



Department for Transport

Shipping Fleet Statistics 2015

About this release

This statistical release presents summary statistics for UK and world shipping fleets.

The latest figures identify growth in the UK flag although it remains relatively small in global terms.

This release includes analyses by country of registration, UK ownership and management, and trading vessel type.

Definitions

Vessels reported upon in this release weigh at least 100 gross tonnes.

Volumes refer to deadweight tonnage (dwt) - a measure of cargo carrying capacity - unless stated otherwise.

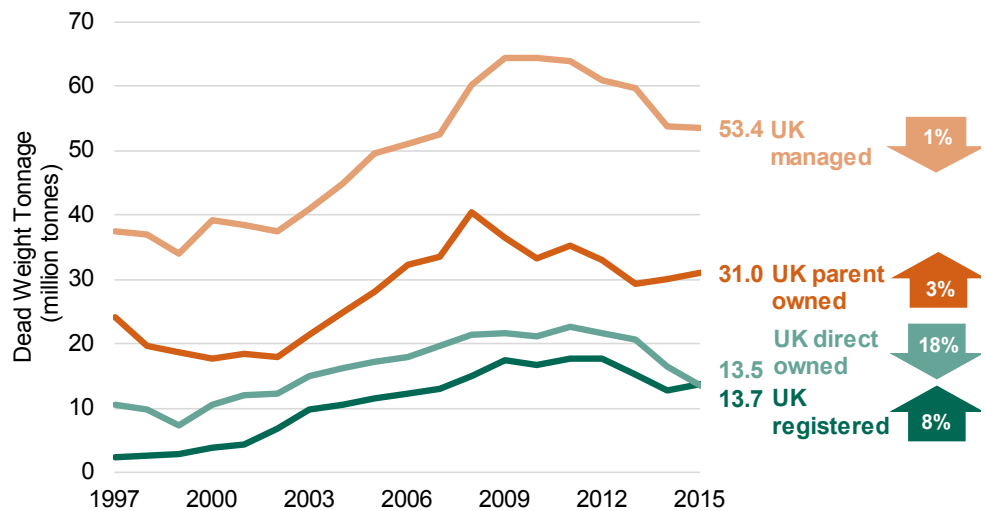
In this publication

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In 2015 the UK registered trading fleet grew for the first time in four years, from 12.6 to 13.7 million deadweight tonnes (+8%)

The deadweight tonnage of the trading fleet owned by UK parent companies also increased by 3 per cent, whilst the UK direct owned and UK managed trading fleet fell by 18 per cent and 1 per cent respectively.

UK interests in trading vessels: 1997-2015 (FLE0101)



The four measures of the UK trading fleet generally grew throughout the decade to 2009, before declining in recent years. However, at the end of 2015, the UK registered fleet (or 'UK flag') was still five times the size it was at the end of 1999. This growth and subsequent decline may reflect the success of the UK tonnage tax scheme introduced in 2000 in promoting of the UK ship register. Tonnage tax companies are required to elect into the regime for a 10-year period and may extend that election on a rolling annual basis.

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

Media: 020 7944 3188

Public: 020 7944 3000



Detailed statistics...

on vessels by UK and foreign ownership or parent group ownership by UK or world registry may be found in FLE0203

Definitions

UK registered: the vessel is UK registered - every merchant ship must be registered in a country

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

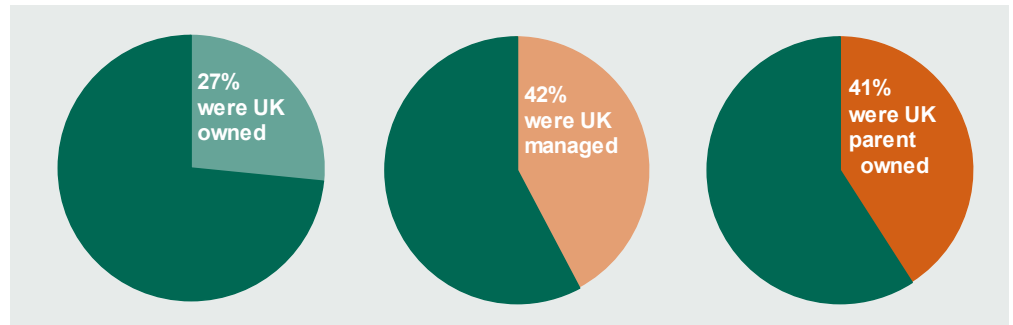
These definitions are not mutually exclusive: vessels may fall into one or more of these groups.

