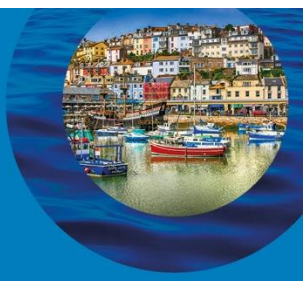Marine
Management
Organisation

UK Sea Fisheries
Statistics 2023

...ambitious for our seas and coasts

UK SEA FISHERIES STATISTICS 2023

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About this publication

This is an official statistics release.

The aim of this publication is to provide a comprehensive picture of UK Sea Fisheries in 2023, recent trends and long-term historical context, back to 1938 in some instances.

The publication is a summary of:

- The UK fishing fleet (Section 1)
- Its activity at sea
    - Landings – how much fish are caught and landed (Section 2)
    - Effort – how long is spent at sea (Section 3)
- Trade (Section 4)

This report contains charts and commentary to describe UK sea fisheries. The accompanying tables for each section and underlying datasets are available here.

This release was previously published as accredited official statistics (formerly known as National Statistics). However, the MMO has written[1] to the Office for Statistics Regulation to request a temporary suspension to the accredited official statistics designation for these statistics. This was agreed[2] by the Director General for Regulation on 3 December 2024. For further details on the reason for the suspension and its impact please see the following statistical notice[3].

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[1] https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/rebekah-paul-to-ed-humpherson-temporary-suspension-of-accredited-official-statistics-status-of-sea-fisheries-statistics/
[2] https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/ed-humpherson-to-rebekah-paul-temporary-suspension-of-accredited-official-statistics-status-of-sea-fisheries-statistics/
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-sea-fisheries-statistics-temporary-suspension-of-the-accredited-official-statistics-designation

Contents

Key Statistics

Fleet

In 2023 there were 5,418 UK registered fishing vessels. This represents a 54% reduction since 1993. The power (kW) of the UK fleet has also decreased by 42% over the past three decades. Gross Tonnage (GT) has decreased by 37% since 1996 when recording of this metric began, to 200 thousand tonnes.

Approximately 79% of the UK fleet is represented by vessels under 10 metres in length, of which 49% are administered in England.

The majority of UK vessels operate within the non-sector (87%) with the remaining vessels in membership of a Producer Organisation.

Landings

In 2023, UK vessels landed 719 thousand tonnes of sea fish with a value of £1.1 billion. Compared to 2022, this is an increase of 12% in quantity and an increase in value of 5%. The increase in value is mainly driven by the increase in landings, although of lower value fish.

Landings into the UK by foreign vessels in 2023 was 19 thousand tonnes, which compared to 2022 represents a 6% increase. Landings abroad by UK vessels increased 13% to 279 thousand tonnes.

Effort

Since 2005, fishing effort (kW days at sea) by the over 10 metre fleet has decreased by around 34%. Most of the reduction in effort is driven by a 34% decline in effort in the demersal trawl and seine segment.

Fishing effort (kW days at sea) by the over 10m fleet increased by 1% between 2022 and 2023.

Trade

The UK is a net importer of fish. The UK's crude trade gap (imports minus exports) in 2023 for sea fish is 274 thousand tonnes. This is smaller than 2022, where the gap was 316 thousand tonnes.

In 2023 the UK imported 611 thousand tonnes of sea fish, with a value of £3.5 billion. It exported 336 thousand tonnes, with a value of £1.7 billion.

Section 1: Fleet

View the tables accompanying this section [here](#).

Fleet Characteristics

Capacity and power

As well as the total number of vessels, the fleet can also be assessed in terms of their capacity and power. Capacity is usually measured in gross tonnage (GT) which is a volumetric measure of a vessel capacity. The power (kW) of a vessel refers to the vessel's engine power.

The MMO holds data on the capacity and power of all individual UK vessels and these figures are aggregated to compare groups of interest. This allows for a more nuanced assessment of the fleet, as opposed to looking at the number of vessels alone.

The number of UK fishing vessels has reduced by 54% over the past three decades, from 11.7 thousand vessels in 1993 to 5,418 vessels in 2023. The power (kW) of the UK fleet has also decreased by 42% over the past three decades[4]. Two key changes which have contributed to this are national and international policies introduced to ensure the sustainability of fish stocks:

1. Greater controls on fishing opportunities

2. Fleet capacity reductions through decommissioning exercises

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[4] Table 1.1

Figure 1.1[56]: Fleet characteristics split by country of administration within the UK.

(Number of vessels)

(Power, KW '000)

(Capacity, GT '000)
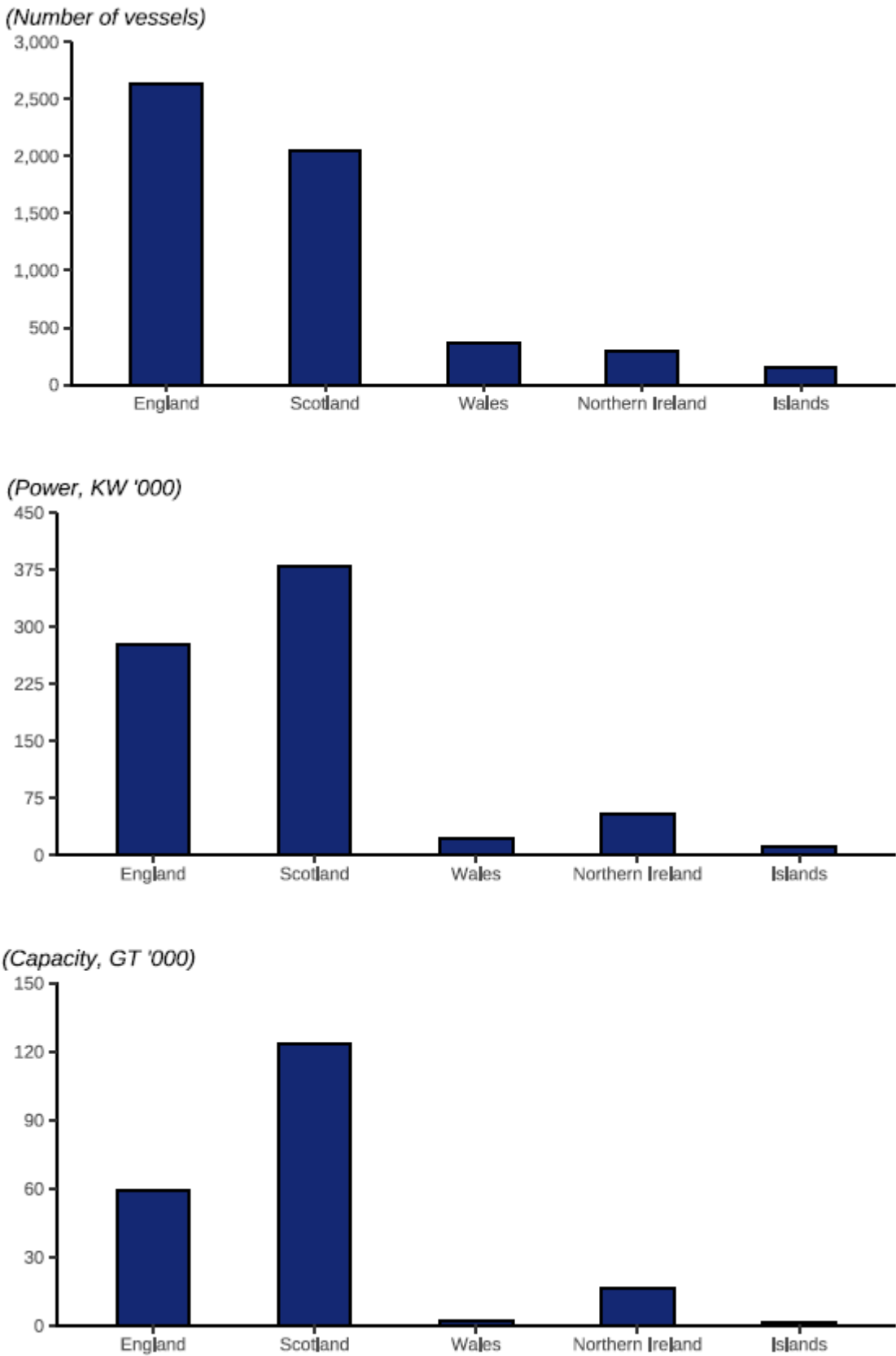
In 2023, England contributed the highest number of vessels to the UK fleet, but Scotland's fleet had more power and capacity. English vessels represent 48% of the total number of vessels in the UK while

Scottish vessels 37%. This proportion has remained the same since 2020, with little change over the last decade. The Scottish fleet has the largest contribution of capacity to the UK fleet (61%) while the English fleet accounts for 29% of the total fleet capacity.

Vessel length

Figure 1.2: Fleet composition showing proportion of over 10m and proportion of under 10m vessels by country of administration.

(Fleet Composition)

■ 10m & under ■ Over 10m
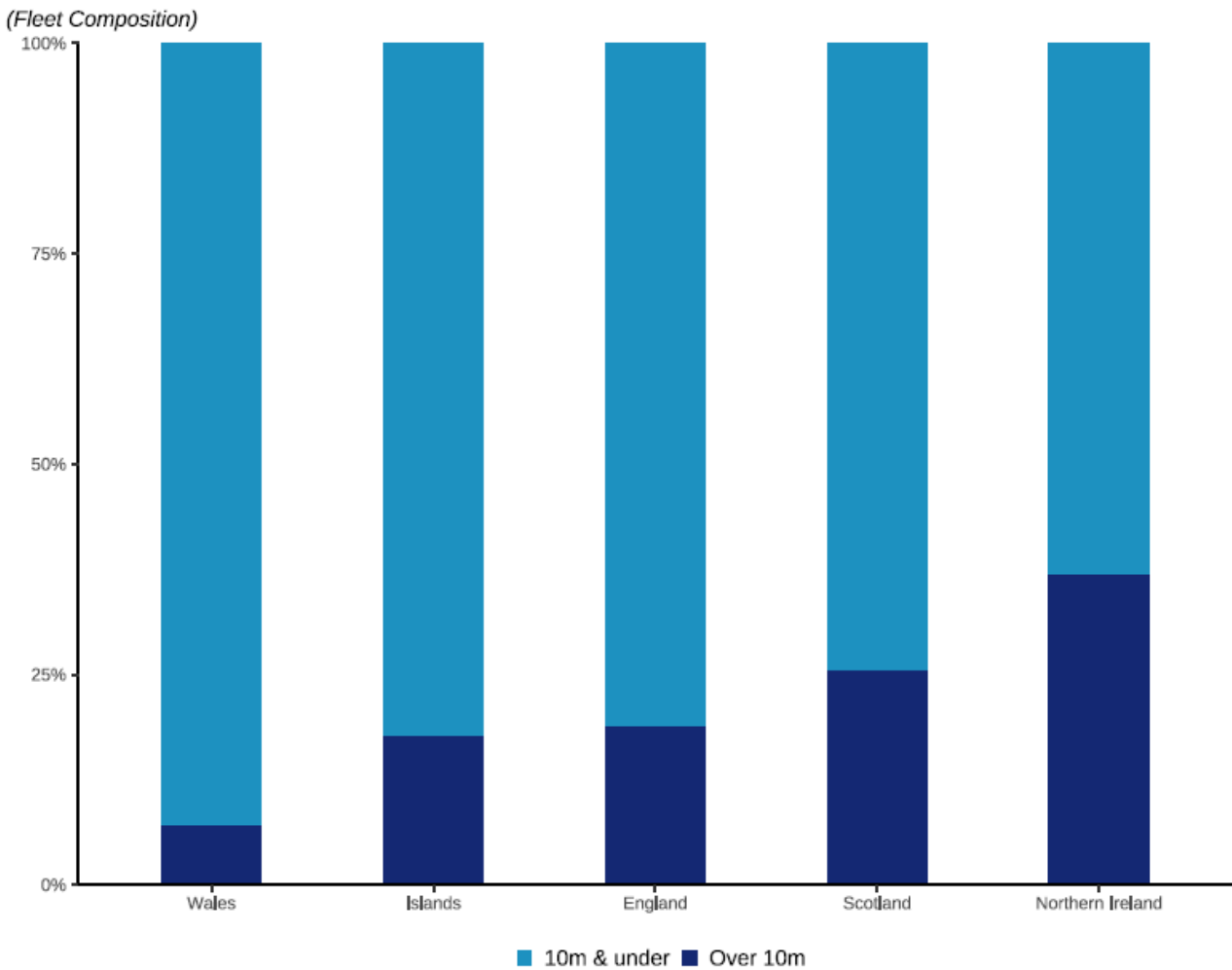
The Welsh fleet has the lowest proportion of vessels over 10m. The smaller number yet higher capacity of Scottish compared with English vessels (Figure 1.1) can be explained by Scotland having a higher proportion of larger, more powerful vessels in comparison to the English fleet.

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[5] In this figure and throughout the publication, Islands refers to the Crown Dependencies of Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey.
[6] The figures and values reported here are based on the country of administration for the vessel while the figures in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 are based on the country associated with the district the vessel is administered by. Some Island vessels (based on country of administration) are assigned to England in the associated tables as the district of their admin port is Plymouth in England.

The fleet with the largest proportion of vessels over 10 metres in the UK is the Northern Irish fleet. The different length composition of the fleet can again be used to explain why the Northern Irish fleet has more capacity and power than the Welsh and island fleets, despite having a similar number of vessels.

In 2023, there were 33 vessels that could not be assigned to a country. These vessels are registered but not administered by a port; typically, new vessels and vessels in the process of moving to another administration[7].

> **Fish stock**
> A fish stock refers to a fish population that is isolated from other stocks of the same species. For example, around the UK there are several cod stocks – including e.g. Cod 7d in the Channel and North Sea Cod. Many fish stocks are managed by quotas – limits set on the tonnage that can be caught. Currently the UK has quota for around 100 different fish stocks.

Owing to the diverse nature of the fishing industry, it is difficult to provide a simple explanation of the variation in fleet characteristics seen across each fisheries administration's respective fleet.. The main influencer is the different fish stocks that the fleets target. Key elements of the Scottish fleet target several fisheries that are high volume but lower priced, such as herring and mackerel caught in the North Sea and West of Scotland waters. To target these stocks, the Scottish fleet has moved towards having higher capacity vessels which cover large sea areas and can catch large volumes (several hundred tonnes) of fish per trip.

Compared with this, the English fleet is involved in several key fisheries that are typically lower volume but higher priced, such as the Channel fisheries for sole and plaice. In addition, a greater proportion of the fisheries pursued by the English fleet cover inshore areas. Together these factors have allowed the English fleet to develop with a greater proportion of smaller vessels that are able to be economically viable through catching smaller quantities of more valuable fish. Changes in fishing opportunities over time have been key drivers for the development of the fleet.

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[7] Table 1.2

Figure 1.3: Fleet characteristics by vessel length groups.

(Number of vessels)

(Capacity, GT '000)
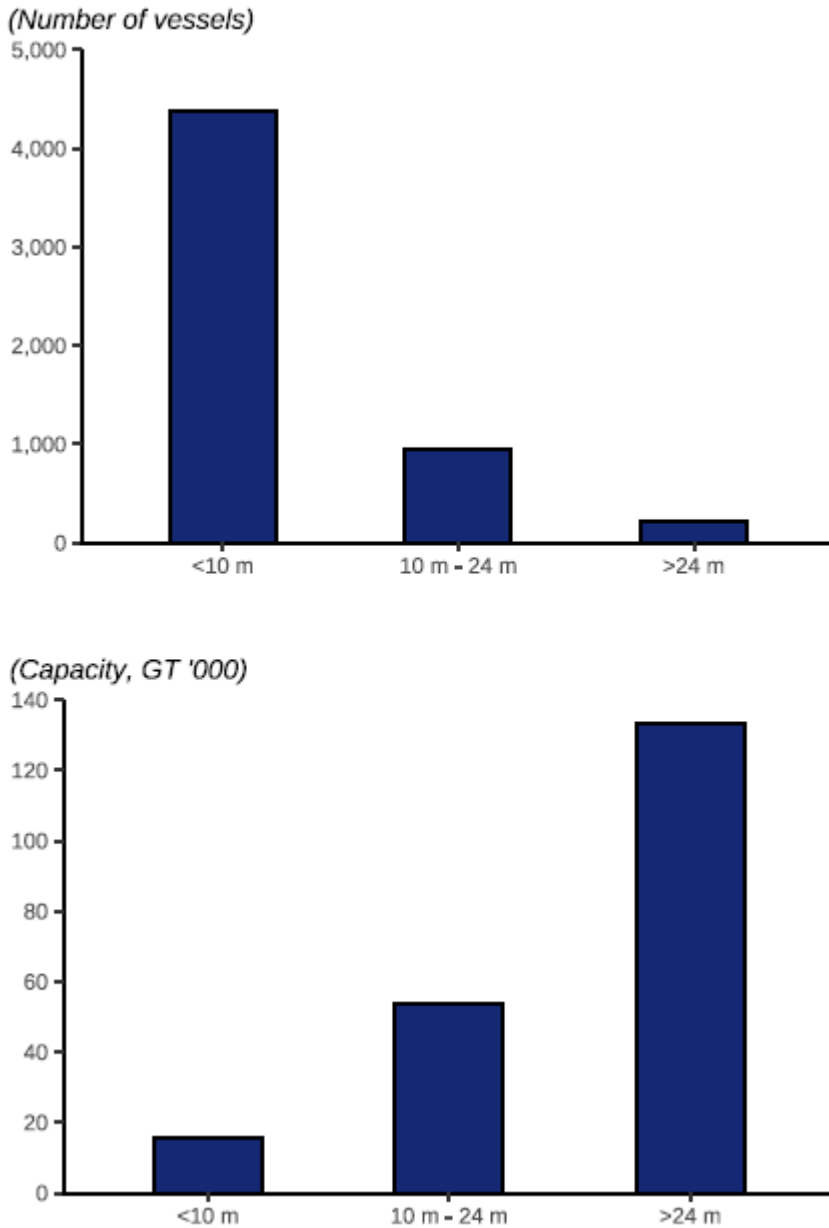
Larger vessels contribute more to the UK fleet's capacity than smaller vessels. Vessels under 10 metres make up 79% of the UK fleet but only contribute 8% to the fleet's total capacity. Larger vessels of more than 15 metres make up 10% of the total fleet by number representing 85% of the fleet's capacity. This is because larger vessels utilise fishing gear that can catch larger quantities and hold greater amounts of fish per trip and can journey for longer distances to better fishing locations.

The Scottish fleet has larger vessels than the English fleet. The average length of a Scottish vessel is 11 metres, while the average length of an English vessel is just over 9 metres. As a result, the Scottish fleet has over twice the capacity than the English fleet, despite the English fleet having 21222% more vessels.

Age of vessels

Figure 1.4: Fleet characteristics by age of vessels within the UK fleet.

(Number of vessels)

(Capacity, GT '000)
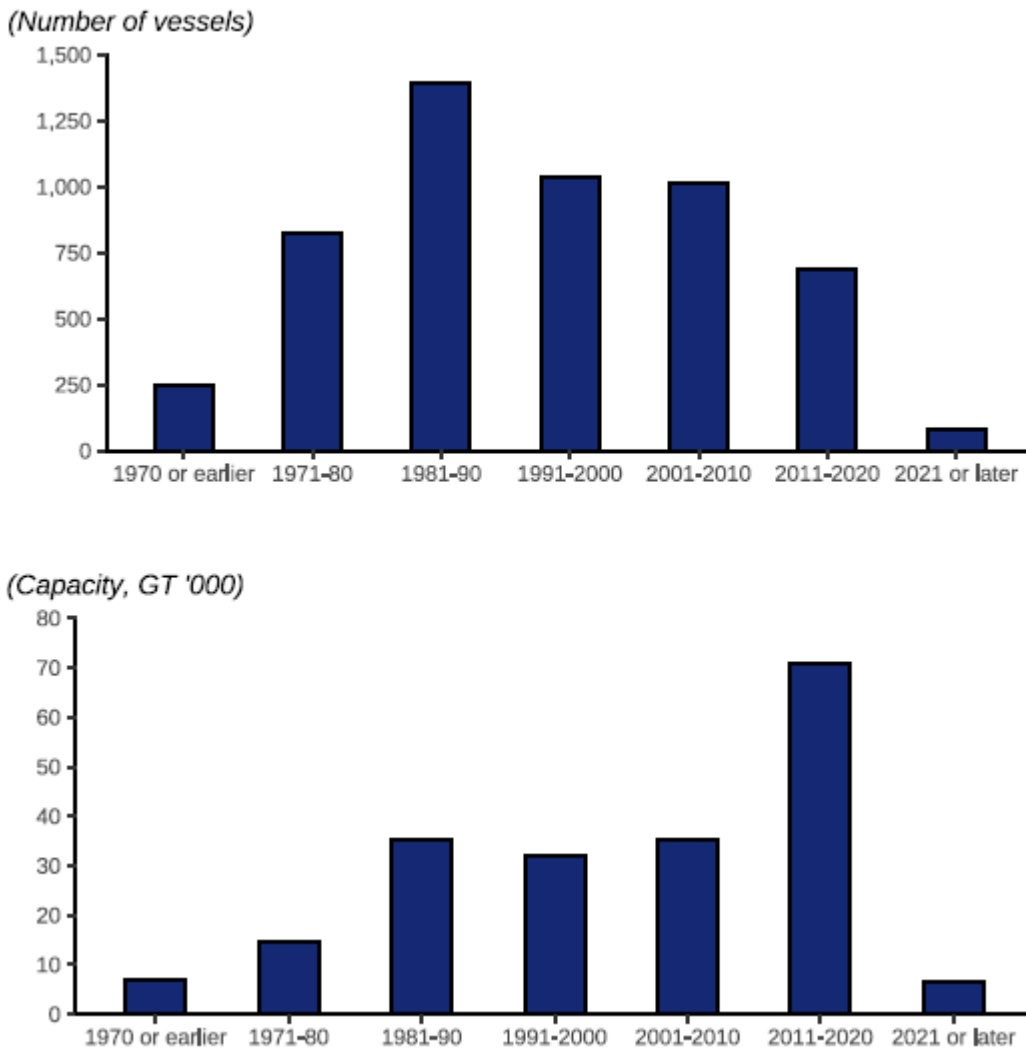
Vessels built in 2011 or later have a much higher capacity than vessels built prior to 2011. While the number of vessels built since 2011 has decreased, the total capacity and power of those built since 2011 has increased substantially. These modern vessels (built since 2011) contribute 43% of the fleet's capacity, while only making up 15% of the vessels in the UK fleet. In comparison, vessels built between 1981 and 1990 account for 25% of the total number of vessels in the fleet but only 17% of the fleet's total capacity. This illustrates the transition within the UK fleet to fewer but larger vessels that have higher capacity and are more efficient in utilising the fishing opportunities available.

