



Department for Transport

# Domestic Waterborne Freight: UK 2015 (Revised)

**Revisions:** The underlying data has been subject to minor amendments due to the discovery of a processing error since this release was first published on 7 December 2016. These changes are small and the impact has been minimal.

**The total amount of goods moved for all domestic waterborne freight increased by 16% to 31.4 billion tonne kilometres (bt-k) in 2015.**

## Domestic waterborne freight goods moved and lifted, 2015

	Goods Moved (bt-k)			Goods lifted (mt)		
	2014	2015	Percentage change	2014	2015	Percentage change
<b>Inland waters</b> 	1.5	1.5	→ 0%	46.9	47.0	→ 0%
<b>Coastwise</b> 	19.4	24.5	↑ +26%	40.0	42.6	↑ +6%
<b>One-port</b> 	6.4	5.8	↓ -9%	17.9	18.7	↑ +5%
<b>Total</b>	27.0	31.4	↑ +16%	94.9	98.2	↑ +3%

### About this release

This publication provides information on freight traffic moved within the United Kingdom by water transport, known as 'domestic waterborne freight'. The statistics are based on re-analysis of the domestic element of the port freight statistics combined with a survey of inland waterway operators.

Next Update: December 2017

### Definitions

#### Inland waters

Traffic carried by barge or sea going vessels on the inland waterways network (rivers and canals).

#### Coastwise

Traffic carried around the coast from one UK port to another.

#### One-port

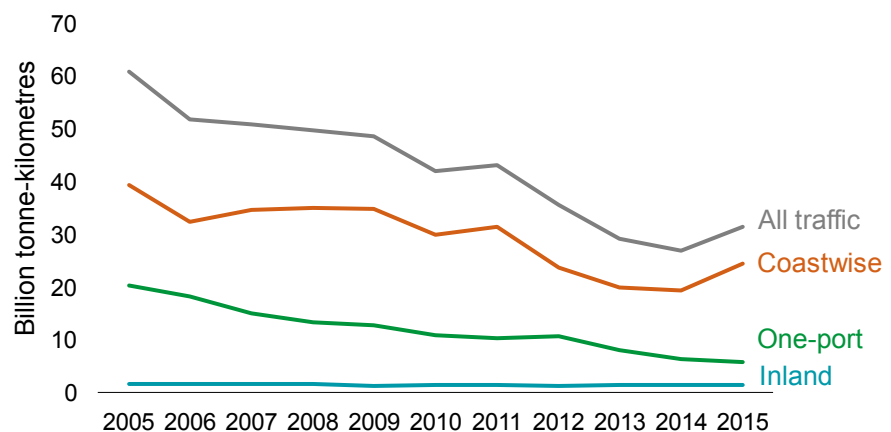
Traffic to and from offshore locations - such as oil rigs and sea dredging.

### Goods moved

Freight traffic for this publication is measured in terms of "goods moved" (the tonnage of goods lifted multiplied by the distance travelled and expressed as tonnes-kilometres). Although, most of the tables supporting this release contain statistics on goods lifted in addition to goods moved.

In 2015, goods moved by domestic water transport accounted for 15% of total domestic freight transport in the UK<sup>1</sup>. The total volume of goods moved was approximately half that recorded in 2005, largely driven by the decline of one-port traffic. Coastwise traffic has increased since 2012 at 24.5 bt-k.

## Domestic waterborne freight goods moved, 2005 - 2015

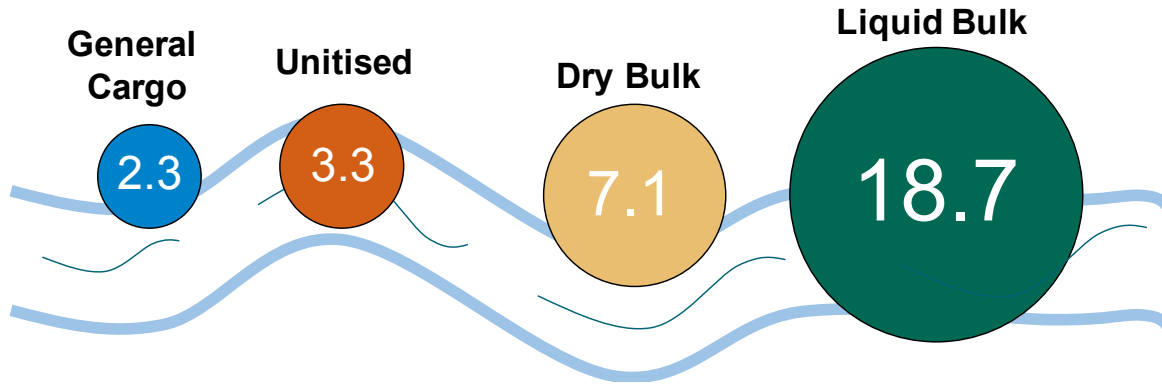


<sup>1</sup>TSGB0401 - Domestic freight transport by mode

## Goods moved by commodity

Of the total goods moved (31.4 bt-k), 60% was liquid bulk goods in 2015 compared to 52% in 2014. The proportion of liquid bulk goods has increased compared to 2014, where the majority of liquid bulk (90%) came from crude petroleum and petroleum products. There was 16.8 bt-k of crude petroleum and petroleum products moved in 2015 compared with 12.5 bt-k in 2014. The remainder of the traffic was made up by dry bulk (23%), unitised traffic (11%) and general cargo (7%).