Detailed statistics...

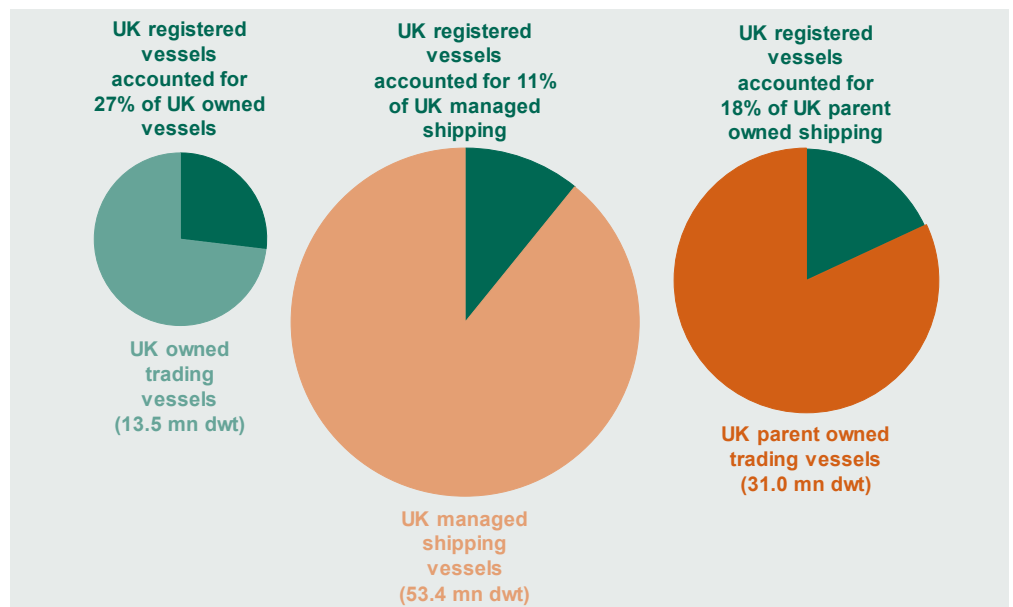
on owned vessels (FLE0202) registered vessels (FLE0302) and managed vessels (FLE0701) are also available

UK owned and managed trading vessels, 2015

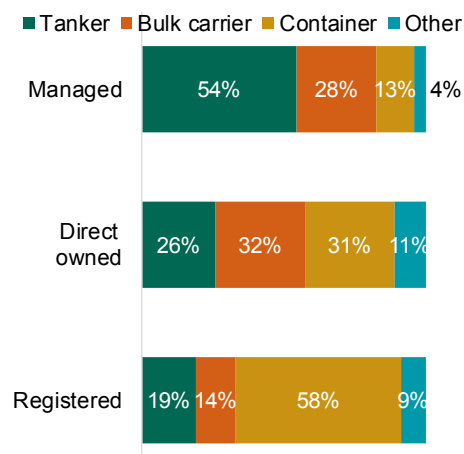
At the end of 2015 there were 13.7 million deadweight tonnes of shipping on the **UK ship register**. Of these...



Conversely...



UK trading fleet by vessel type, 2015



The type of vessels registered on the UK Ship Register, or owned or managed by UK companies varies considerably. At the end of 2015, just over half (54 per cent) of all **UK managed vessels** were tankers, whereas just over half (58 per cent) of the **UK registered fleet** was comprised of container vessels.