Industry groups

> **Fish Producer Organisations (FPOs)**
> FPOs are officially recognised bodies set up by fishery or aquaculture producers.
> In the UK, they are responsible for managing the quota for their vessels and play an essential role in fisheries management.

On 31 December 2023, 695 vessels over 10 metres in length were members of a FPO, 64% of all vessels over 10m. The remaining 392 vessels over 10m were not members of an FPO and were therefore members of the non-sector. The proportion of non-sector vessels (36%) has remained relatively stable since 2018.

The composition of FPOs varies greatly; Scottish FPO had the highest membership with 134 vessels, although the average number of vessels in an FPO was 29[8].

Fishermen's survey

The MMO usually provides a summary of the estimated number of fishers working within the UK fleet collected from the annual Fishermen's Survey. The data that was collected in relation to 2023 have been determined to be unreliable for English vessels, with the resulting estimates contrary to long term trends, coherent publications and anecdotal industry intelligence. Therefore, the results of the Fisherman's Survey 2023 will not be published.

Data for 2022 and earlier continue to be the most reliable estimate of the number of fishers for UK vessels for that time period and have still been included within the published accompanying tables for this section. For analysis of the longer term trends please refer to last year's release of UK Sea fisheries statistics 2022[9] The number of fishers for Scottish vessels will continue to be published as part of the Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics[10], and Seafish have published information about employment in the fishing industry in the Economics of the UK Fishing Fleet[11].

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[8] See Table 1.5.
[9] Section 1 - Fleet - GOV.UK
[10] Sea fisheries statistics - gov.scot
[11] Economics of the UK Fishing Fleet 2023 — Seafish

Section 2: Landings

View the tables accompanying this section here.

UK summary

In 2023, UK vessels landed 719 thousand tonnes[12] of sea fish into the UK and abroad with a value of £1.10 billion[13]. Compared to 2022, this is an increase in the quantity of sea fish landed (12%), and a 5% increase in value landed.

Multiple factors impact fishing, and landings tend to fluctuate considerably over time. Since 2020, the biggest impact on sea fisheries was the effect of the UK's departure from the EU. This had an impact on the stocks the UK fleet had access to fish in subsequent years.

Value is reported in current prices, or as the value at the time of the transaction. No adjustments have been made to account for changes in inflation over time.

> **Species groups**
>
> Fish are commonly split into three **groups of similar species**.
>
> **Demersal** fish inhabit the bottom of the ocean. Key demersal species fished by the UK fleet include cod and haddock.
>
> **Pelagic** fish inhabit the water column (not near the seabed or shore). The two main pelagic species fished by the UK fleet are mackerel and herring.
>
> **Shellfish** include various species of molluscs (e.g. scallops, whelks) and crustaceans (e.g. crabs and Nephrops).

The quantity of landings in 2023 increased compared to 2022 driven by an increase (14%) of pelagic species landed. The overall value of landings also increased mainly due to landings of pelagic species, increasing by 17%.
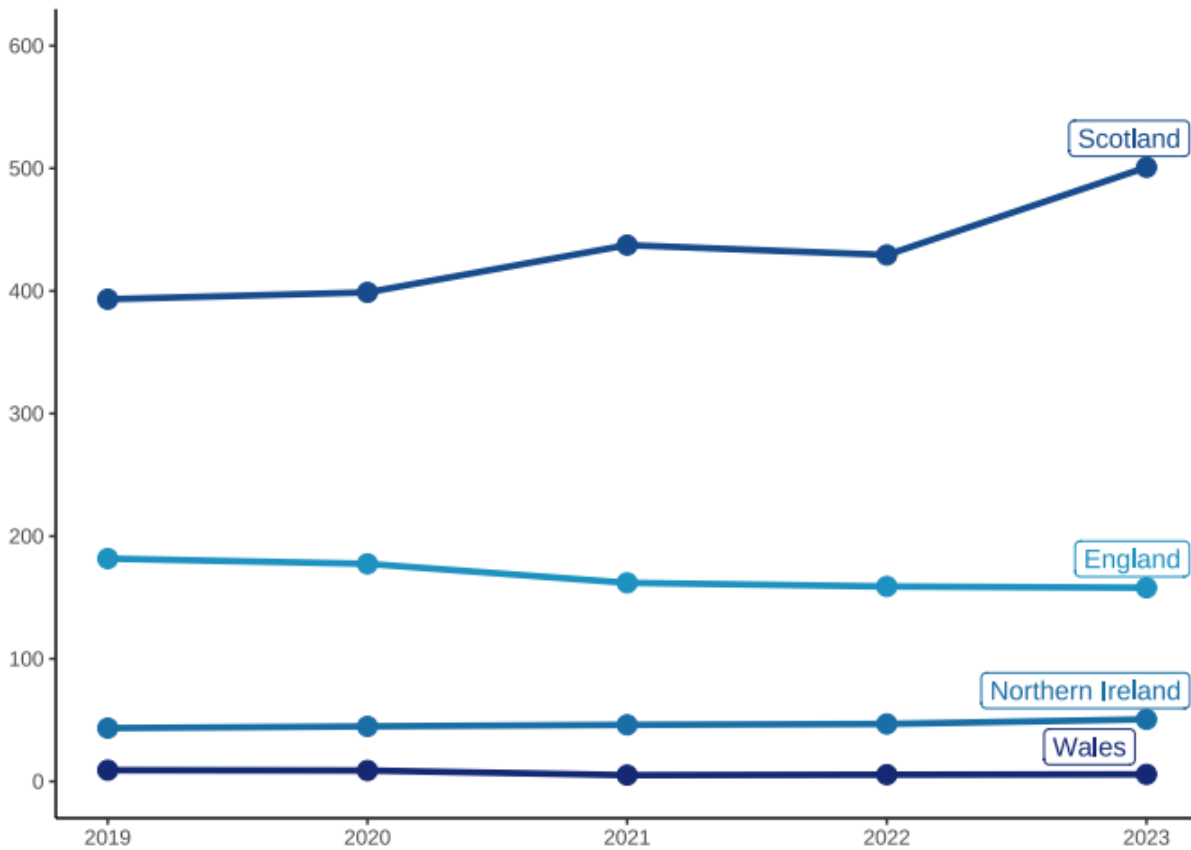
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[12] In this section, tonnes always refer to live weight tonnes. This is the sum of the live weight of fish caught, prior to any processing e.g. gutting or shelling.
[13] Table 2.1

Vessel nationality

Figure 2.1: Quantity of landings by the UK fleet between 2019 and 2023 by fisheries administration.

(Live Weight '000 tonnes)

Of the four UK nations, Scotland lands the most fish by quantity and value. At the country level, the landed weight of fish by each of the four nations has remained relatively stable over time. However, there was a 17% increase in landings by Scottish vessels between 2022 and 2023. This increase was mainly driven by an increase in landings of pelagic species, which is an important economic sector for the Scottish fleet, due to an increase in quota for key pelagic species including Mackerel and Blue Whiting in 2023.

Vessel length

Over three quarters of the total quantity of fish caught by UK vessels in 2023 was landed by vessels over 24 metres in length. In 2023, these vessels represented just 4% of the UK fleet by number. The large volume of landings by these large vessels is explained by their very high fishing capacity and power.
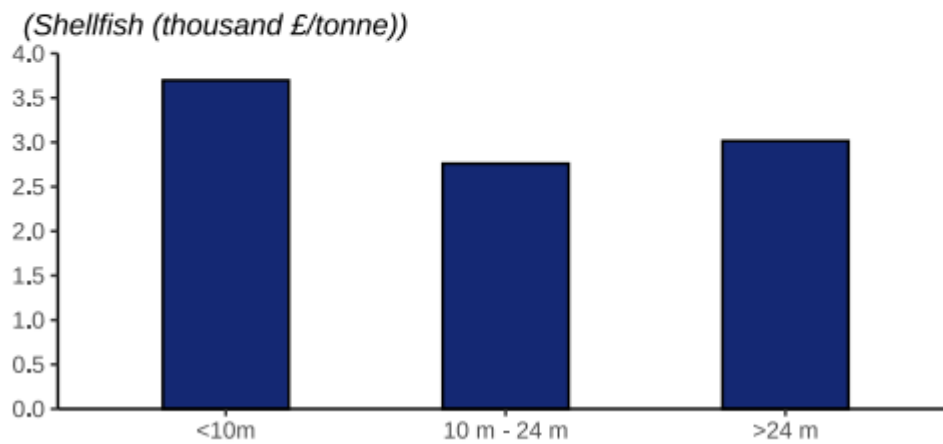
Landings of pelagic species by vessels over 24 metres in length accounted for 97% of the annual total pelagic landings for the whole UK fleet. 74% of all landings of demersal species by the UK fleet were by vessels over 24 metres in length.

In contrast, landings of shellfish are more evenly distributed across the fleet, with vessels 10 metres and under in length accounting for 22% of the total quantity of shellfish landings. Landings of shellfish made by over 24m vessels accounted for 63% of shellfish landings.

Table 2.2: Quantity of landings by UK vessels 10m and under and over 10m

Vessel Length	2022	2023	Percentage change
Quantity ('000 tonnes)			
10m and under	32.6	34.0	4%
Over 10m	612.2	685.2	12%
Value (£ million)			
10m and under	129.9	134.2	3%
Over 10m	921.8	970.5	5%

Figure 2.3: Value of landings by the UK fleet in 2023 by fishing vessel length and species group.

(Demersal (thousand £/tonne))

(Pelagic (thousand £/tonne))

(Shellfish (thousand £/tonne))
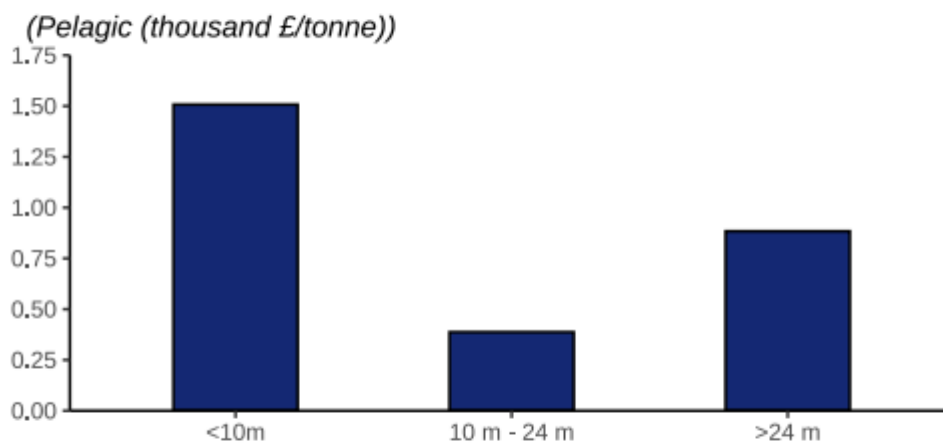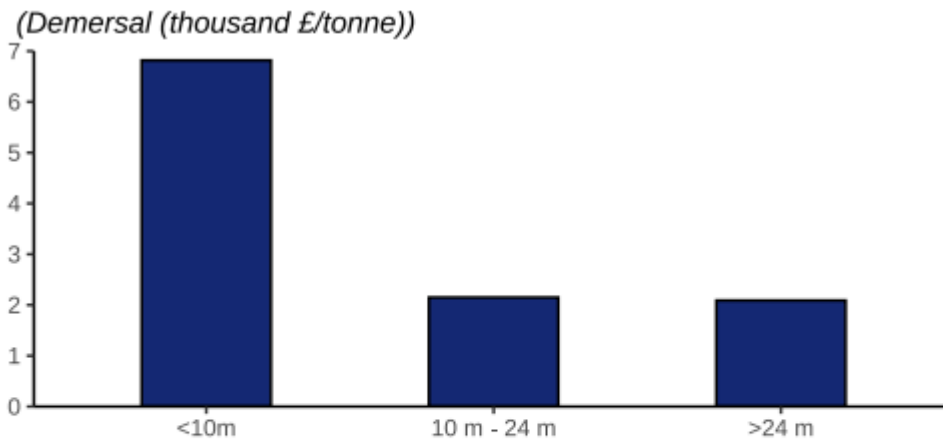
Overall, vessels under 10 metres fetch a higher price per tonne for their landings (£3,900) compared to vessels over 24 metres (£1,200). This is especially true for demersal catches. Landings of demersal species by larger vessels tend to be frozen on board the vessel and sold in bulk, contributing to their lower price per tonne.

Industry group[14]

Around 90% of the quantity of landings by the UK fleet in 2023 were landed by vessels in a Fish Producer Organisation (FPO)[15]. The vessels registered with the largest FPO, Scottish FPO, accounted for 20% of the quantity and 19% of value of fish landed by the UK fleet.

Some Producer Organisations target specific species groups. For example, vessels in Klondyke, Interfish, Humberside FPO, Lunar Group and Anglo Northern Irish primarily target pelagic species. Other FPOs are segregated more by region. For example, Wales and West Coast FPO and South Western FPO.

Over a third of UK vessels over 10 metres in length were in the non-sector (vessels without Producer Organisation membership). These vessels typically have limited access to fishing quota[16] and primarily target shellfish species, which are mostly non-quota stocks. In 2023 they caught 48% of all shellfish, 3% of demersal and 1% of pelagic species landed by the UK fleet.

Vessels 10 metres and under in length without Producer Organisation membership (the '10 metre and under pool') also landed relatively small quantities of demersal and pelagic species, with 81% shellfish landings. The fishing methods used by this sector and the different species targeted mean that they typically gain higher than average prices for their catch (Figure 2.3).

---

[14] Table 2.9
[15] Fish Producer Organisations (FPOs) are officially recognised bodies set up by fishery or aquaculture producers.
[16] Fishing quota allocations for England and the UK - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Species group

Figure 2.4: Quantity of landings by UK vessels in 2023 by species group.
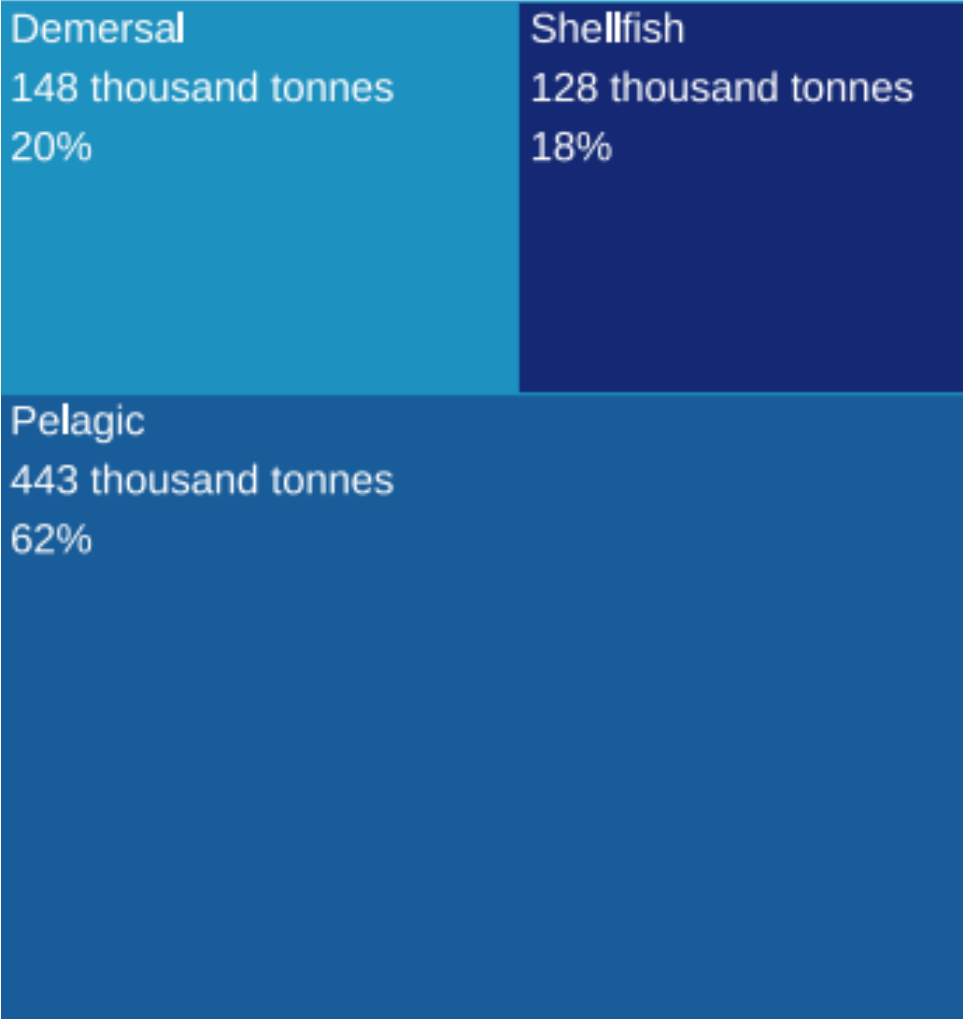
Pelagic species make up 62% of the total quantity of landings by UK vessels, while only contributing just over a third of the value landed[17]. This is because pelagic species typically fetching a lower price per tonne. Shellfish landings made up 18% of the total quantity landed but accounted for 35% of the value landed, which was slightly less than the value of pelagic landings.