Domestic waterborne freight goods moved (bt-k) by cargo category, 2015, [DWF0102](#)



## Goods moved by inland waterway route

Inland waters traffic is carried by both barges and by seagoing vessels. Overall this accounts for a relatively small proportion of domestic waterborne freight traffic.

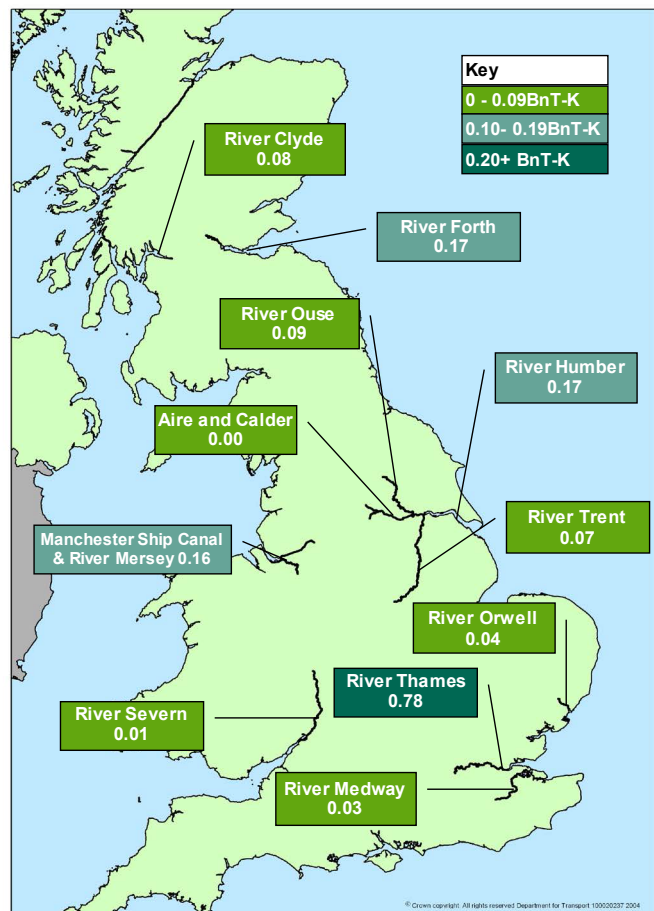
From 2014 to 2015, inland waters traffic has remained steady at 1.5 bt-k.

Of the navigable waterways, the Thames and Kent region handled the most domestic traffic in the UK. This is largely due to the River Thames which handled more than 4 times the volume of freight moved than any other inland waterway in 2015.

In terms of goods lifted, the River Thames lifted around 22.3 million tonnes of freight (47% of the total traffic on waterways).

For more details on the figures above refer to the web tables [DWF0207](#) and [DWF0208](#).

## Major inland waterway routes, goods moved 2015



## Changes made to the publication

In last year's publication, we proposed to reduce the number of tables in this statistical release subject to user feedback. We have removed tables DWF0201-0203, 0209-0210, DWF0303-0311 and DWF0401-0402. However, we have kept DWF0501 following user feedback. If you have any further comments to these changes, please contact us at: [maritime\\_stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:maritime_stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

## Background notes

Port Freight statistics include 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 [PORT0106](#).

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/publications/maritime-and-shipping-statistics-guidance>

This publication also provides figures in terms of goods moved whereas the Port Freight statistics make no estimate of how far the freight goods may have travelled. However, many of the tables that support this release also contain figures on goods lifted.

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.

## Strengths and weaknesses of the data

Most of the data for this release comes from DfT Port Freight Statistics. This is a robust data source, for more information see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/port-freight-statistics-2015-final-figures>.

The port freight statistics data does not always state a specific port or wharf, instead it references the statistical port which is 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 the Technical notes at:

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

Some of the data for internal inland waters traffic is sourced 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.

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/statistics/domestic-waterborne-freight-2015>

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/collections/maritime-and-shipping-statistics#technical-note>

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Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/230364/pre-release-access-dwf.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/230364/pre-release-access-dwf.pdf)

## Links to other information

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