Boosting economic growth

Notes

1. *Maritime Growth Study: keeping the UK competitive in a global market*,

Department for Transport,
September 2015

gov.uk/government/
publications/maritime-
growth-study-report

Whilst it is not immediately evident that a large register attracts equally large economic benefits or foreign investment, the 2015 *Maritime Growth Study*¹ set out a vision for the UK maritime sector that:

- provides ship owners with a high quality, commercially-oriented UK Ship Register
- promotes the UK brand
- reinforces our maritime centre status and
- generates income for UK taxpayers

Global comparisons

Detailed statistics...

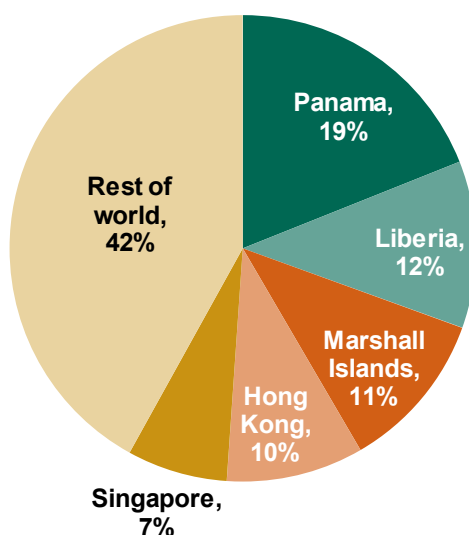
See FLE0501 and FLE0502

The top 10 ship registers and the UK

Global position	Mn DWT
1. Panama	326.8
2. Liberia	199.7
3. Marshall Islands	190.9
4. Hong Kong	164.0
5. Singapore	120.0
6. Malta	95.9
7. Greece	72.4
8. Bahamas	69.6
9. China	65.4
10. Cyprus	33.0
19. United Kingdom	13.7

In 2015, the UK remained the 19th largest trading fleet in the world and accounted for 0.8 per cent of the world's trading fleet. The world's five largest ship registers account for over half of the world's trading vessel capacity.

Top 5 ship registers: share of global trading fleet, 2015



Panama, Liberia, the Marshall Islands and a number of other open flags account for leading shares in world ship registration.

Hong Kong, Singapore and other far eastern countries leading in exports and manufacturing also account for large shares of the global trading fleet.

In 2010-2015 the UK flag declined at an average annual rate of 3 per cent per annum, whilst the world fleet grew by 5 per cent per annum.

Definitions

The Red Ensign Group is the collective title for the shipping registers of:

The United Kingdom

The Crown Dependencies (the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey)

The Overseas Territories (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, St Helena and the Turks & Caicos Islands)

Detailed statistics

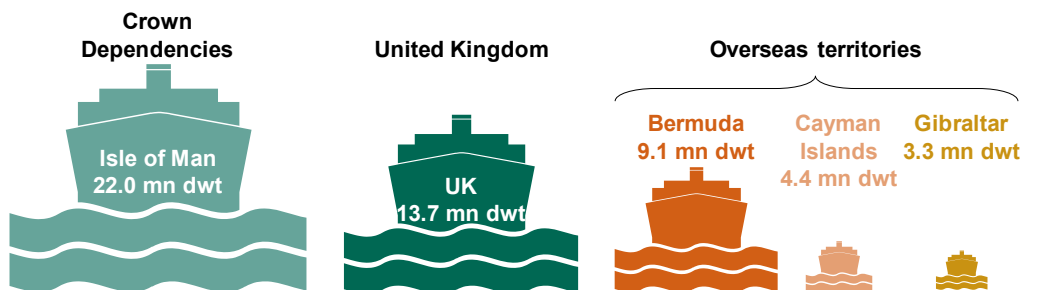
on the Red Ensign Fleet may be found in table FLE0401 and FLE0402

Notes

1. Registers with less than 1,000 gross tonnes of trading vessels are not presented.

In 2015, the Isle of Man had the largest single ship register in the Red Ensign Group (42 per cent). The United Kingdom had the second largest Red Ensign Group ship register (26 per cent). Collectively the Overseas Territories accounted for nearly a third of the Red Ensign shipping (32%), of which the largest single register was Bermuda.