---

[17] Table 2.1

Figure 2.5: Value of landings by UK vessels between 2019 and 2023 by species group.
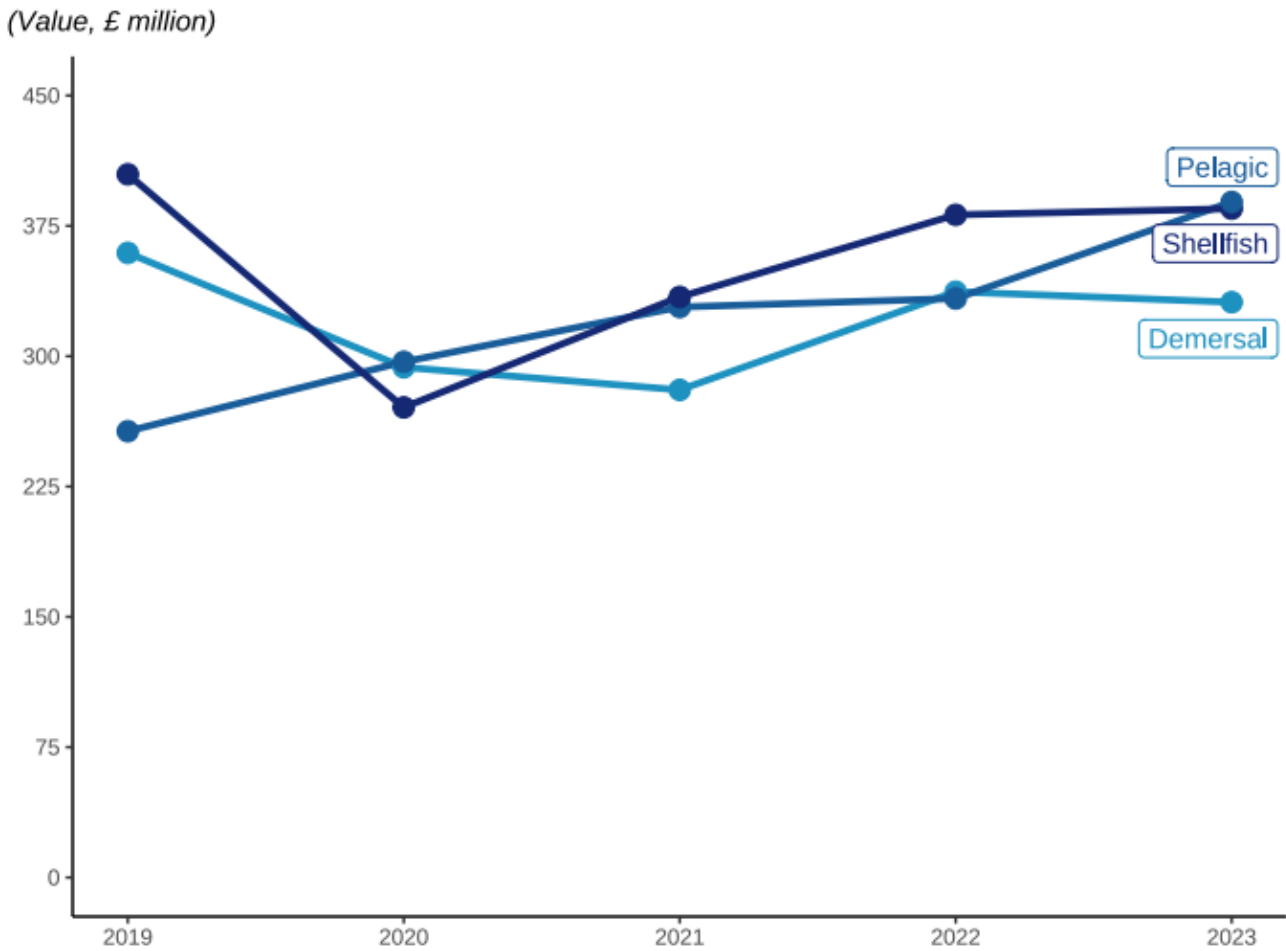
The value of landings increased in 2023 for pelagic and shellfish, with a slight decrease for demersal species when compared to 2022.

The quantity of demersal landings increased by 8% while the value of those landings decreased by 2%. Shellfish landings increased by 5% and their value also increased by 1%.

Demersal

Figure 2.6: Quantity and value of landings between 2019 and 2023 by UK vessels of different demersal species fish; Cod, Haddock, and Monks or Anglers

(Live Weight, 000 tonnes)

(Value, £ million)
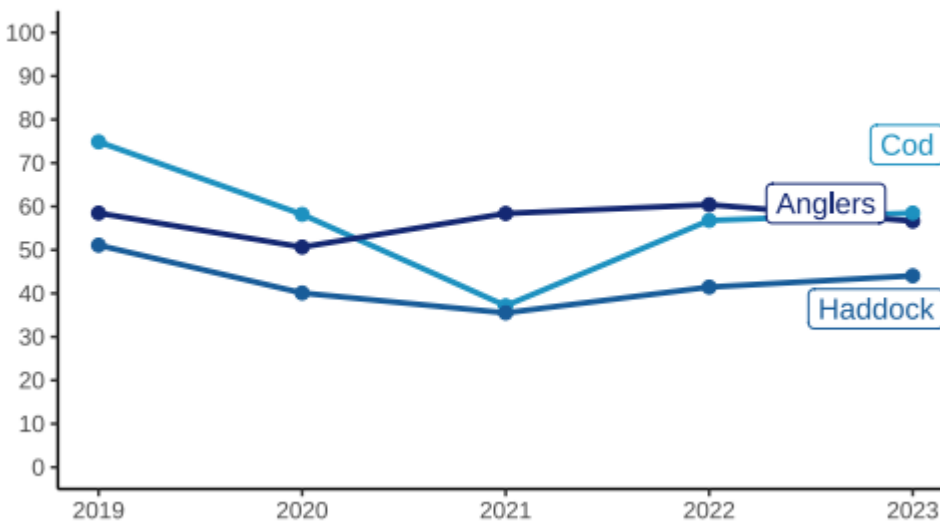
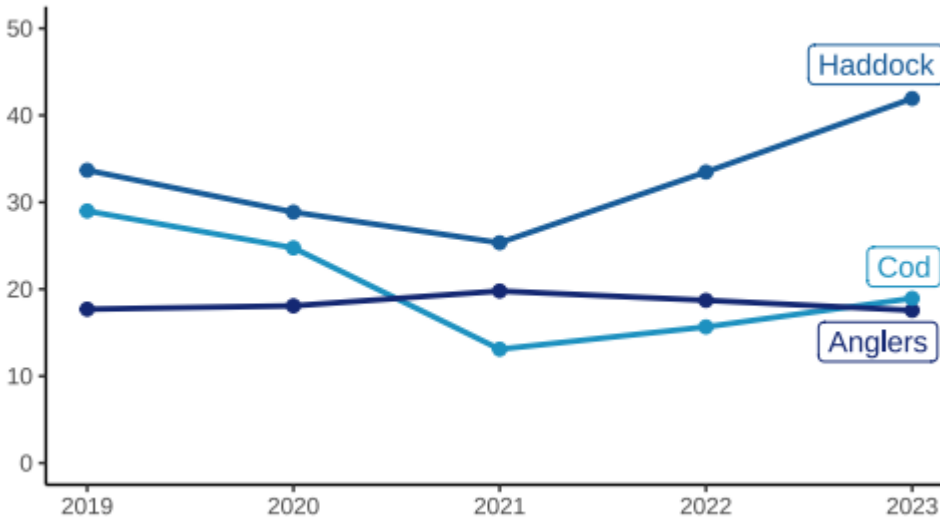Landings of key demersal species, specifically cod and haddock, increased in 2023. Landings of cod increased compared to 2022 (21%) leading to an increase in the value landed (3%).

Landings of demersal species, particularly cod and haddock, have fallen considerably since 1996. This follows the long-term declining trend reported since 1938[18]. In 2023, landings of demersal fish were around 17% of the quantity landed in 1938.

The decline in landings of demersal fish has several causes, including reductions in fleet size, declining fish stocks and restricted fishing opportunities. National and international regulations have limited demersal fishing activity in recent decades, through decommissioning of fishing vessels, reductions in quotas and fishing effort limits and other provisions of stock management plans.

---

[18] Table 2.7 – note this table includes landings into the UK by UK and foreign vessels.

**Figure 2.7: Quantity and value of landings in 2023 by UK vessels of different demersal species fish; Cod, Haddock, and Monks or Anglers.**

('000 tonnes)
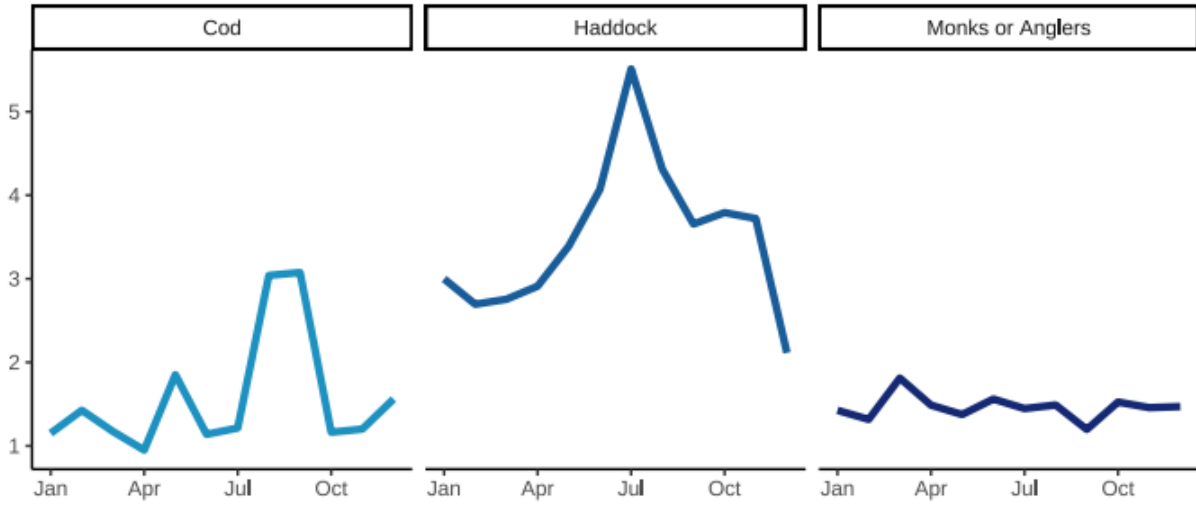
(£ million)
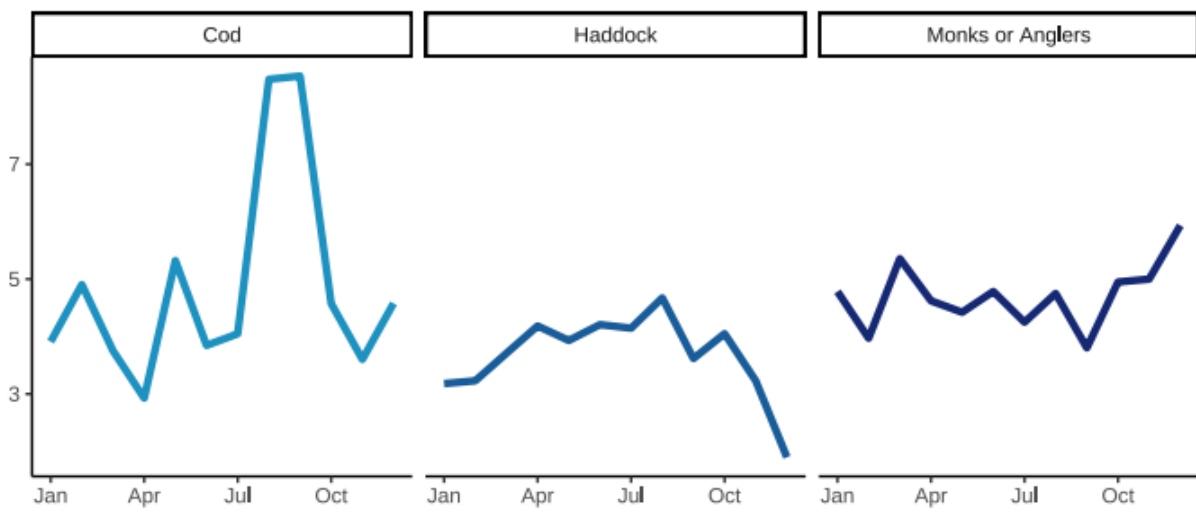
Landings of cod fluctuate more than haddock and anglerfish as the UK's distant water fleet has targeted cod in e.g., Faroese waters and the waters around Svalbard. The distant water fleet are vessels that fish outside their own territories and often into other countries Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and international waters. These large vessels can be out to sea for months and land huge volumes of fish at a time. This explains the spikes in quantity landed every few months.

Sole, turbot and halibut all command the highest price of demersal species landed by the UK fleet, ranging between £11,000 and £15,000 per tonne in 2023[19]. These high prices, particularly for sole, are likely down to reduced supply following the introduction of the Sole Recovery Zone[20].

> **ICES rectangle**
> The International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) standardise the division of sea areas for analysis. Each ICES statistical rectangle is 30 min latitude by 1-degree longitude, which is approximately 30 nautical miles by 30 nautical miles. Note that the area of ICES rectangles varies because the Earth is a sphere.
> ICES rectangles are amalgamated to create ICES areas.

The following maps show landings of demersal species by the UK fleet in 2023 by ICES rectangle of capture. In 2023, the largest quantities and value of demersal species caught by the UK fleet were in the north-east of Scotland and the English Channel. Demersal species with the highest average prices were captured by the UK fleet from waters along the west coast of Scotland.

---

[19] Table 2.16
[20] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manage-your-fishing-effort-sole-recovery-zone/sole-recovery-zone-rules

Figure 2.8: Quantity and value of landings of demersal species by the UK fleet in 2023 by ICES rectangle.[21]
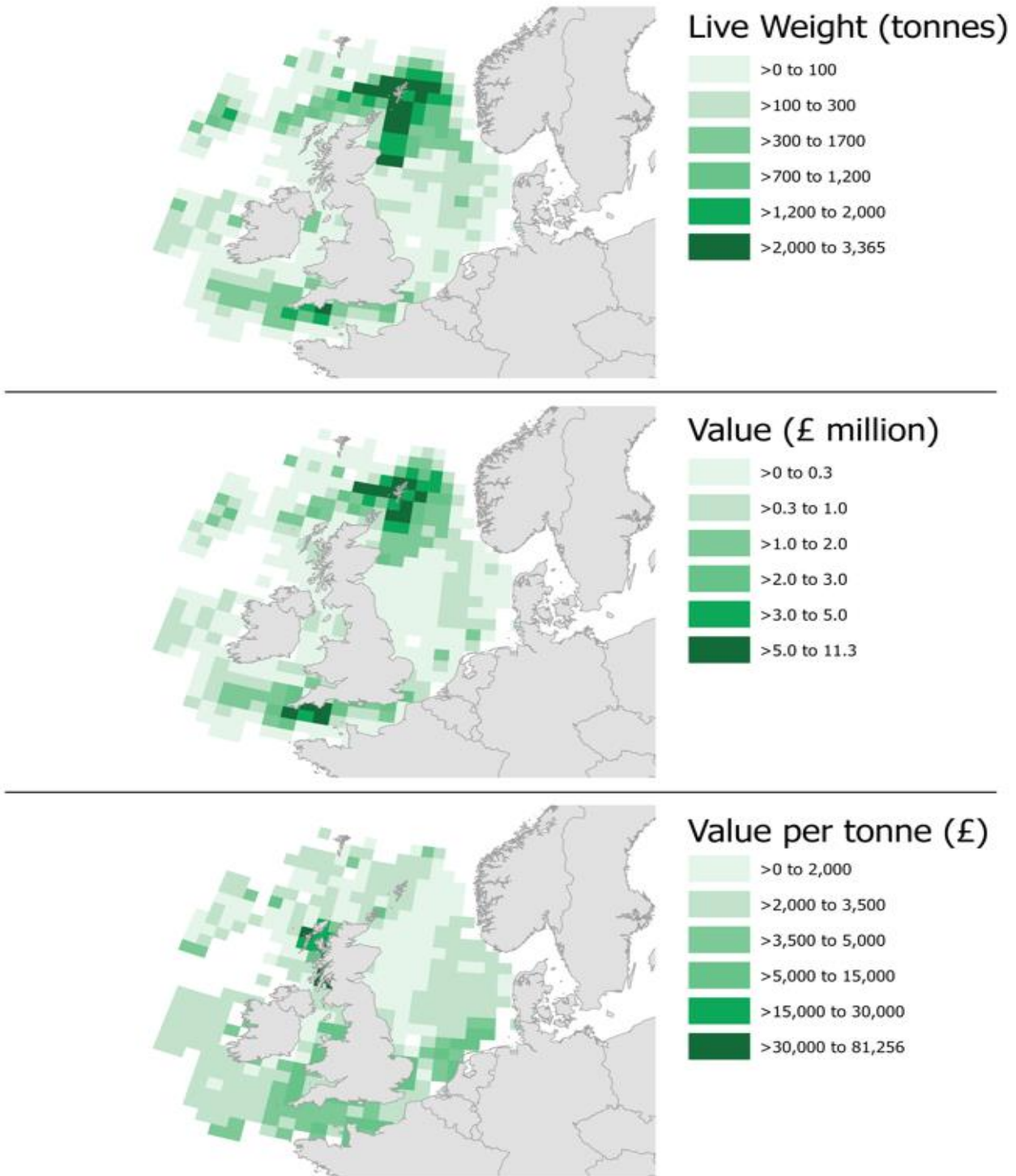
Live Weight (tonnes)
- >0 to 100
- >100 to 300
- >300 to 1700
- >700 to 1,200
- >1,200 to 2,000
- >2,000 to 3,365

Value (£ million)
- >0 to 0.3
- >0.3 to 1.0
- >1.0 to 2.0
- >2.0 to 3.0
- >3.0 to 5.0
- >5.0 to 11.3

Value per tonne (£)
- >0 to 2,000
- >2,000 to 3,500
- >3,500 to 5,000
- >5,000 to 15,000
- >15,000 to 30,000
- >30,000 to 81,256

Date of Publication: 29/11/2024
Coordinate System: ETRS 1989 LAEA
Projection: Lambert Azimuthal Equal Area
MMO Reference: 10839

Not to be used for navigation.
Contains Collins Bartholomew, ICES and MMO data.
© Collins Bartholomew and MMO copyright and database right 2024.
© ICES Statistical Rectangles dataset 2020. ICES, Copenhagen.
Contains public sector information licenced under the Open Government Licence v3.0

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[21] The very high value per tonne records included here are landings of wrasse species, commonly referred to as "cleaner fish". These are sold for their use in fish farms.

Pelagic

Figure 2.9: Quantity and value of landings between 2019 and 2023 by UK vessels of different pelagic species fish; Blue Whiting, Herring, and Mackerel.

(Live Weight, 000 tonnes)

(Value, £ million)
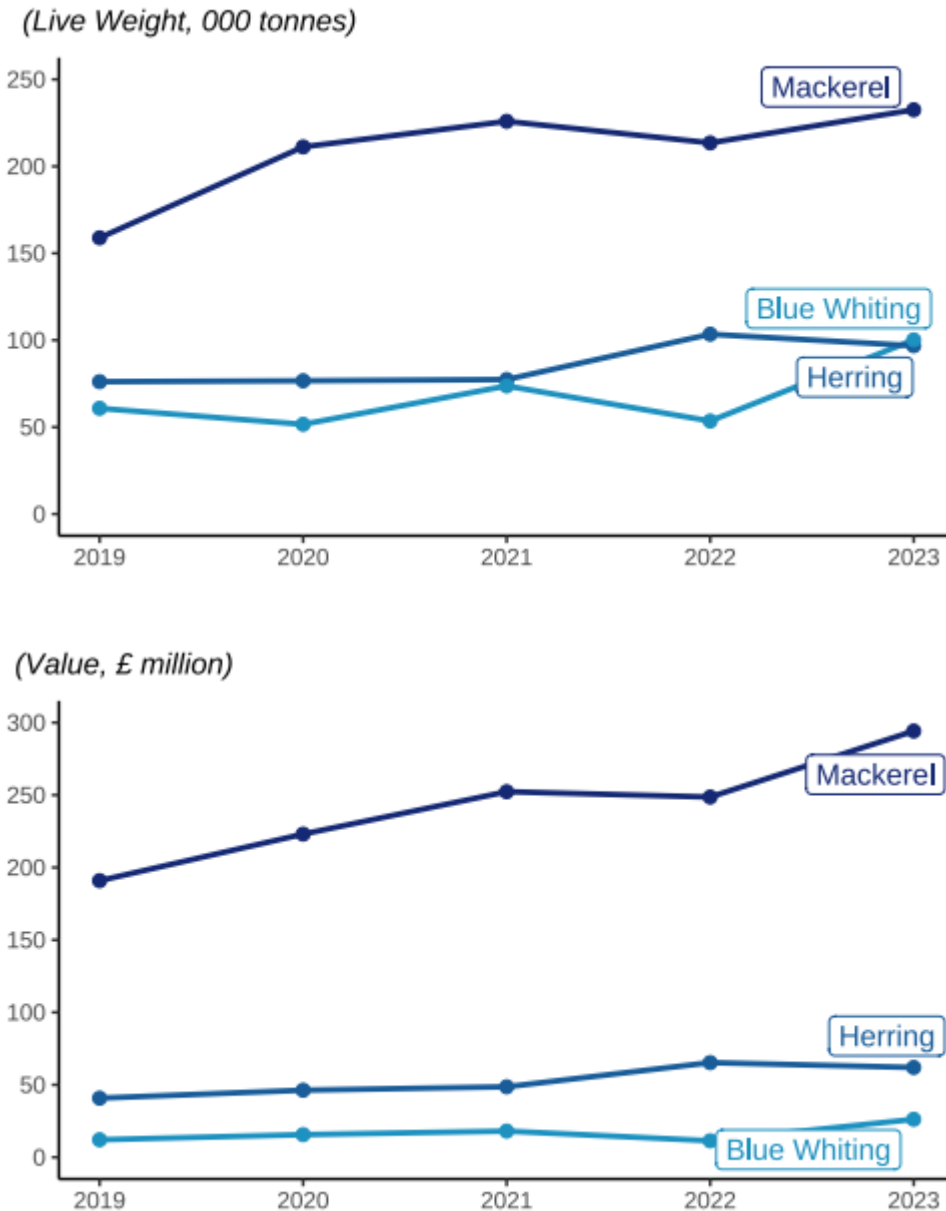
In 2023, the quantity of mackerel landed by UK vessels was 9% higher than in 2022 leading to an increase in value landed for Mackerel (18%). This increase was due to an increase in available quota for the UK fleet in Mackerel stocks in 2023.

