takes place solely on the inland waterway network. Furthermore, *international* freight - carried by sea to or from the UK - will appear in the Port Freight statistics but it will only count towards these statistics if it crosses into inland waterways. Further details of these calculations are given in the technical note for this publication: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/domestic-waterborne-freight-statistics>

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Both publications give details of the total amount of freight handled or *goods lifted* in DWF. Another significant difference is that this publication also provides figures in terms of goods moved whereas the port freight statistics make no estimate of how far the freight may have travelled.

The format of the publications differs too. In particular, port freight statistics gives greater detail of the cargo carried as well as data for specific ports.

## 7. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

Most of the data for this release comes from our own *Port Freight Statistics*. This is a robust data source, for more information see [Ports statistics](#)

The port freight statistics data does not always give a specific port or wharf instead it often gives the *statistical port* which is actually made up of several smaller ports or wharves (e.g Tilbury is a component of the statistical port London). In order to make the inland tonne-kilometres more accurate, the specific port is sometimes estimated using data the Department already records on ship arrivals and knowledge of the cargo type handled at certain ports. However these estimates will not have a major impact on the data, even if the port has been wrongly estimated. This is because all of the component ports are relatively close to the geographical location of the statistical port.

Some details of traffic coming from, or going to, *minor ports* are estimated, however, the total amount of traffic by cargo type is known for these ports. Therefore, the estimation is done in a way that is consistent with the totals and has little overall effect on the statistics.

From 2000 onwards more accurate recording of the routing of crude oil shipments has resulted in differences in one-port and coastwise traffic compared with earlier years. See [Technical notes](#)

Some of the data for internal inland waters traffic comes from an additional survey of barge operators. As far as is known, this is comprehensive, and efforts have been taken to ensure that no double counting takes place between this and the data already collected from the port freight statistics. However, there is still a possibility that such traffic is not fully reported or is being doubled counted.

## 8. Background notes

This release is a summary of a larger set of data tables, charts and documentation on domestic waterborne freight statistics available from the Department for Transport web site at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waterborne-freight-in-the-united-kingdom-2011>

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Other documents which form part of this release include a technical note describing the data sources, methods, definitions and data issues in more detail:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/domestic-waterborne-freight-statistics>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/domestic-waterborne-freight-statistics>