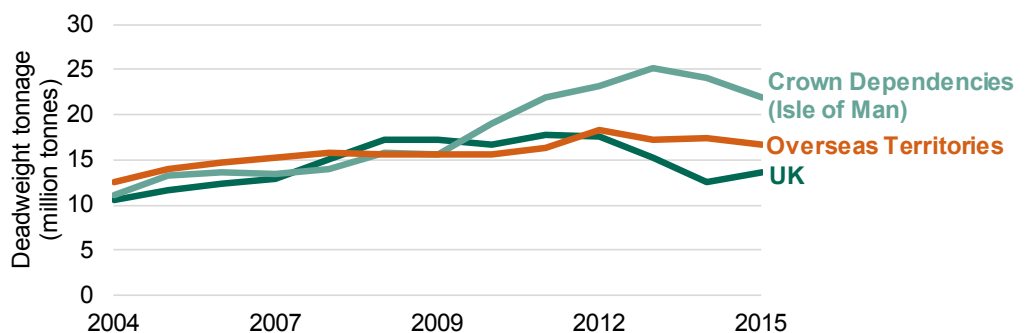
Red Ensign Group ship registers, trading vessels, 2015¹



Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and Gibraltar are open registers and are therefore available to all shipping regardless of the place of business of the owner. They are referred to by some as ‘flags of convenience’ as they were originally established to circumvent restrictive national employment legislation. Registration within the Red Ensign Group provides vessels with the support of British consular services world-wide and British Royal Navy protection.

The volume of shipping registered in each of the Red Ensign regions had been diverging in recent years. However, the Isle of Man’s register declined by 13 per cent in 2013-2015 (from 25.2 to 22.0 million dwt).

Red Ensign Group ship registers, trading vessels, 2004-2015



Detailed statistics...

FLE0101-FLE0102: summary and interactions of the four definitions of the UK trading fleet

FLE0201-FLE0204: UK owned vessels of 100GT+ & 500GT+ by type of vessel and registry

FLE0301-FLE0304: UK & Crown Dependency registered vessels of 100GT+ & 500GT+ vessel type & registry

FLE0401-0402: Red Ensign registered vessels by trading type, registry and share of world fleet

FLE0501-FLE0502: Selected international registered trading fleets

FLE0601-FLE0701: UK group beneficial owned and UK managed vessels by vessel type and registry

Further tables containing breakdowns and time series of the number, deadweight tonnage and gross tonnage of vessels by type of vessel, size of vessel, fleet definition, and selected international fleets may be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/shipping-fleet-statistics>

Further guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics may be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maritime-and-shipping-statistics-guidance>

All volumes featured in this release refer to deadweight tonnage (dwt) - a measure of cargo carrying capacity - unless stated otherwise.

The gross tonnage (gt) of a vessel represents the size of a vessel. It is used when measuring the sizes of different types of vessel when no more specialised measure suit all vessel types. As this release is largely concerned with the cargo carrying capacity of trading vessels we have generally used dwt rather than gt. Gross tonnage is also typically the measure used to assess the cost of vessel registration.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

Further resources

[ihsonline.com](https://www.ihsonline.com)

[gov.uk/guidance/uk-ship-register-for-merchant-ship-and-bareboat-charter-100gt](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-ship-register-for-merchant-ship-and-bareboat-charter-100gt)

These statistics are derived from commercial data sourced from IHS. They are believed to be of good quality, but as the management of the data set is not within the DfT's control they are not eligible for National Statistics badging. All IHS data are for 31 December.

This statistical release contains statistics on the size of the UK registered fleet. These data may differ slightly from the definitive information on the UK Ship Register administered by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).