The UK fleet catches more mackerel than any other species – over 232 thousand tonnes in 2023, comprising 32% of the total UK catch in 2023. 54% of mackerel landings by UK vessels were landed abroad in 2023.

Most pelagic species are under stock management plans with quotas. Their annual landings therefore track quota limits. There have been increases to quotas for key pelagic species (Herring and Blue Whiting) in the last couple of years due to transfers of quotas and access arrangements made by the UK as an independent coastal state.

Even though the majority of both pelagic species and demersal species fall within quota species, pelagic landings have not seen the same reduction as demersal species over the very long term. When compared to 1938, pelagic landings in 2023 were 33% lower, while demersal landings were down 83%.

Figure 2.10: Quantity and value of landings in 2023 by UK vessels of different pelagic species fish; Blue Whiting, Herring, and Mackerel.
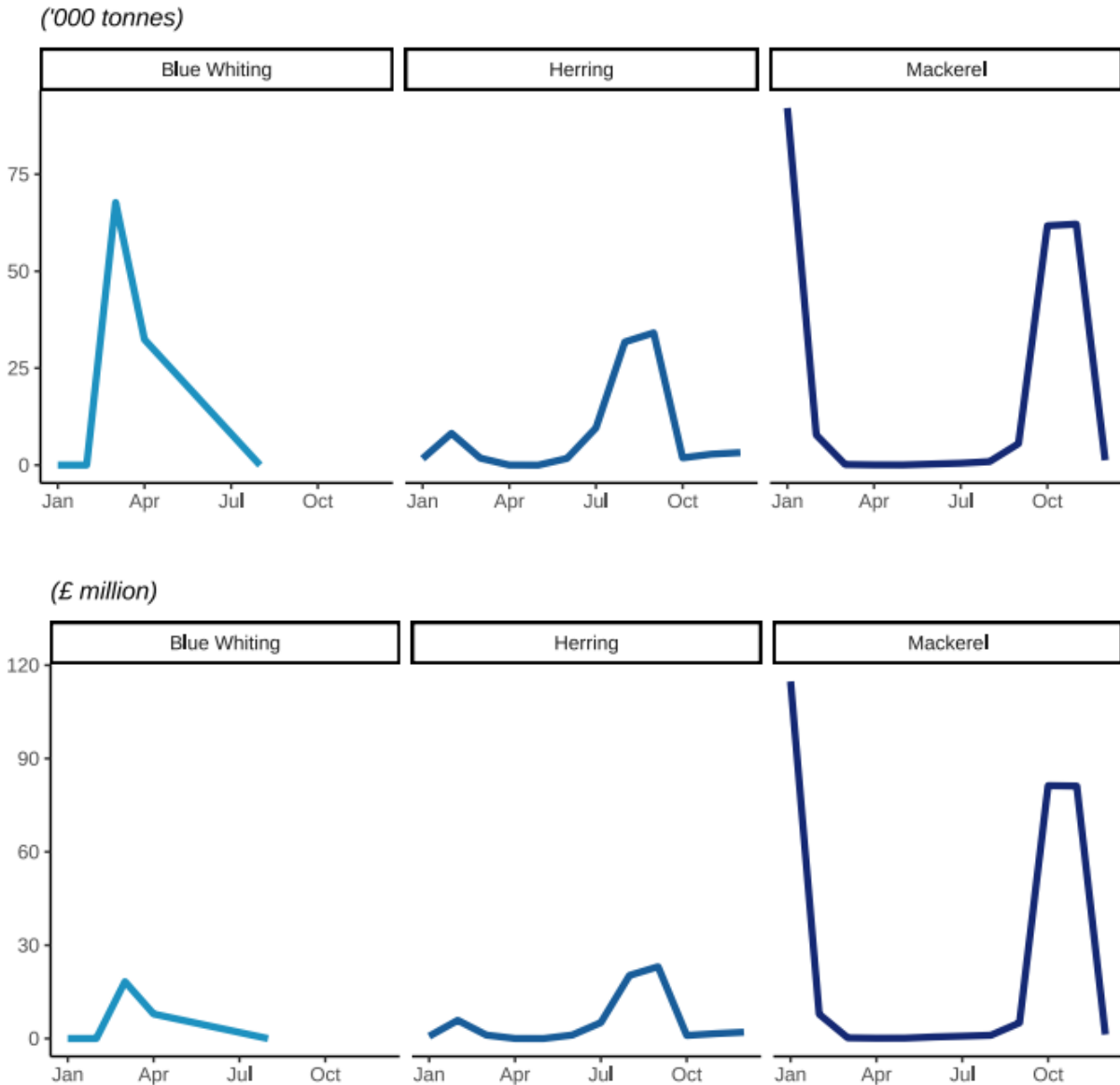

Pelagic landings follow seasonal patterns. Mackerel is a winter fishery for larger vessels therefore, large volumes of landings are seen annually in January, February and October and November. Quotas had almost been exhausted by the end of the year, so catches are consistently lower in December. Around 97% of all mackerel landings into the UK by the UK fleet in 2023 were in those four peak months.

A two-month period (August to September) accounts for 84% of herring landed into the UK by the UK fleet. Landings in June and July came primarily from the Northern North Sea and were supplemented in August and September by fisheries in the Irish Sea.

The following maps show landings of pelagic species by the UK fleet in 2023 by ICES rectangle of capture. In 2023, the largest quantities and value of pelagic species caught by the UK fleet were

captured from rectangles near Shetland and from the north coast of Scotland down to the north-west coast of Ireland. Price per tonne was more evenly spread across ICES rectangles, with the highest prices fetched closer to the southwest coast.

Figure 2.11: Quantity and value of landings of pelagic species by the UK fleet in 2023 by ICES rectangle.
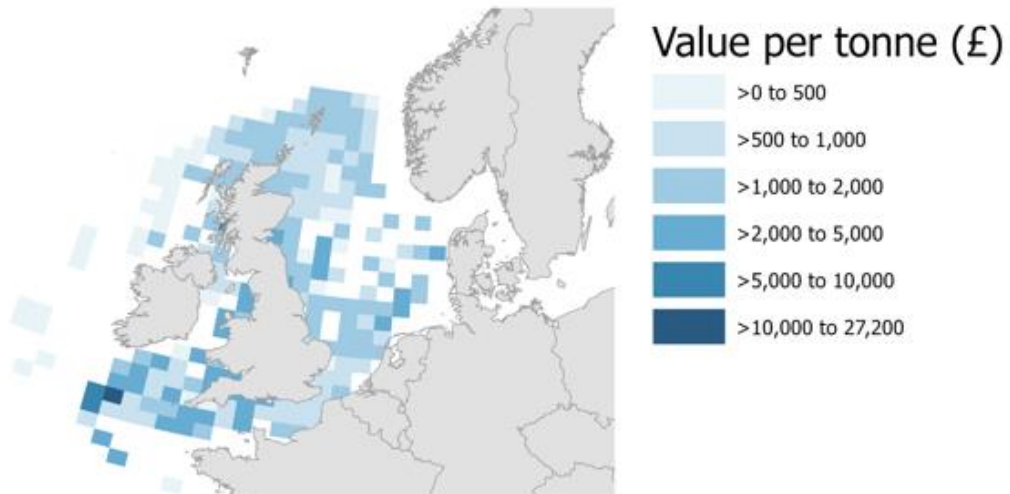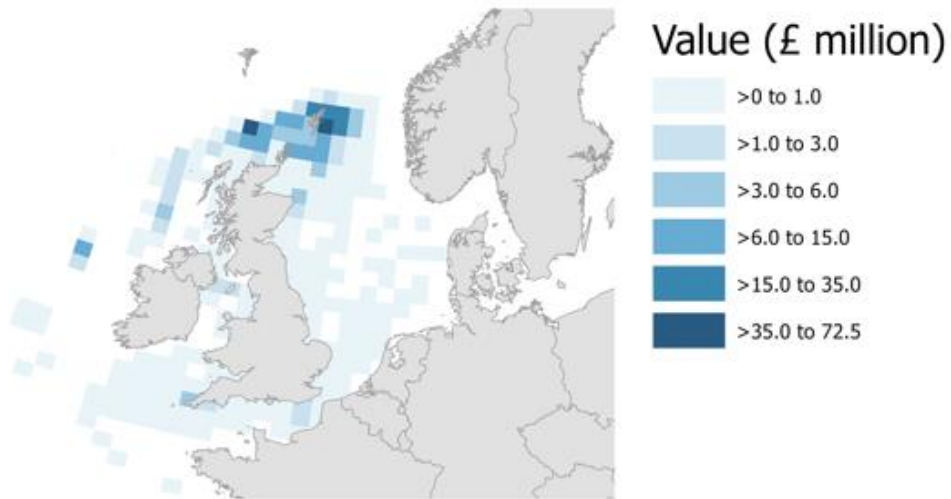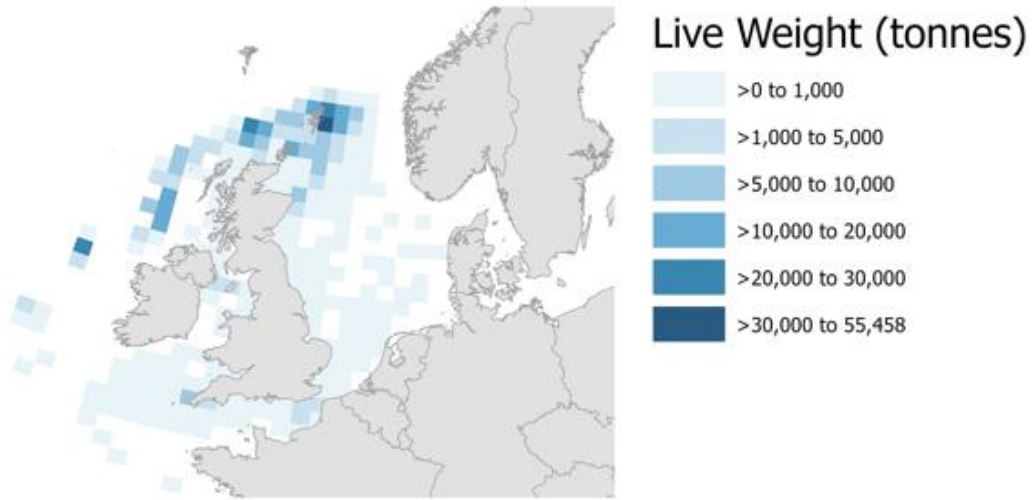
Live Weight (tonnes)
- >0 to 1,000
- >1,000 to 5,000
- >5,000 to 10,000
- >10,000 to 20,000
- >20,000 to 30,000
- >30,000 to 55,458

Value (£ million)
- >0 to 1.0
- >1.0 to 3.0
- >3.0 to 6.0
- >6.0 to 15.0
- >15.0 to 35.0
- >35.0 to 72.5

Value per tonne (£)
- >0 to 500
- >500 to 1,000
- >1,000 to 2,000
- >2,000 to 5,000
- >5,000 to 10,000
- >10,000 to 27,200

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Shellfish

Figure 2.12: Quantity and value of landings between 2019 and 2023 by UK vessels of different shellfish species fish; Edible Crabs, Nephrops, and King Scallops.

(Live Weight, 000 tonnes)
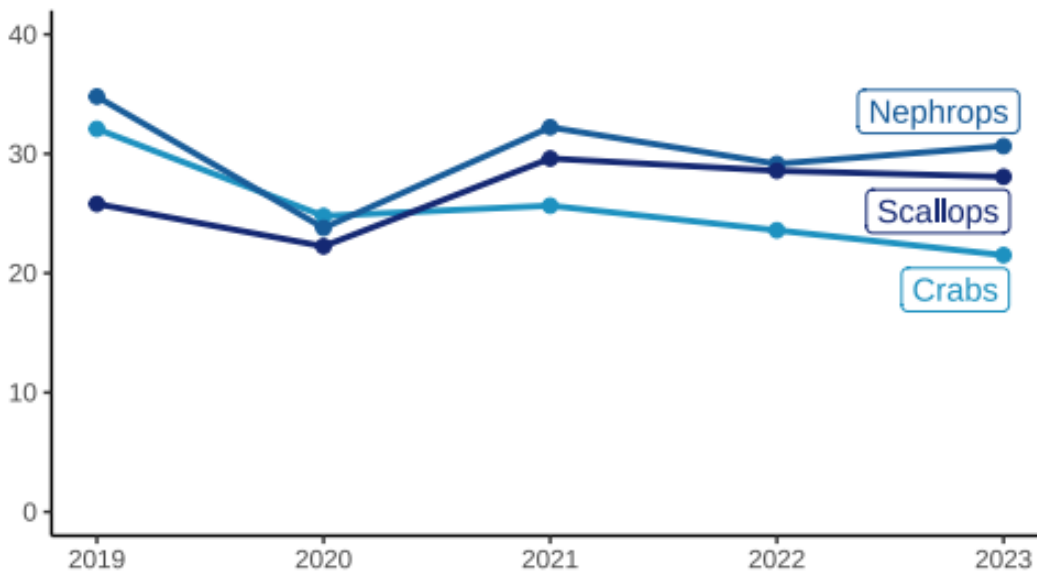
(Value, £ million)
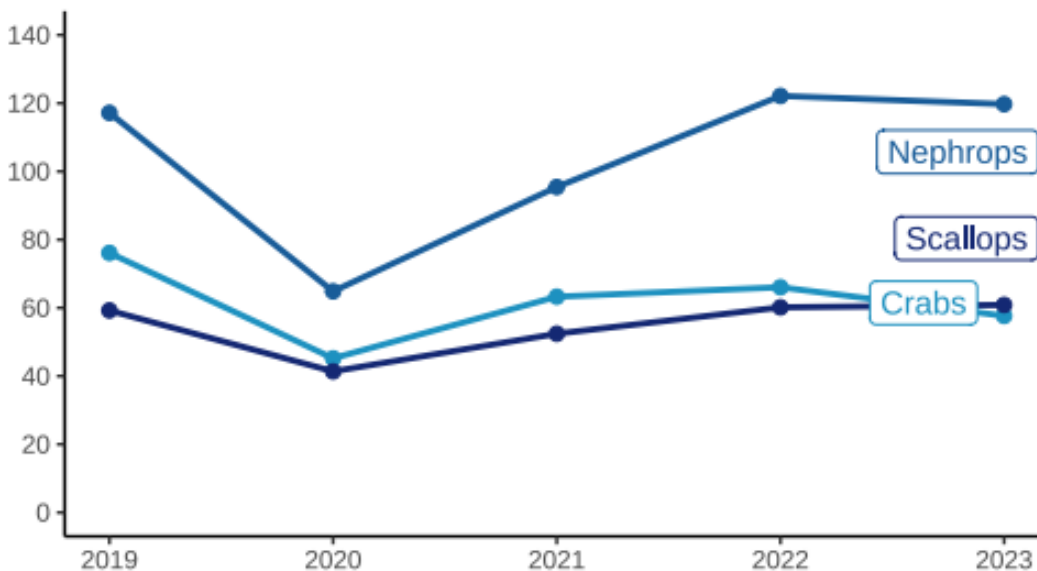
Nephrops (also known as langoustine or Norway lobster), edible crabs and king scallops are the main shellfish species landed by the UK fleet, accounting for 69% of all shellfish landings made by the UK fleet in 2023.

The value of landings of these three key species decreased between 2022 and 2023, mainly for crabs with a decrease in value of 12%.

Over the last eighty-five years, landings of demersal and pelagic landings have decreased substantially (discussed above). In contrast, landings of shellfish have increased by over 284%, from 32 thousand tonnes in 1938 to 123 thousand tonnes in 2023.

This is partly driven because, for shellfish species, quotas only apply to Nephrops. Further, the increase in shellfish landings by the UK fleet is likely due to the industry diversifying into the shellfish sector, where there are often fewer restrictions on fishing opportunities.

Successive improvements in data collection for this sector in recent years, including the introduction of mandatory reporting of first sales of fish, may account for some of the increase in reported landings.

**Figure 2.13: Quantity and value of landings in 2023 by UK vessels of different shellfish species fish; Edible Crabs, Nephrops, and King Scallops.**

('000 tonnes)

(£ million)
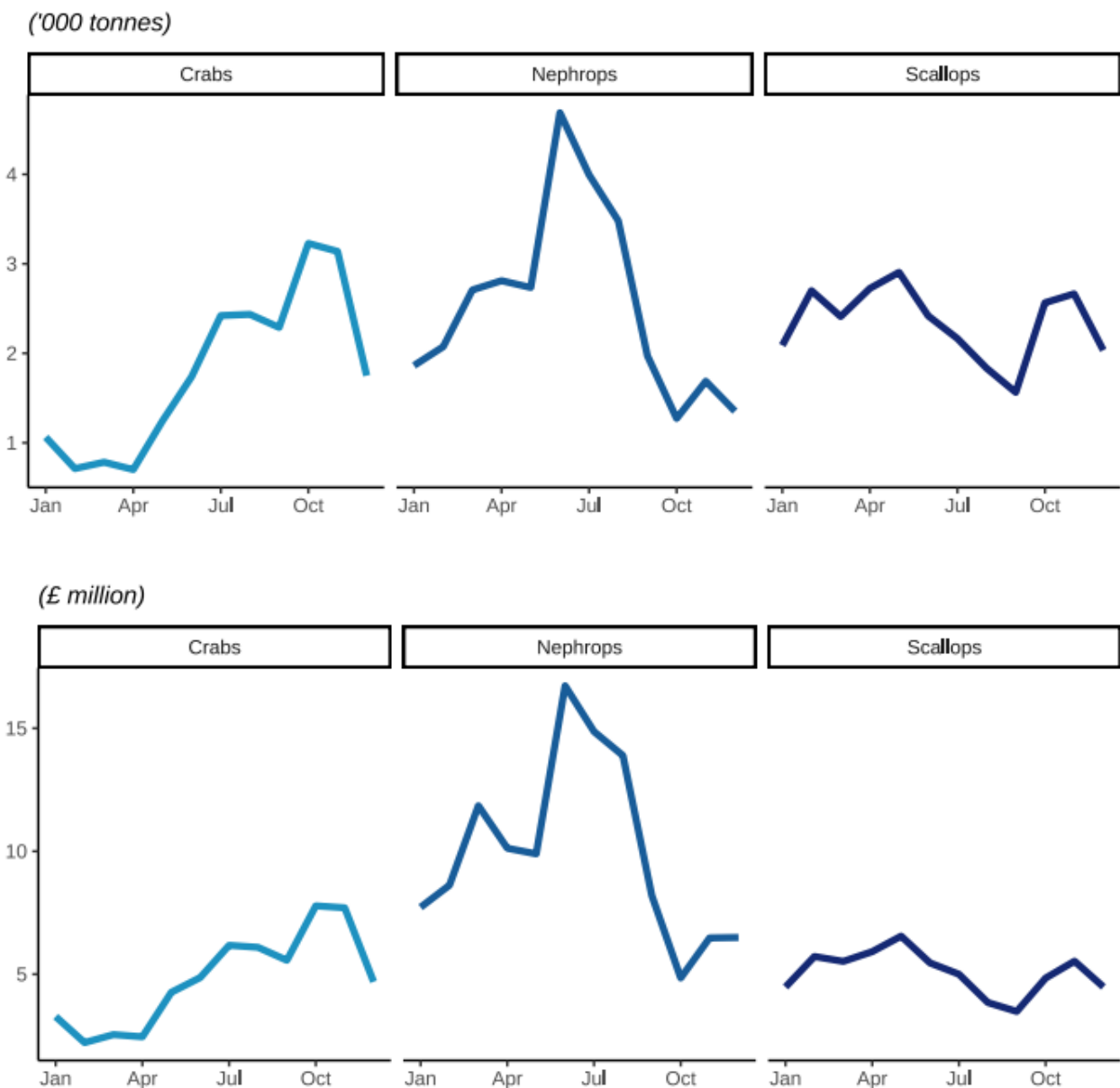
Landings of Nephrops fluctuate but show the highest peak in summer months. Crabs and scallops peak in landings towards the end of the year before the Christmas period.

The following maps show landings of shellfish species by the UK fleet in 2023 by ICES rectangle of capture. In 2023, both the largest quantity and value of shellfish species were captured in rectangles relatively close to the coast of the UK. However, shellfish species with high prices were typically captured in rectangles away from coastal areas.

