Shipping Fleet Statistics

Statistical Release

September 2012

Department for Transport

Shipping Fleet: 2011

This Statistical Release presents summary statistics on UK and world shipping fleets. It is updated annually.

The statistics include analyses by country of registration (including UK Crown Dependencies & Overseas Territories), UK ownership, management and parent ownership, and vessel type.

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At the end of 2011:

- There were 730 **UK owned** trading vessels, totalling 20.5 million gross tons, or 22.5 million deadweight tons.
- This represented little change on the year before in terms of vessel numbers (a net increase of 2 vessels) or gross tonnage (up 1 per cent), but deadweight tonnage increased by 7 per cent. The size of the fleet had more than trebled since 1999 by either tonnage measure, with an increase of over 20 per cent in the number of vessels.
- 359 of these 730 trading vessels (49 per cent) were also registered in the UK, but these accounted for only 33 per cent of gross tonnage and 28 per cent of deadweight.
- Of these 730 vessels, 162 were tankers, 140 were ro-ro vessels, 114 were container ships and 78 were bulk carriers.

UK parent-owned fleet

- 930 trading vessels were UK parent owned, totalling 27.2 million gross tons and 35.2 million deadweight.

UK managed fleet

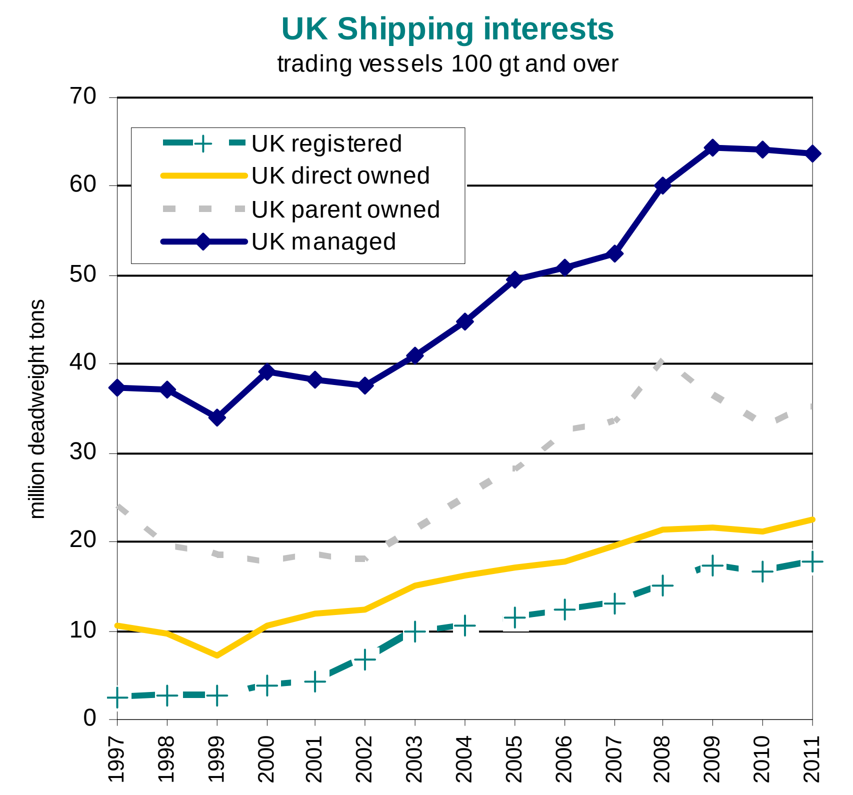
- 1,228 trading ships were UK managed, totalling 49.4 million gross tons or 63.8 million deadweight tons.

World fleet

- The world trading fleet at the end of 2011 consisted of over 55,000 vessels, totalling 983 million gross tons, or 1.47 billion tons deadweight.

1. UK Shipping Interests

Shipping is a complex international business, and many different parties, often based in different countries, may have a commercial interest in a single vessel. There is therefore no single measure of the extent of a nation's interests in shipping that is suitable in all circumstances. The following chart illustrates four of many ways that the shipping interests of the UK might be presented, in each case in terms of the deadweight tonnage (a measure of cargo carrying capacity) of the vessels concerned.



Definitions:

UK registered:
The vessel is UK Registered. (International law requires that every merchant ship be registered in a country – the UK Ship Register is administered by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.)

UK direct owned:
The registered owner of the vessel is a company registered in the UK.

UK parent owned:
The nationality of the company having the controlling interest in the direct owner is United Kingdom.

UK managed: The company managing the ship is a UK company.