Figure 2.14: Landings of shellfish species by the UK fleet in 2023 by ICES rectangle.
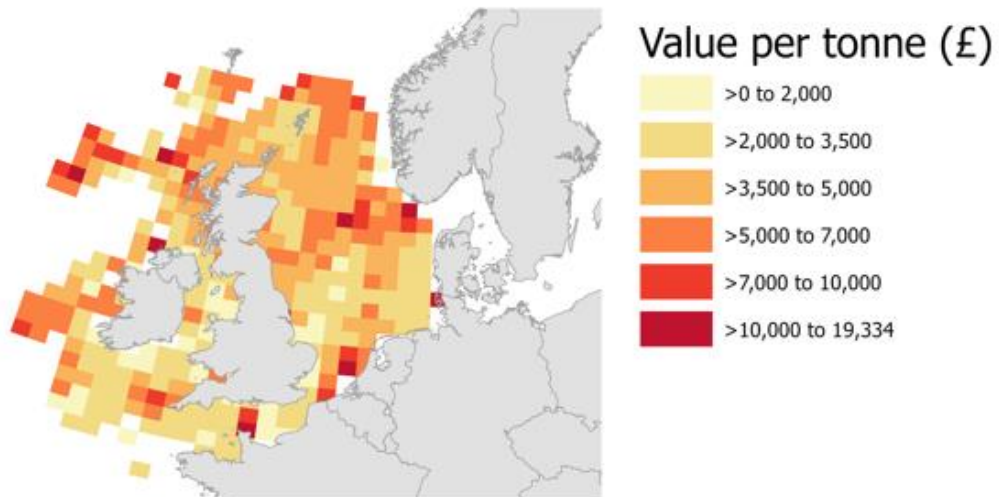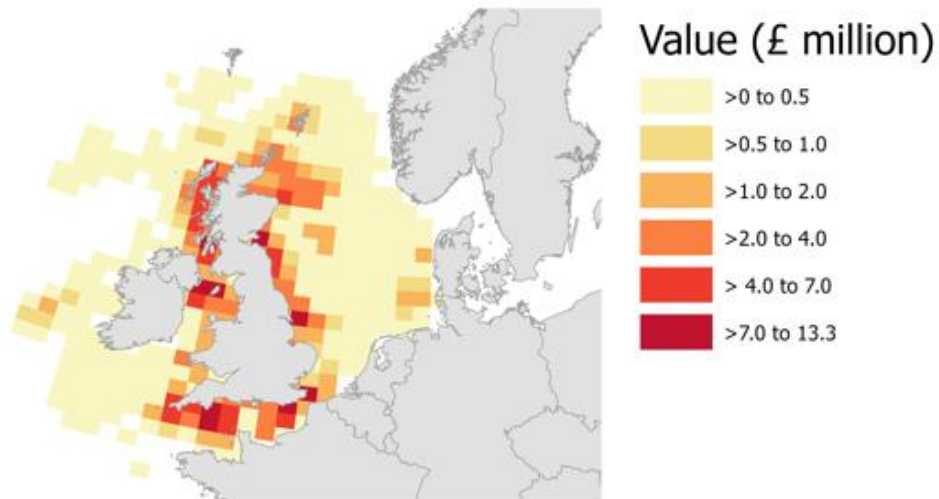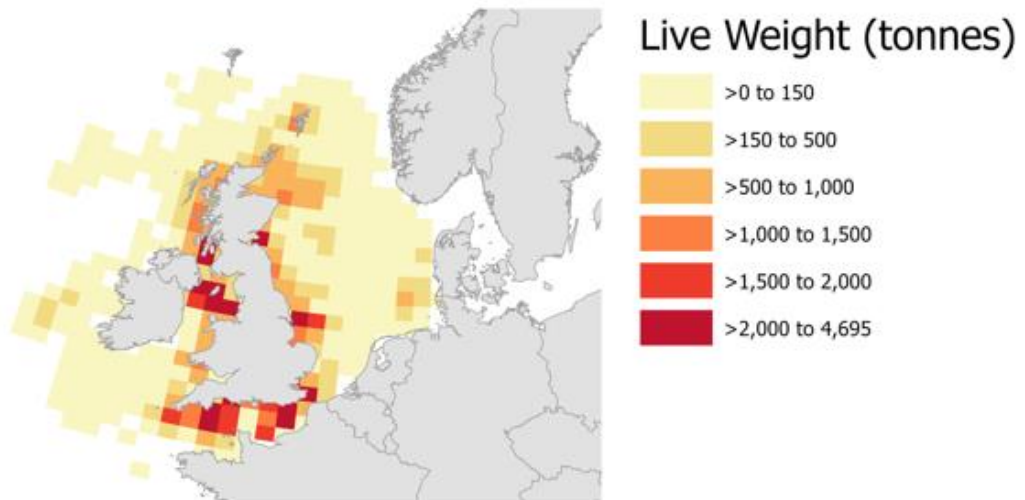
Live Weight (tonnes)
- >0 to 150
- >150 to 500
- >500 to 1,000
- >1,000 to 1,500
- >1,500 to 2,000
- >2,000 to 4,695

Value (£ million)
- >0 to 0.5
- >0.5 to 1.0
- >1.0 to 2.0
- >2.0 to 4.0
- > 4.0 to 7.0
- >7.0 to 13.3

Value per tonne (£)
- >0 to 2,000
- >2,000 to 3,500
- >3,500 to 5,000
- >5,000 to 7,000
- >7,000 to 10,000
- >10,000 to 19,334

Landings by port

Figure 2.15: Quantity and value of landings in 2023 into UK ports.

(Value, £ million)

(Live weight, '000 tonnes)
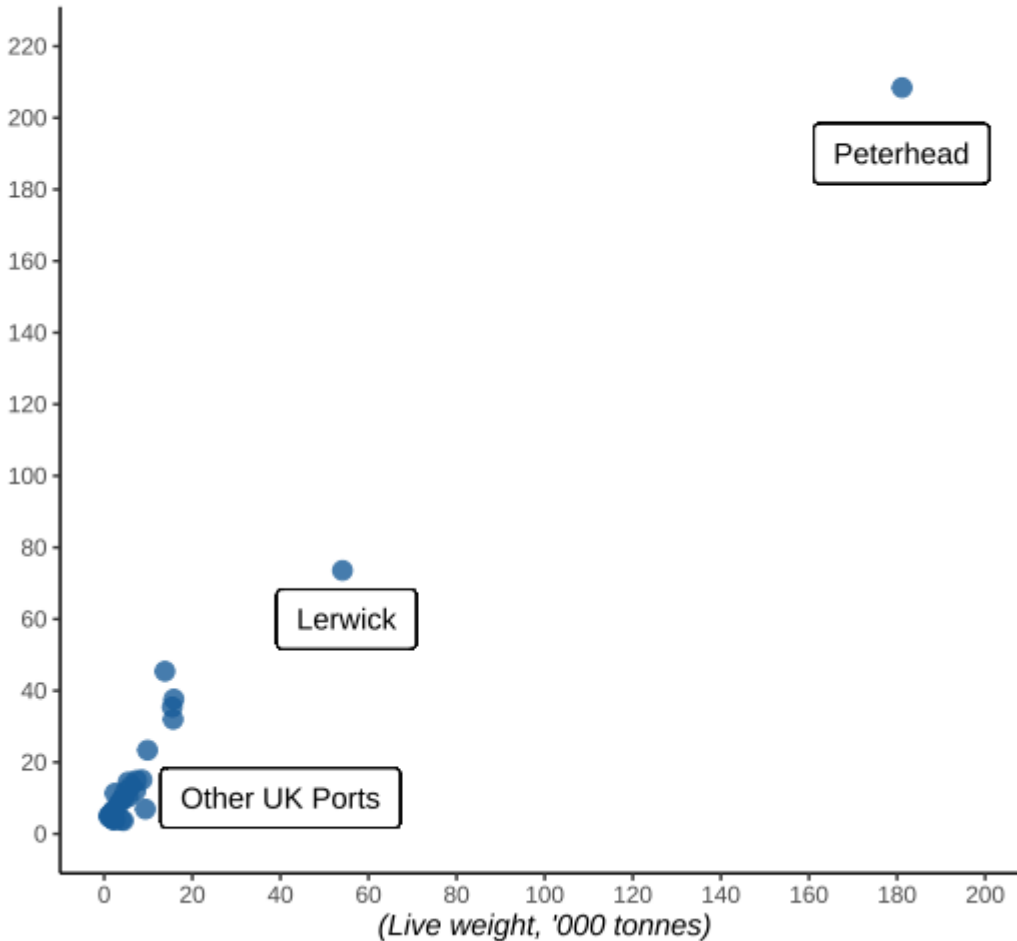
Peterhead continually ranks highest for landings by port, with Lerwick in second place. These ports are both in Northern Scotland. In England, Newlyn was the port with the highest quantity of landings, while Brixham had the highest value of landings.

Approximately 72% of all landings by UK vessels into Scotland were into Peterhead and Lerwick. This is because Peterhead and Lerwick specialise in pelagic species.

In contrast, landings into Newlyn and Brixham (the top 2 English ports) accounted for only 32% of landings into England, with the remaining landings more evenly spread around the English coast.

Figure 2.16: Quantity of landings into the UK's top 20 ports in 2023.

Species Group
- Pelagic
- Demersal
- Shellfish

Cullivoe (3.3 kt)
Scalloway and Isles (4.8 kt)
Lerwick (54.1 kt)
Kinlochbervie (6.1 kt)
Scrabster (15.4 kt)
Lochinver (7.3 kt)
Fraserburgh (15.7 kt)
Ullapool (9.8 kt)
Peterhead (181.1 kt)
Belfast (9.4 kt)
Kirkcudbright (4.4 kt)
Kilkeel (3.9 kt)
Ardglass (5.5 kt)
Hull (4.4 kt)
Grimsby (7.1 kt)
Leigh-On-Sea (3.9 kt)
Brixham (13.8 kt)
Newlyn (15.8 kt)
Plymouth (5.4 kt)
Shoreham-by-Sea (8.6 kt)

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Figure 2.17: Value of landings into the UK's top 20 ports in 2023.

Species Group
- Pelagic
- Demersal
- Shellfish

Cullivoe (£8.2 m)

Scalloway and Isles (£11.9 m)

Lerwick (£73.6 m)

Kinlochbervie (£13.4 m)

Scrabster (£35.4 m)

Lochinver (£15 m)

Fraserburgh (£32 m)

Ullapool (£23.4 m)

Peterhead (£208.4 m)

Belfast (£6.9 m)

Portavogie (£6.8 m)

Kilkeel (£9.5 m)

Ardglass (£10.3 m)

Bridlington (£11.4 m)

Hull (£9.7 m)

Grimsby (£12 m)

Shoreham-by-Sea (£15.1 m)

Brixham (£45.4 m)

Newlyn (£37.7 m)

Plymouth (£14.5 m)

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Landings abroad by the UK fleet

Figure 2.18: Quantity of landings abroad by the UK fleet in 2023.

Norway (133.3)

Faroe Islands (3.4)

Denmark (52.8)

Ireland (29.3)

Netherlands (57.7)

Belgium (<0.1)

France (0.3)

Spain (1.8)

Live Weight (kt)
>0 to 1
>1 to 5
>5 to 30
>30 to 60
>60 to 134

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In total in 2023, UK vessels landed 279 thousand tonnes of fish abroad. This is 39% of the total quantity of fish landed by UK vessels and represents 26% of the value of all fish landed by UK vessels (slight increase when compared to 2022). The majority of landings abroad are pelagic fish species (90%), of which 45% was mackerel. Half of all landings abroad were into Norway, followed by landings into ports in the Netherlands (20%). A small number of the UK registered fishing fleet is in Dutch economic ownership; landings by these vessels contribute to the large quantities of fish landed into the Netherlands.

Landings into UK ports by foreign vessels

Figure 2.19: Quantity of landings in UK ports by foreign vessels in 2023.
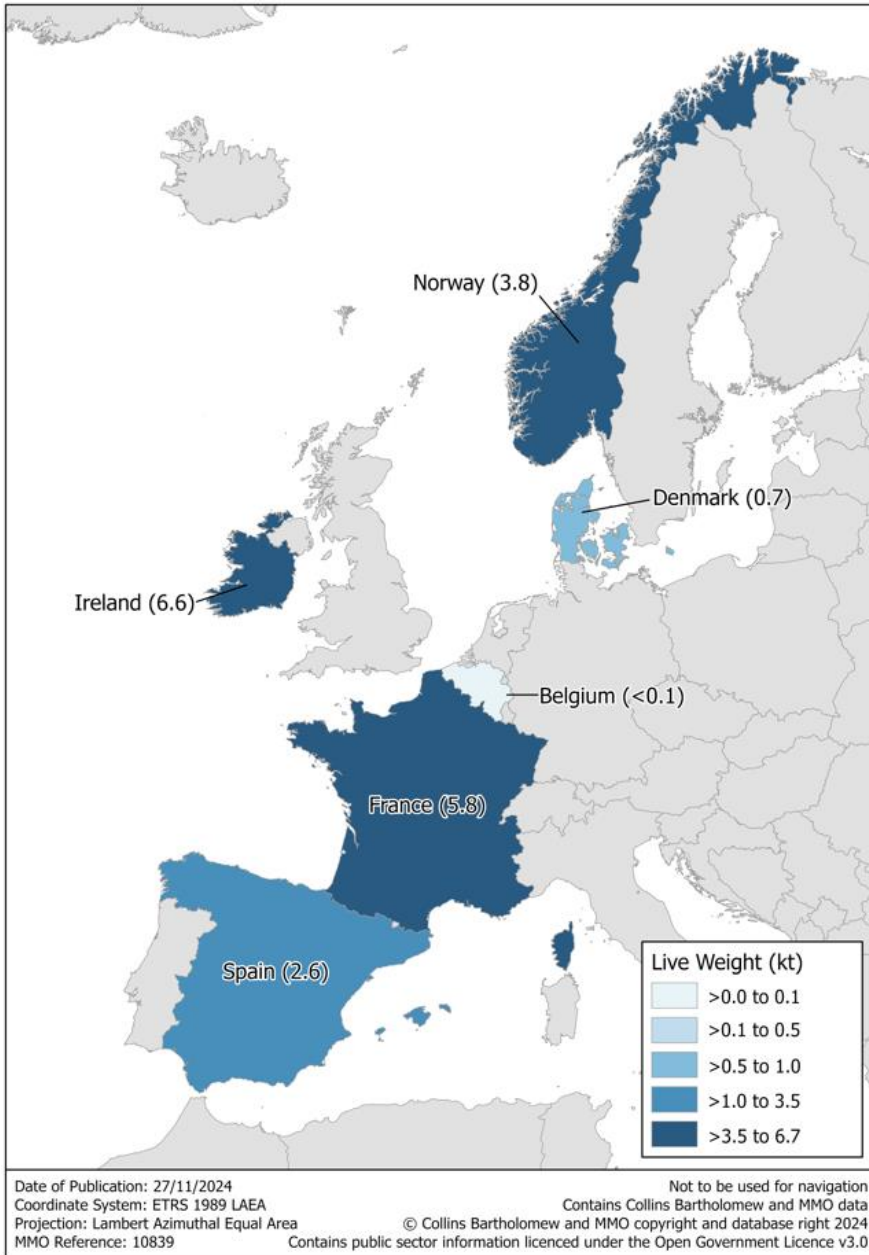
In 2023, 19 thousand tonnes of fish were landed into the UK by foreign vessels, which was an increase of 3% compared to 2022. Landings decreased significantly between 2019 and 2021 (down 62%), however have remained similar since this date. This decrease in landings can be attributed to the reduced access for foreign vessels into UK waters following EU exit.

Close to 97% (19 thousand tonnes) of fish landed into the UK by foreign vessels were either demersal or pelagic. The remainder was shellfish landings, accounting for less than one thousand tonnes.

Area of capture

Figure 2.20: Quantity of landings by area of capture and species group in 2023.
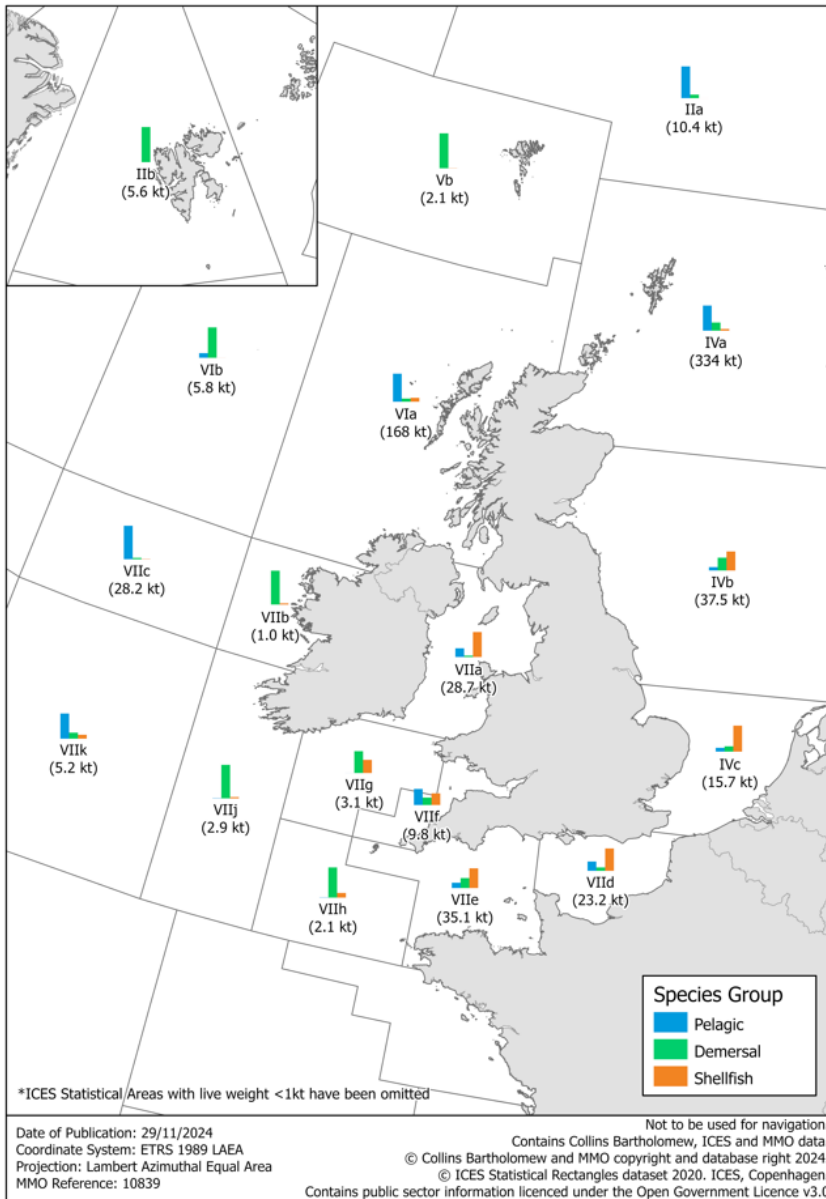
Different sea areas yield different proportions of species.

- 53% (78 thousand tonnes) of the demersal fish landed by the UK fleet was from the Northern North Sea in 2023.

- 54% (240 thousand tonnes) of pelagic fish landed by the UK fleet was from the Northern North Sea in 2023.

- 27% (35 thousand tonnes) of shellfish landed by the UK fleet is from the English Channel.

Typically, shellfish landings form a high proportion of landings from enclosed sea areas with large coastal stretches (Irish Sea, Bristol Channel, English Channel and the Southern North Sea), while pelagic species form the majority of landings from open waters such as the West of Scotland, Northern North Sea, West of Ireland and Porcupine Bank.

Landings by Exclusive Economic Zone

Exclusive Economic Zone

The term Exclusive Economic Zone is taken to mean the entire zone under the exclusive jurisdiction of a coastal state or international organisation. This will include the territorial seas which spans 0-12 nautical miles from the coast as well as the UNCLOS Exclusive Economic Zone from 12 up to 200 nautical miles (or roughly 22 to 370 kilometres) from the coast. Where EEZs would overlap a median line is used to delineate the sovereignty of waters.

ICES Statistical Rectangles

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) has implemented spatial divisions of the sea for statistical analysis in major fishing area 27. ICES rectangles are the lowest broadly available unit of spatial reporting for this area. Each rectangle is 0.5 degrees latitude by 1 degree longitude.

From 2021 vessels were required to report fishing activity by EEZ, differentiating between UK and EU waters. From this date the EEZ of capture will be determined by using the landings data as reported in vessel logbooks. Landings data by EEZ published prior to 2021 is based on the estimated EEZ by ICES rectangle spatial apportioning, therefore caution is advised when assessing differences with years before this date due to the alternative methodology used. This is however the most reliable data available to the MMO to determine EEZ for UK fishing vessel activity prior to 2021.

Figure 2.21: The UK's Exclusive Economic Zone.

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Figure 2.22: Quantity of landings caught by UK vessels in 2023 by waters.

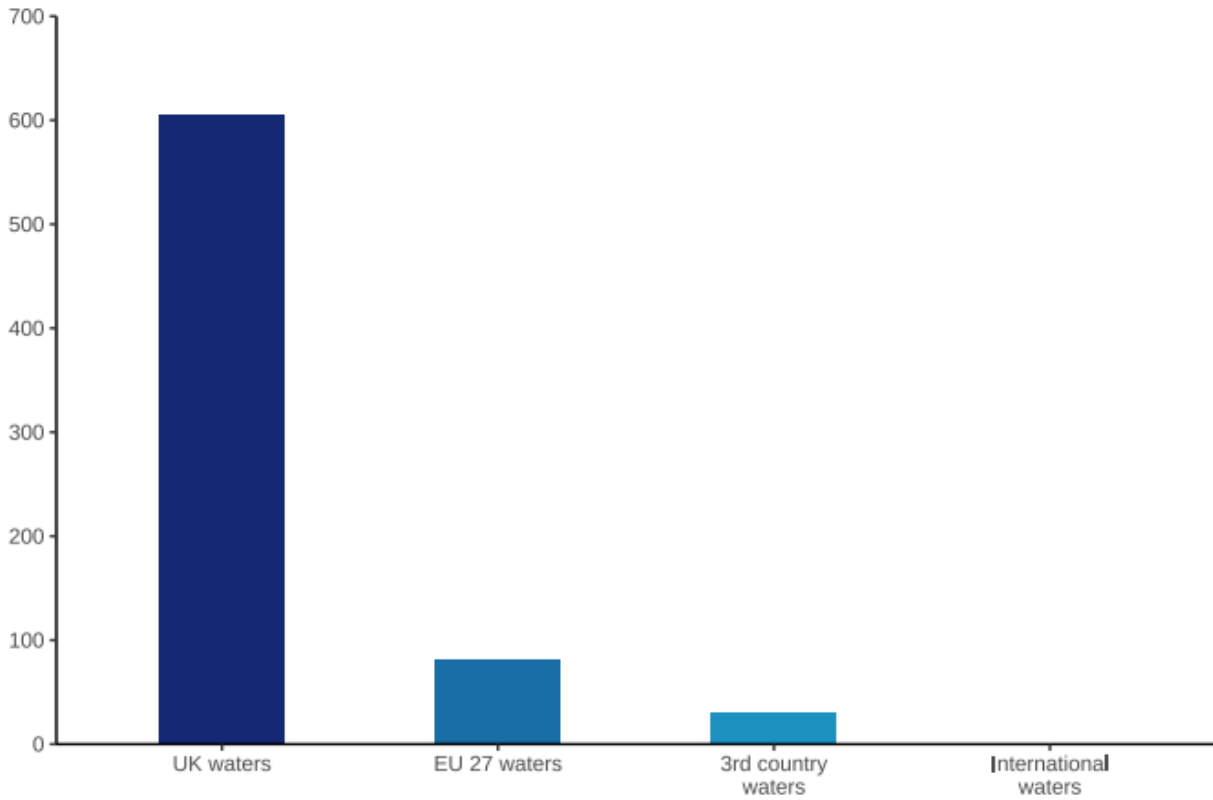*(Live weight, '000 tonnes)*

Figure 2.23: Value of landings caught by UK vessels in 2023 by waters.

(Value, £ million)
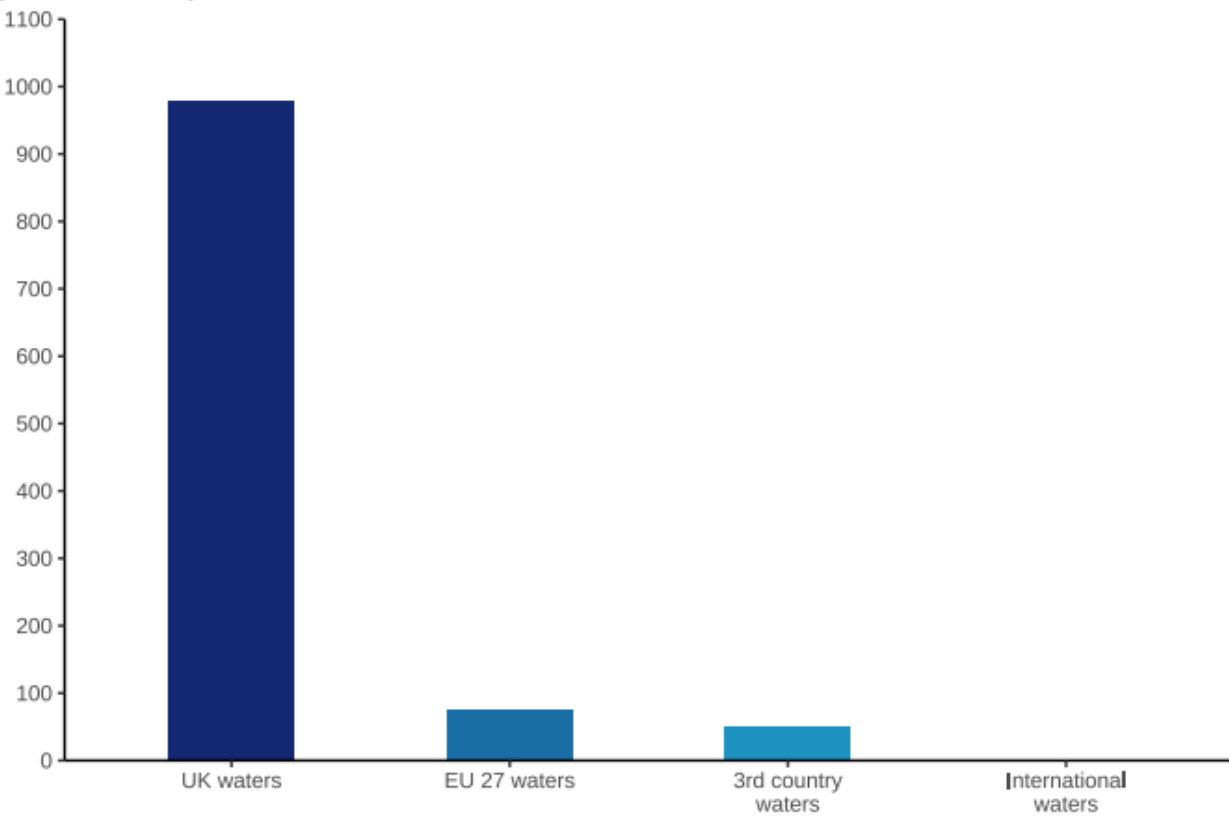
In 2023, 84% of landings and 89% of the value of landings by UK vessels were from UK waters.

Outside the UK's waters the most important coastal state or bloc was EU-27 waters, where UK vessels caught and landed 82 thousand tonnes of fish and shellfish for a value of £75 million in 2023 (down 17% compared to 2022). This equates to 11% by weight and 7% by value of the UK fleet's landings.

Figure 2.24: Percentage of species group landed by UK vessels caught from both UK and non-UK waters in 2023.
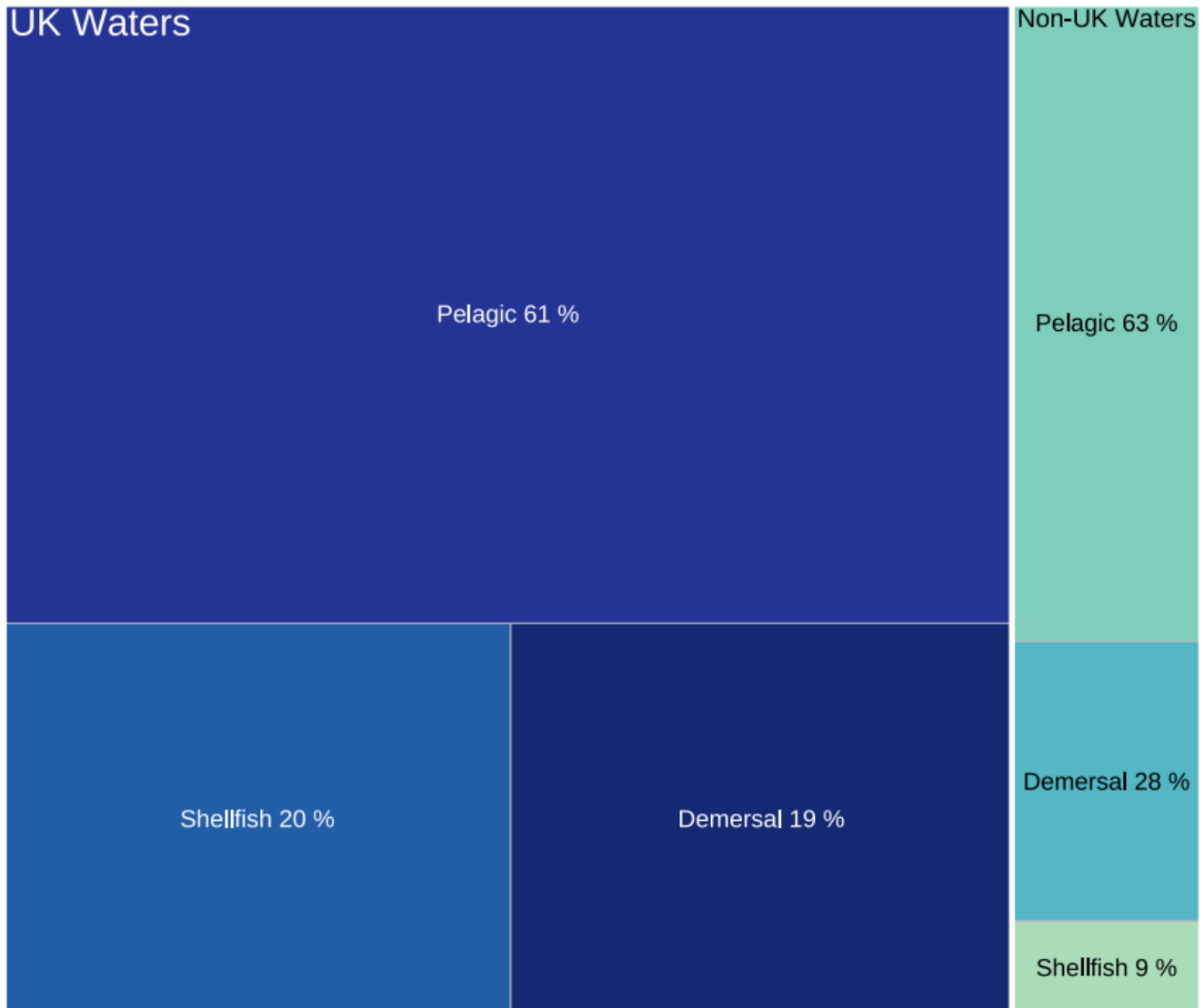
Pelagic species made up the majority of landings caught from both UK and non-UK waters in 2023. UK vessels landed a total of around 606 thousand tonnes of fish and shellfish from UK waters with a first sale value of approximately £978 million. By tonnage 53% of this was from UK waters of area 27.4.a (Northern North Sea); mackerel and herring made up 73% of those UK in UK Northern North Sea landings.

Fishing gear

Gear

Different types of fishing gear are used to catch different species of fish. A single vessel can use several gears, or individual vessels may be more specialised. Gears can be grouped several ways. One grouping is active versus passive. Active gears follow the target fish while target fish come to passive gears which remain in one place.

Active gears

- Beam trawlers target fish on the seabed by towing a net from either side of the boat.

- Demersal trawlers fish along or just above the seafloor to catch demersal fish. A funnel-shaped net is towed behind one or two boats.
- Dredges are rigid structures that are towed along the seabed by a boat. They are used to target shellfish species such as scallops and oysters.

- Seine netting uses a net that is vertical in the water. Demersal seines target bottom dwelling fish while pelagic seines target fish that inhabit the water column.

Passive gears

- Drift and fixed nets usually target pelagic fish and hang in the water column. They are suspended from buoys or the seabed.

- Gears using hooks attract fish by placing bait on a hook fixed to the end of e.g. a line.

- Pots and traps are rigid structures into which fish, mainly shellfish, are enticed through funnels that are hard to escape from.

Most (91% in 2023) of fish landed by UK vessels was captured using active gears. 99% of pelagic fish were caught using active gears and 92% of demersal fish[22]. 63% of all shellfish were caught using active gears, mainly by scallop dredges and otter trawls.

The type of gear used can make a difference to the average price of fish. For demersal species, the average price of fish captured using passive gears is higher than for active gears. Price differentials are also observed between different gears of the same class. For example, shellfish caught using demersal trawls and seines are sold at a higher average price than dredges. This variation in prices partly reflects the different species caught by different gears. For example, demersal trawls and seines

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[22] Table 2.11

capture the majority of the Nephrops landed by the UK fleet, while the bulk of the landings from dredges are scallops, which sell at a lower average price[23]. However, there can also be a premium attached to the method by which the fish are captured. This is driven partly by consumer choice around the environmental impact of different gears.

[23] Table 2.16

Landings by quota and non-quota stocks

Quota and non-quota stocks

Landings of quota stocks are those fish which are managed via quota limits, i.e. there is an upper limit set on the amount of fish that can be harvested from the sea. Non-quota stocks do not have an upper limit set on the quantity of fish that can be caught, however some are managed via different regimes, e.g. effort limits on days at sea.

Non-quota species include almost all commercial shellfish species, Nephrops being the exception.

In 2023, landings of quota species make up 84% of the total quantity of landings by the UK fleet and 72% of the value.

Figure 2.25: Quantity of landings by UK vessels of non-quota and quota species in 2023 by fisheries administration.
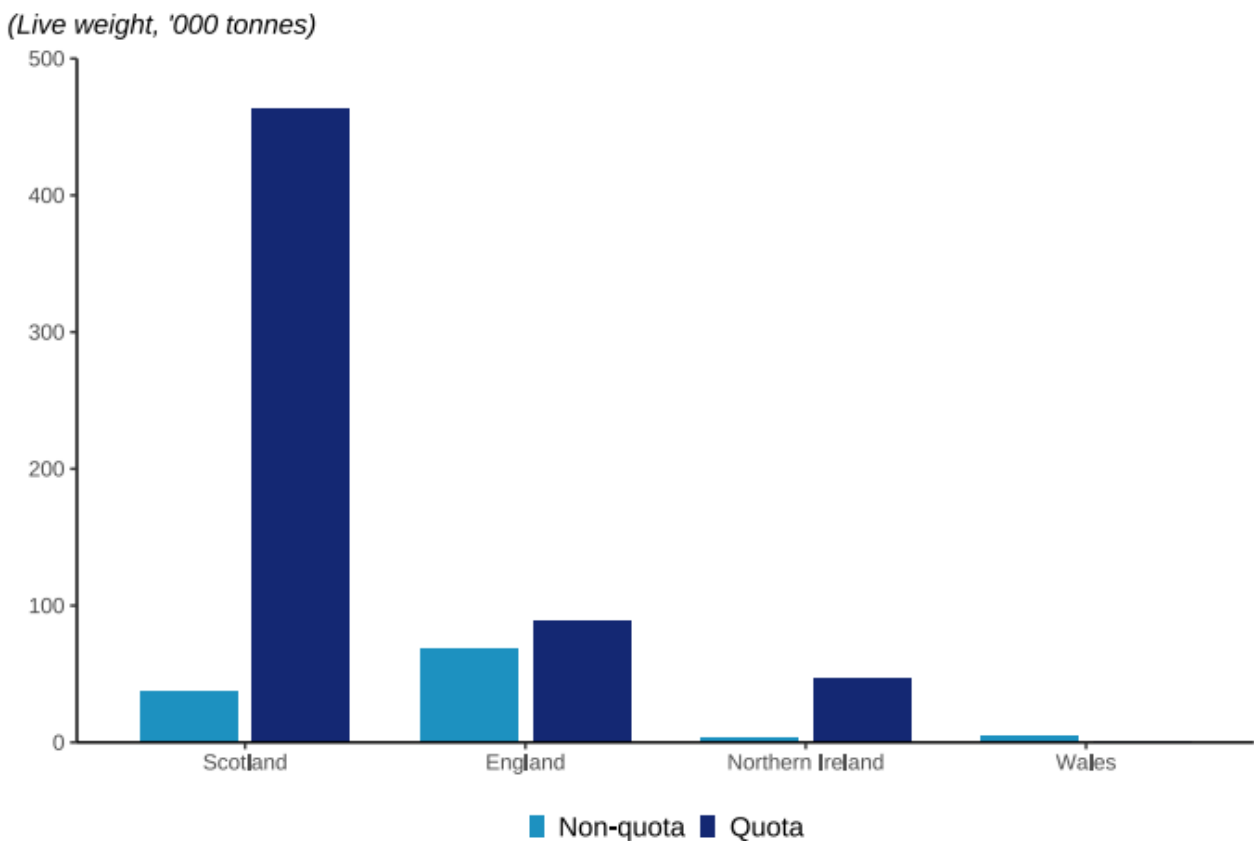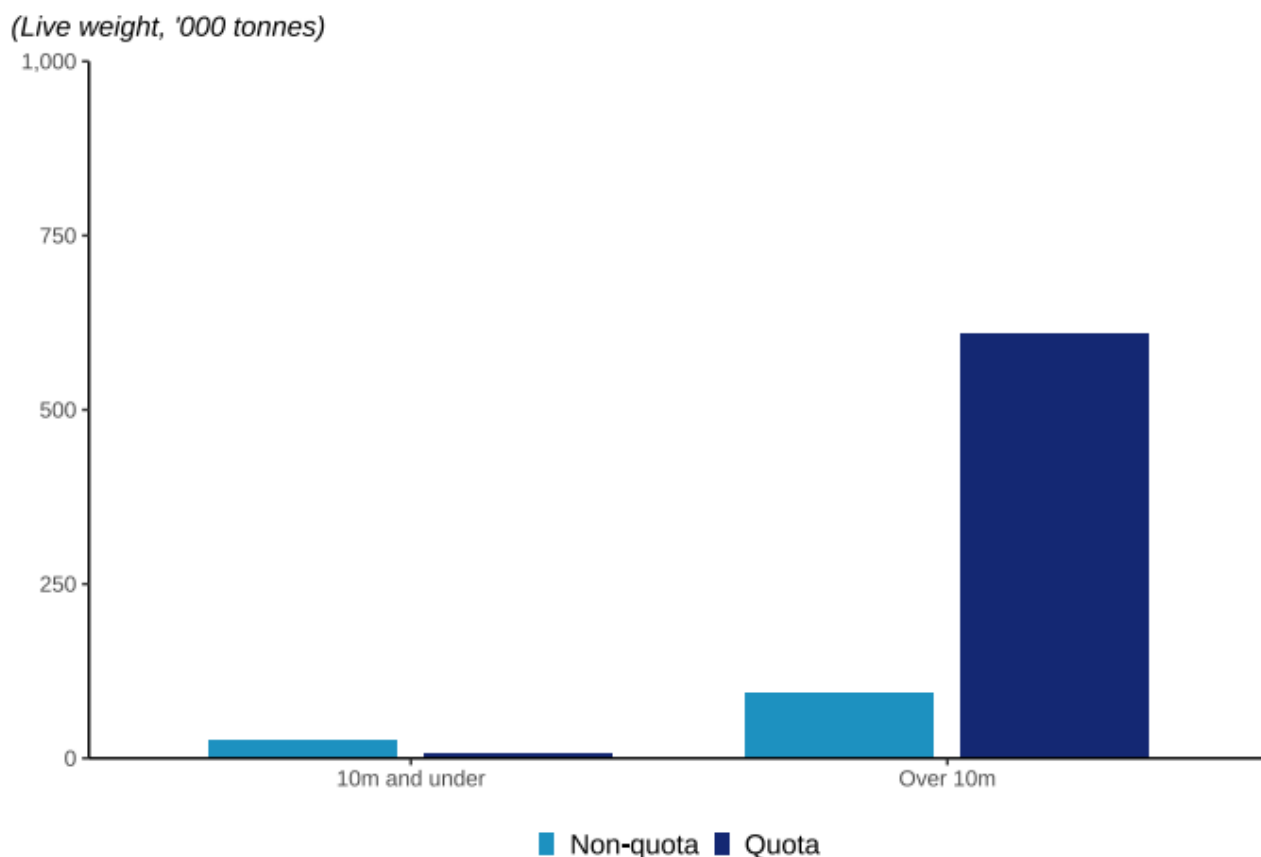

(Live weight, '000 tonnes)

■ Non-quota ■ Quota

Figure 2.26: Quantity of landings by UK vessels of non-quota and quota species in 2023 by 10m and under and over 10m vessels.

(Live weight, '000 tonnes)

Legend: ■ Non-quota ■ Quota

Quota allocations and management

Quota is allocated to the sector (Fish Producer Organisations) and the non-sector. The non-sector is split into two categories based on vessel length – over 10 metre and 10 metre and under.

Each UK nation holds the quota and manages uptake via catch limits for the non-sector. For the sector, individual Fish Producer Organisations are responsible for managing their members quota.

Scottish vessels landed 77% of UK landings of quota species in 2023.