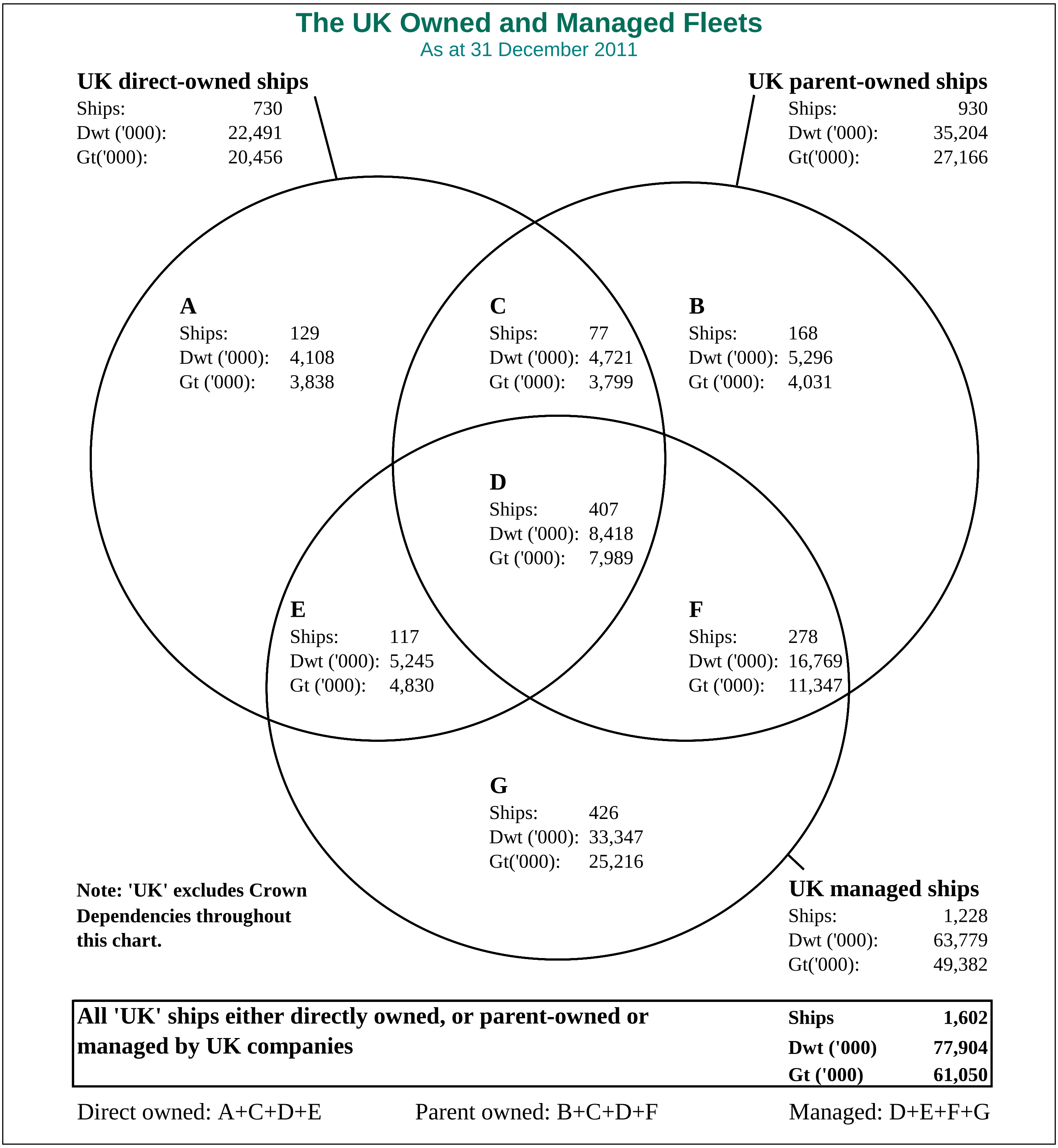
By all four measures the 'UK fleet' has seen substantial growth since a low point in the late 1990s. In 2011, UK companies directly owned 22.5 million dwt, while UK companies had a controlling interest (parent ownership) in 35.2 million dwt. Since 1999, the deadweight tonnage of UK Registered shipping has grown more than six fold (from a relatively low base), while UK owned tonnage has trebled, and UK parent owned and UK managed tonnage have both increased by almost 90 per cent.

This growth has tended to level off since 2008 or 2009, with the recession, but only one of the four measures – parent ownership – showed a marked drop, which has partly reversed in 2011.

The UK share of the world fleet in terms of flag or direct ownership has grown since 1999. The UK shares in terms of parent ownership or management are almost the same as they were in 1999, as the world fleet has grown by a very similar amount over the period, i.e. just under 90 per cent.

The schematic diagram below demonstrates the degree of overlap between the UK direct owned, parent owned and managed fleets.

- Less than 20% of the UK direct owned fleet does not have either a UK parent or a UK manager.
- Over half of UK managed tonnage (51% of gross tonnage, 52% of deadweight) does not have either a direct or a parent UK owner.



2. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

- These statistics are derived from data provided by a leading commercial supplier. They are believed to be of good quality, but since the commercial data set is not within DfT's control they are not considered National Statistics.
- The published tables include statistics for ships which are UK registered. For the sake of consistency within this data set, these are based on the same commercial information source as the rest of the data. This means the results may differ slightly from the definitive information on the UK Ship Register provided by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), who administer the UK register.

3. Glossary

For more detail of these and other definitions and concepts, please see the Technical Notes (link in following section).

- Vessels: These statistics refer to all vessels of 100 gross tonnes or over, unless otherwise stated
- Gross tons: a volume measure representing the size of a vessel. It is often used when measuring the sizes of different types of ship, where no more specialised measures suit all vessel types.
- Deadweight: a measure of the carrying capacity (in tonnes) of a vessel.

4. Background notes

- The web tables and charts give further detail of the key results presented in this statistical release. They are available here: http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?orderby=title&post_type=table&series=shipping-fleet-parent-series
- Further guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics can be found here: http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/shipping-fleet/shipping-fleet-tech-note.pdf
- The next update in this series, for 2012 data, is due for publication in September 2013.