Landings of non-quota species by under 10 metre vessels were 3 times higher than their landings of quota species. Conversely, landings of quota species by over 10 metre vessels were almost 6 times higher than their landings of non-quota species. Vessels over 10 metres in length landed 99% of the landings of quota species by UK vessels.

Quota allocations are primarily based on Fixed Quota Allocation (FQA) units. These are mainly held by vessels in the sector based on their fishing track record of catching quota species. Most vessels in the sector – a member of a Fish Producer Organisation – are vessels over 10 metres in length. Vessels

under 10 metres in length are mainly part of the non-sector and are allocated a small proportion of the total UK quota. Their landings of quota species are therefore less.

Section 3: Effort

View the tables accompanying this section [here](#).

Effort

Fishing effort captures the time vessels spend fishing. One measure of this is **days at sea**. Another measure is **kW days at sea**, which considers both the time vessels spend fishing and the power (kW) of the vessel's engine.

Effort restrictions are one of the ways fish stocks are managed. Limiting the number of days vessels can fish restricts their fishing opportunities.

Western Waters

To prevent growth in fishing activity in the sea areas to the west of the UK, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Morocco, an area (the 'Western Waters') was established from November 2003 in which fishing effort is limited.

Trips targeting edible crabs and spider crabs, demersal species and scallops are covered by the Western Water effort regime.

Following the end of transition from the EU in 2021 the UK has been enforcing the EU Western Waters regulation as amended by The Common Fisheries Policy (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The scope of this regulation has been changed to be consistent with the jurisdiction of the UK as an independent coastal state, and as such limits the application to those parts of the areas covered by Western Waters which are within United Kingdom waters.

Western waters effort statistics are also updated monthly here: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/effort-use-statistics

These monthly statistics are provided to supervise control of fishing effort in Western Waters areas within British fisheries limits waters by UK vessels. The Western Waters regulations were originally derived from EU law and have been transposed into UK law. The statistics are made available on or after the 15th day of each month.

Over 10 metre fleet

Figure 3.1: Fishing effort shown by kW days at sea (millions) from 2005 to 2023 by the over 10m fleet.
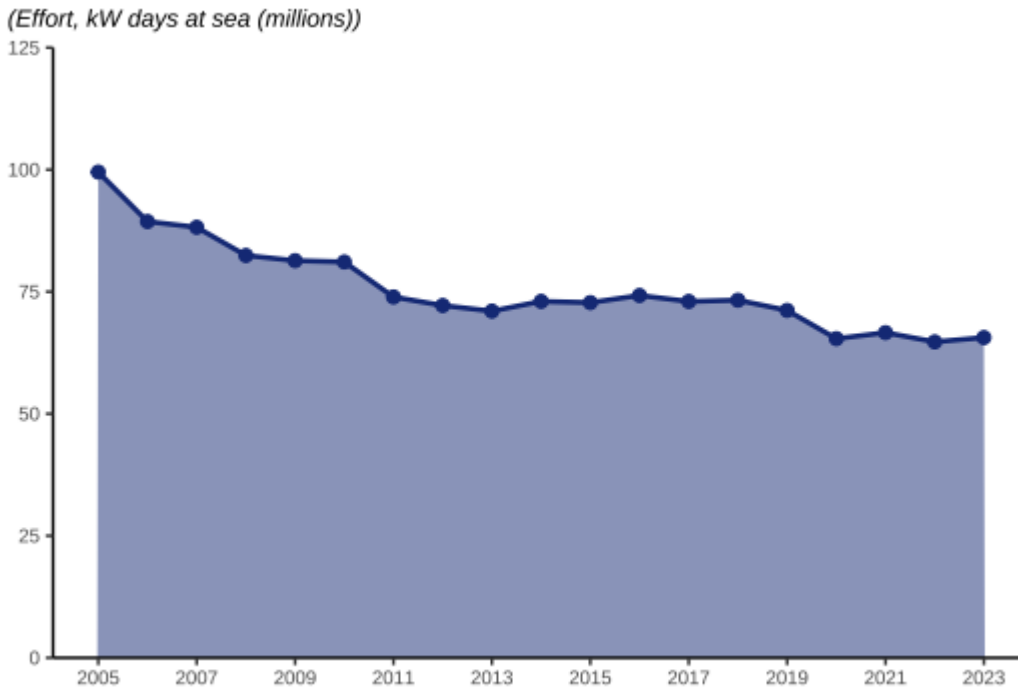
Since 2005, fishing effort (kW days at sea) by the over 10 metre fleet has decreased by around 34%. Between 2005 and 2012 there was a fairly sharp decline, from 100 million kW days at sea down to around 72 million kW days at sea, but this then levelled off and remained relatively stable before seeing another decline down to around 65 million kW days from 2019 onwards.

Figure 3.2: Fishing effort shown by kW days at sea (millions) comparing 2008 to 2023 by the over 10m fleet by gear metier[24].

(Effort, kW days at sea (millions))
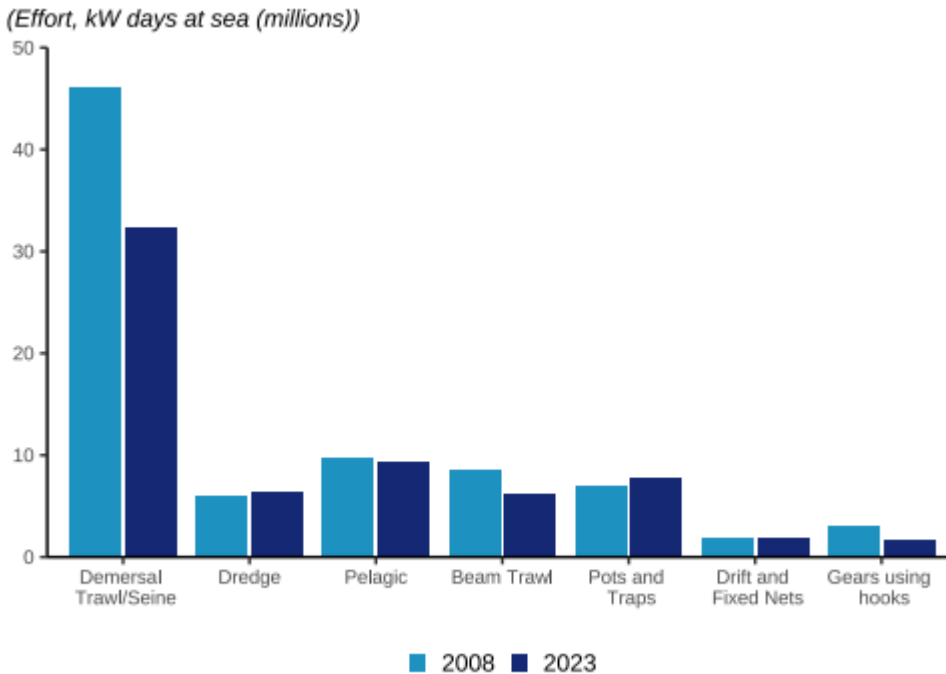
Effort by the demersal trawl and seine segment of the fleet fell by 30% between 2008 and 2023 to 32 million kW days at sea. The beam trawl segment, which has relatively lower levels of effort (6.1 million kW days at sea in 2023) fell by 28% over the same period.

This reduction in effort in the demersal trawl and seine segment has been an ongoing trend since 2004 following decommissioning exercises which were carried out by UK fisheries administrations between 2001 and 2003. The latter focused on removing fleet capacity targeting cod in the Cod Recovery Zone (a combination of North Sea, West of Scotland and Irish Sea fishing areas) and was particularly focused on vessels that used demersal trawls for whitefish. A further exercise was carried out to remove excess beam trawl fishing capacity in the Western Channel fishing area as part of the recovery regime for sole. This removed eight vessels previously active in the area.

---

[24] Polyvalent gears not included here as to small to be represented on graph for further details see table 3.2

Sole Recovery Zone

Sole Recovery Zone (SRZ)

As part of the measures for recovery of sole stocks, a Sole Recovery Zone was established from 2004 to apply effort controls to vessels of 10 metres or over, using certain gears (including beam trawls) in the Western Channel. Further information of SRZ measures can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manage-your-fishing-effort-sole-recovery-zone/sole-recovery-zone-rules

The Marine Management Organisation controls effort in the Western Channel by allocating days for fishing with these gears to eligible vessels.

Figure 3.3: The Sole Recovery Zone (British Waters of ICES Area VIIe).
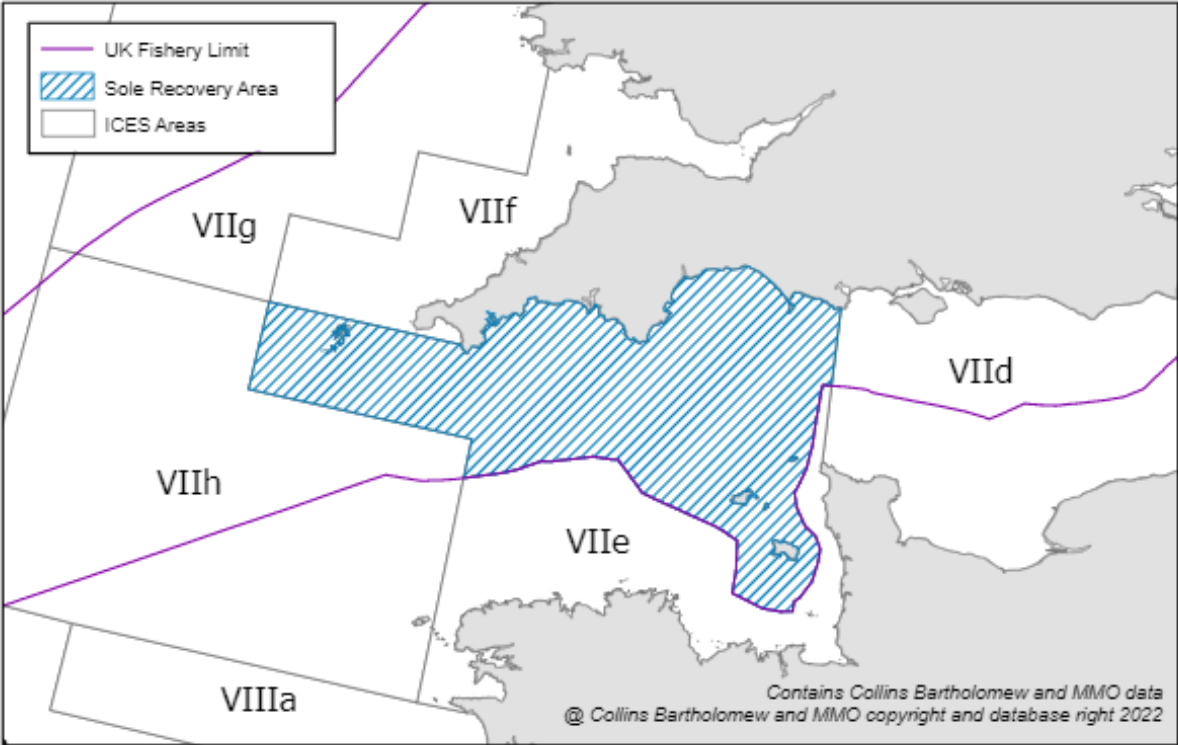
Figure 3.4: The number of vessels using beam trawls and associated effort (kW days at sea) in the SRZ from 2003 to 2023.

(Number of Vessels)

(Effort, kW days at sea (millions))
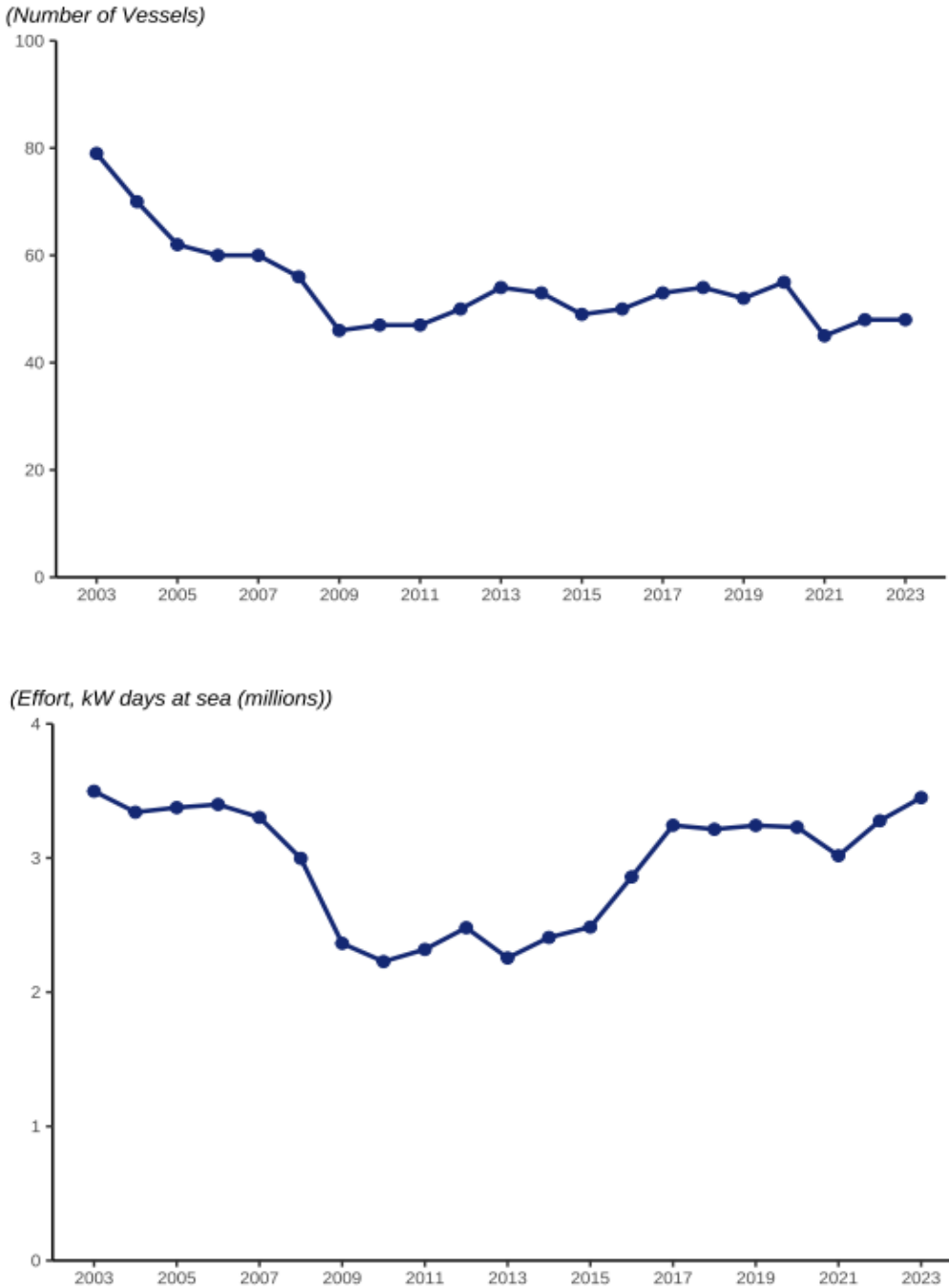
Since the implementation of the SRZ in 2004, the number of vessels beam trawling in the Sole Recovery Zone fell dramatically, as did effort, before stabilising. Reasons for this may include the effect of decommissioning schemes as well as reduced fishing opportunities owing to effort and quota controls. However, effort has increased considerably in recent years, approaching pre-2008 levels. In 2023 there was no change in the number of vessels compared to 2022. However, there was an increase in the kW days between 2022 and 2023, increasing by 170 thousand kW days (5% increase). This was due to an increase in the number of days at sea.

Section 4: Trade

View the tables accompanying this section here.

Data on trade is collected by trade weight. This differs to the measure of quantity used in previous sections which is live weight. MMO landings data is reported in terms of *live weight* which is the weight of the live fish caught from the sea. Trade weight is sometimes smaller if fish are processed further after landing (e.g. gutted or shelled) on board a ship prior to being exported.

Trade data are sourced from HM Revenue & Customs overseas trade statistics[25] which reports UK trade in goods (exports and imports). Data are reported on a physical movement basis, meaning the weight and value of the transaction is captured at the time the goods cross international borders, regardless of whether there has been any change in economic ownership of those goods. Value is presented in current prices, meaning no adjustment has been made to account for changes in inflation or exchange rates.

These data, and those published by HMRC, are not directly comparable with headline statistics for total UK trade published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Imports and exports

Figure 4.1: Total imports and exports by the UK in 2023.
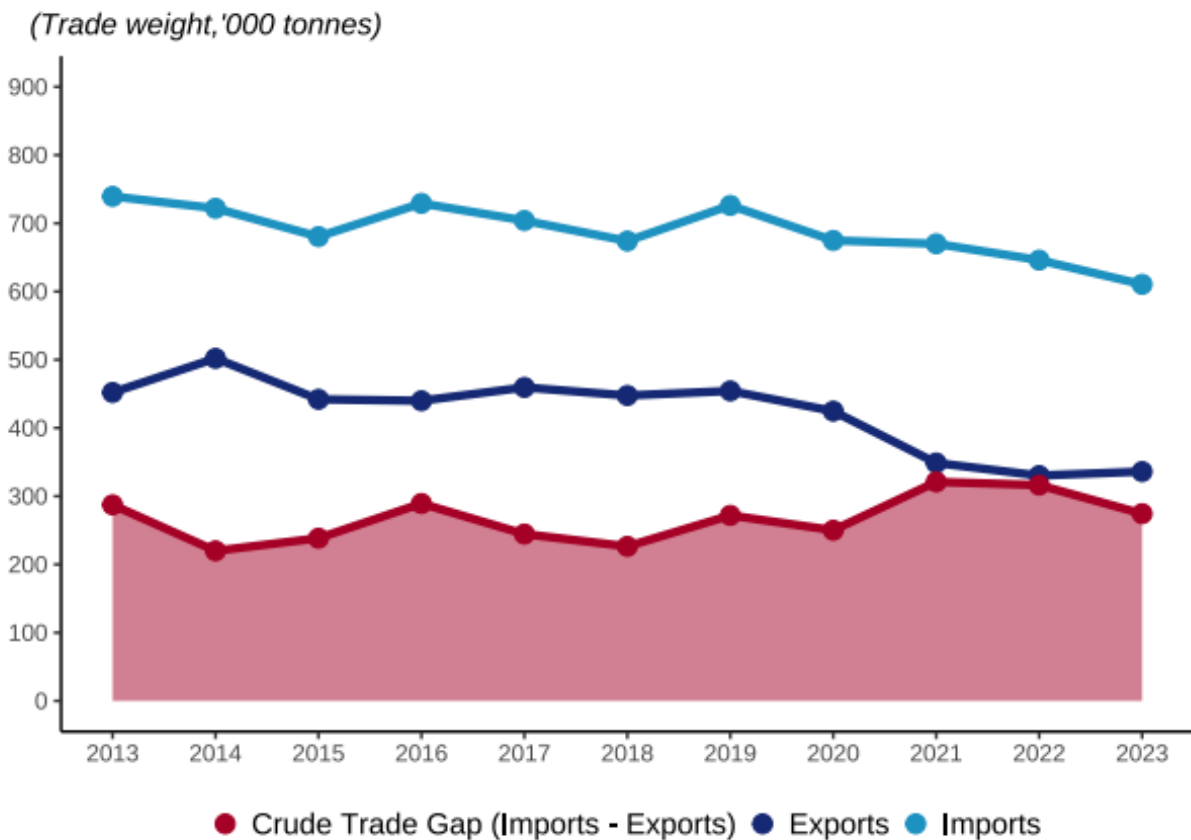
The UK's trade gap (imports minus exports) in 2023 for sea fish was 274 thousand tonnes. The UK is a net importer of fish, with a higher volume of fish imported than exported. In 2023 the UK imported 611 thousand tonnes of fish[26], with a value of £3.5 billion. It exported 336 thousand tonnes. Compared to 2022, the crude trade gap decreased by 13%, as a result of a combination of a 6% increase in imports and a decrease in exports (down 2%) compared to 2022.

Figure 4.2: UK imports and exports of fish and fish products split by species in 2023.

(Trade weight, '000 tonnes)

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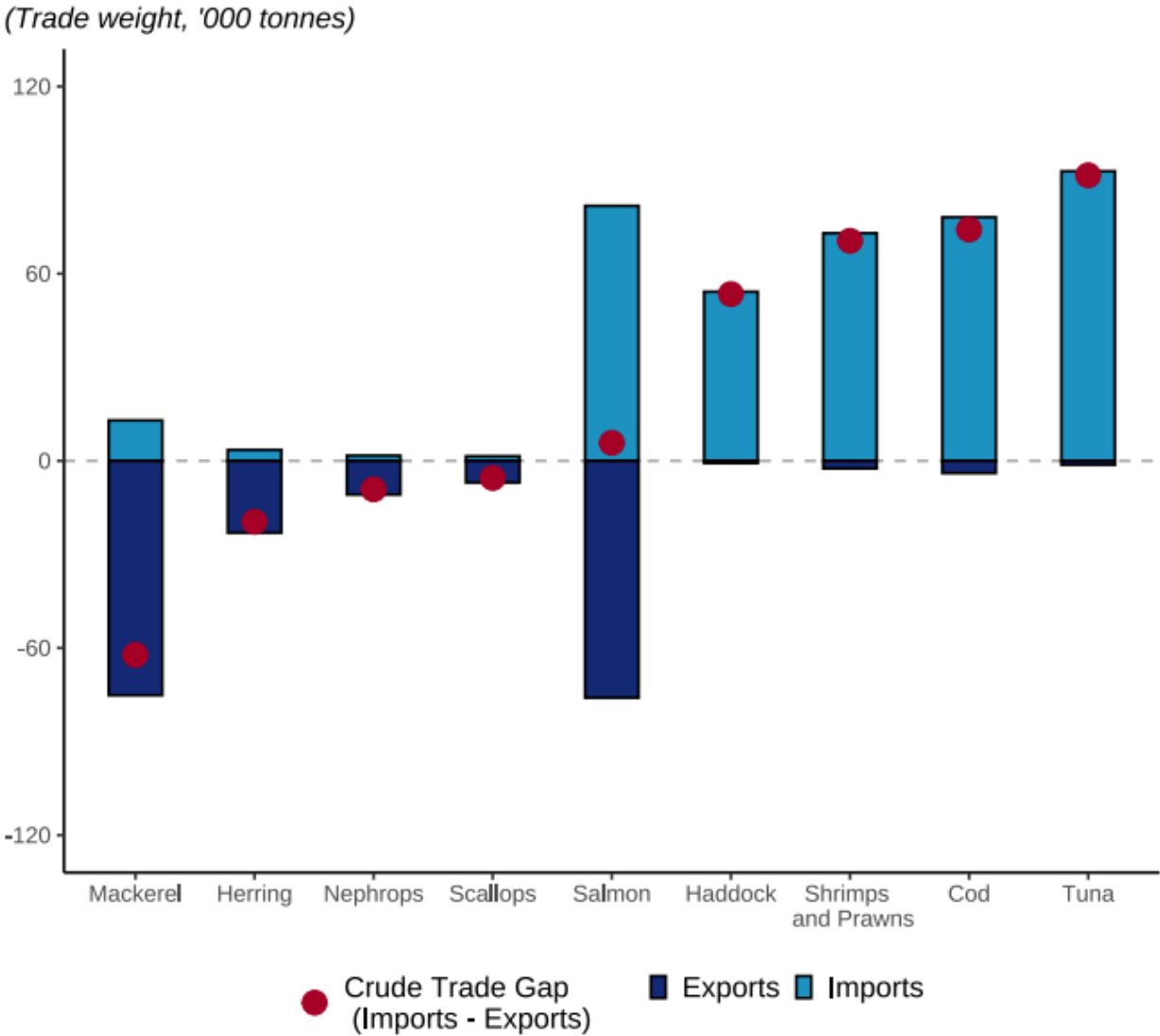
[26] Excluding fish products

Imports

Figure 4.3: Imports into the UK of fish and fish products by top 5 import markets in 2023.

Norway (101.4 kt)
Iceland (43.4 kt)
Netherlands (38.7 kt)
China (66.5 kt)
Vietnam (38.1 kt)

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Norway was the country from which the UK imported the most fish and fish products in 2023. Demersal and pelagic fish accounted for 84% of fish imports into the UK by weight. Shellfish accounted for the remaining 16%. In terms of value imported, shellfish made up a slightly higher percentage at 21%, because of the higher price typically fetched by shellfish species[27].

The UK imported 133 thousand tonnes of fish products[28] in 2023, with most of which was fish meal (69%). This brings the total imports (including sea fish, freshwater fish and fish products) to 743 thousand tonnes.

---

[27] Table 2.12.

[28] Fish products includes e.g. fish meal and oils.

Figure 4.4: Imports to the UK of cod by top 5 import markets in 2023.

(Trade weight '000 tonnes)
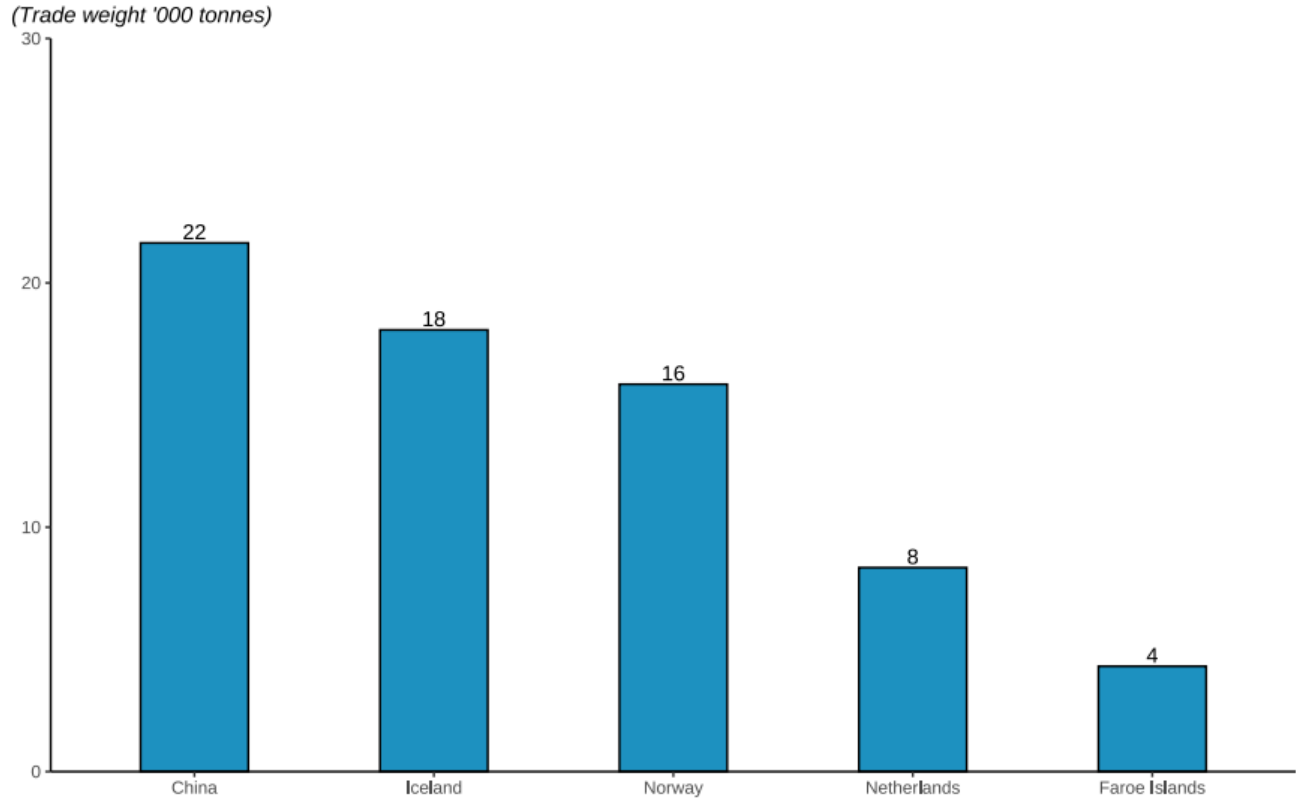
The UK is a net importer of cod, importing 78 thousand tonnes in 2023. The countries the UK imported the largest quantities of Cod from in 2023 were China (22 thousand tonnes), Iceland (18 thousand tonnes) and Norway (16 thousand tonnes). Imports from these 3 countries accounted for 71% of the total imports of Cod into the UK in 2023.

Figure 4.5: Imports to the UK of tuna species by top 5 import markets in 2023.

(Trade weight '000 tonnes)
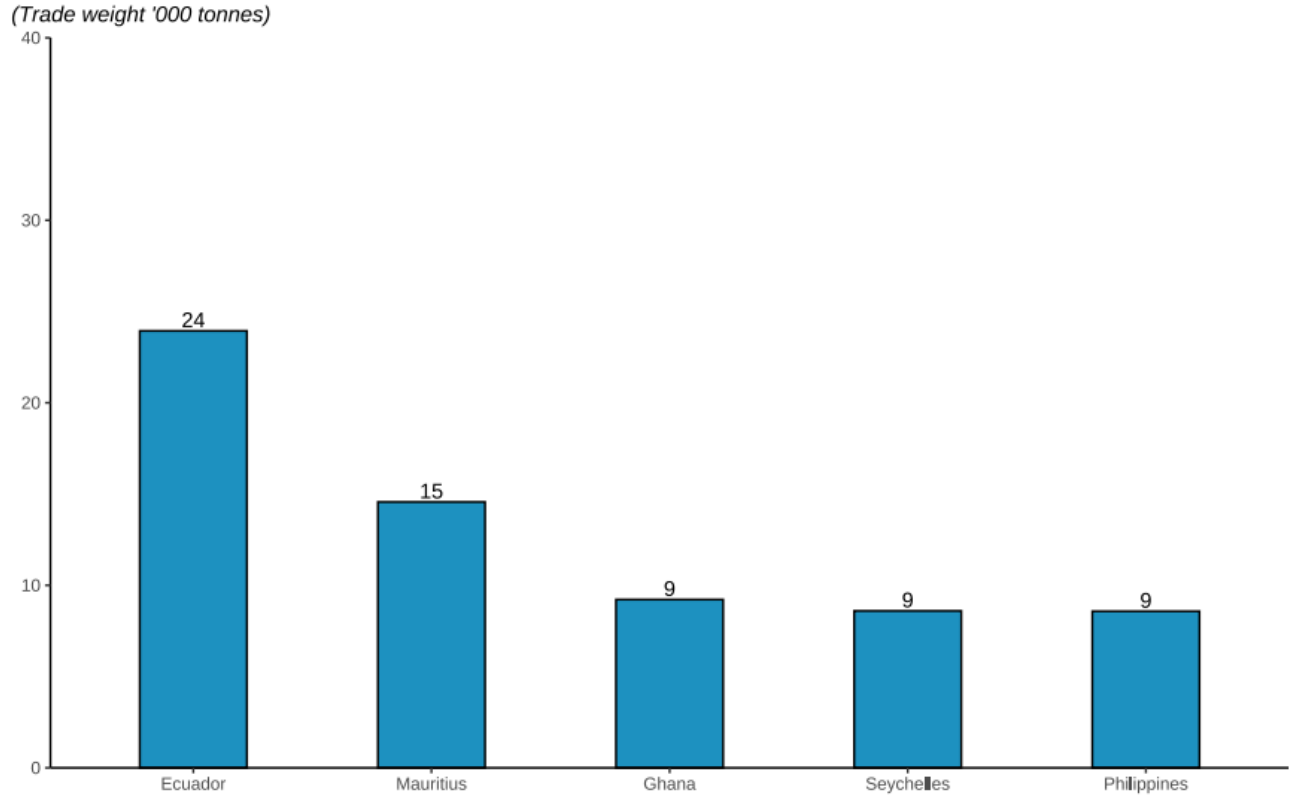
The UK is a net importer of tuna, importing 93 thousand tonnes in 2023. The countries the UK imported the largest quantities of Tuna from in 2023 were Ecuador and Mauritius. Imports from Ecuador accounted for 26% of the total imports of Tuna into the UK in 2023.

Figure 4.6: Imports to the UK of shrimps and prawns by top 5 import markets in 2023.

(Trade weight '000 tonnes)
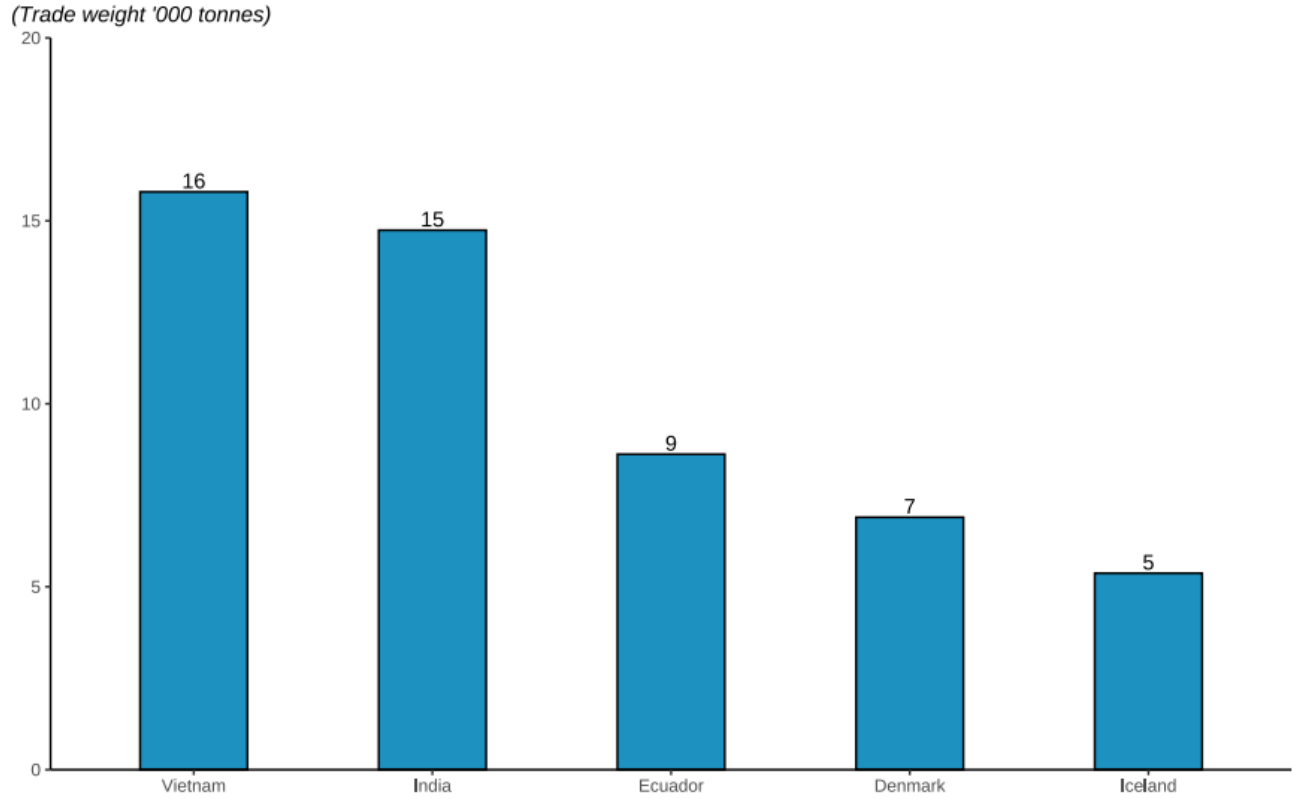
The UK is a net importer of shrimps and prawns, importing 73 thousand tonnes in 2023. The countries the UK imported the largest quantities of shrimps and prawns in 2023 were Vietnam (16 thousand tonnes) and India (15 thousand tonnes). Imports from these two countries accounted for 42% of the total imports of shrimps and prawns into the UK in 2023.

Exports

Figure 4.7: Exports from the UK of fish and fish products by top 5 export markets in 2023.

Netherlands (39.7 kt)

Ireland (13.8 kt)

Spain (19.9 kt)

France (103.6 kt)

U.S.A (28.1 kt)

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Coordinate System: GCS ETRS 1989
MMO Reference: 10748

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The UK exported the most fish and fish products to France in 2023. Demersal and pelagic fish accounted for 81% of fish exports out of the UK by weight with shellfish accounting for 19%. Shellfish similarly make up a higher percentage of the exports by value owing to their higher price per tonne on average than other sea fish (29%). The UK exported 11 thousand tonnes of fish products in 2023, bringing the total exports (including sea fish, freshwater fish and fish products) to 347 thousand tonnes.

Figure 4.8: Exports from the UK of Mackerel by top 5 export markets.

(Trade weight '000 tonnes)
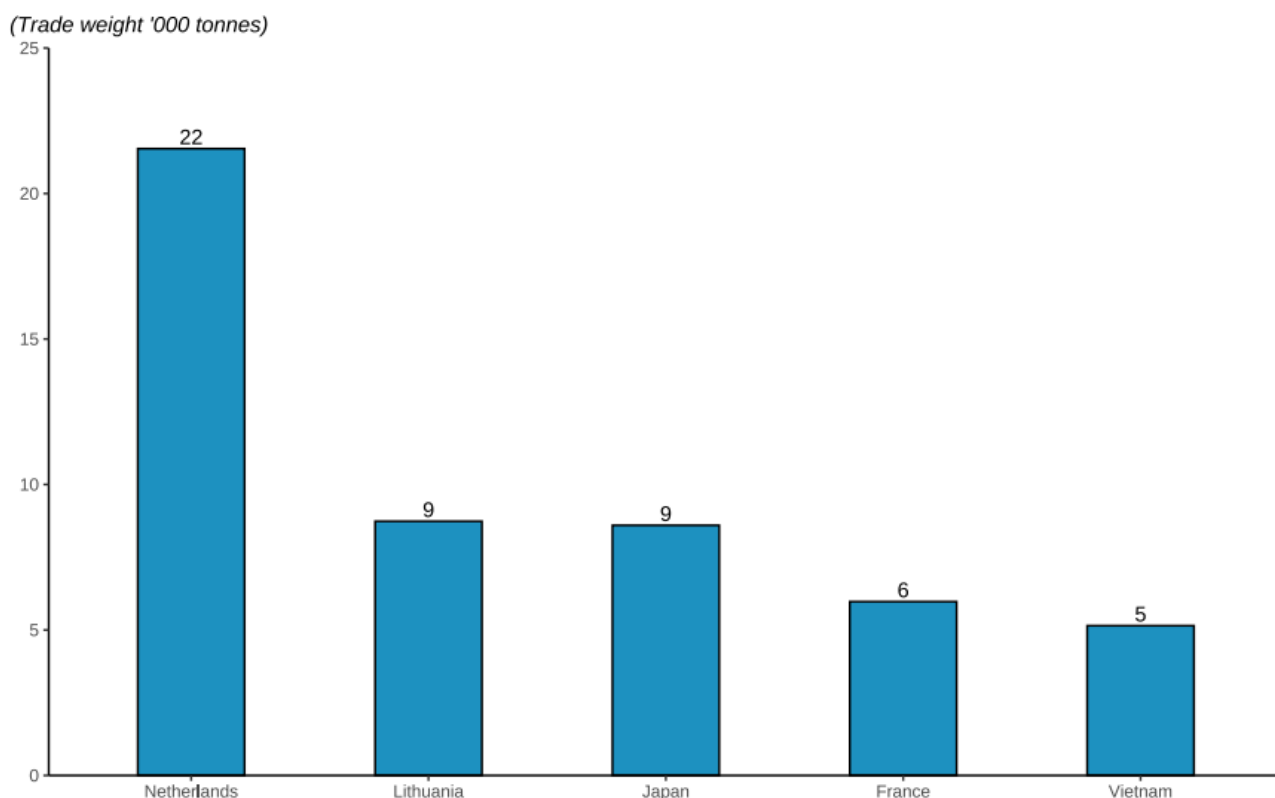
The UK is a net exporter of mackerel, exporting 75 thousand tonnes in 2023. Mackerel exports increased by 31% compared to 2022. The largest share of mackerel exports went to Netherlands (18 thousand tonnes).

Gross Domestic Product

GDP
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a standard measure of value added through the production of goods and services in a country. It is often used as a measure of the size or health of an economy.

GDP is the sum of the Gross Value Added (GVA) of each industry sector within a country.

GVA for fishing and aquaculture includes landings abroad by the UK fleet. Fishing and aquaculture is included in the wider agriculture, forestry and fishing sector group.

GVA is reported in current prices, meaning no adjustment has been made to account for changes in inflation over time.

The GVA for fishing and aquaculture in 2023 is £862 million, up 8% on a year earlier. The GVA for fishing comprises 5.7% of the total for agriculture, forestry and fishing[29].

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[29] http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/datasets-and-tables/data-selector.html?table-id=A1&dataset=pn2 .

Annex A: ICES data

In collaboration with Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), the MMO has previously published either a chapter or standalone report called Main stocks and their level of exploitation[30] which summarised ICES data for 6 key species (spanning 13 stocks) of interest to the UK fleet.

ICES have improved their dissemination of scientific data, and we now recommend users access this interactive data direct from ICES.

> All stock assessment graphs can be accessed at the following link:
> https://www.ices.dk/data/assessment-tools/Pages/stock-assessment-graphs.aspx.
>
> Seafish provide a thorough guide of how to interpret ICES graphs. See pages 25-26 here:
> https://www.seafish.org/document/?id=23A69338-21D2-4617-ADF5-58099360DAEB.

Below we have provided a list of key stocks of interest to the UK fleet and their corresponding biological stock page on ICES. This is not an exhaustive list of stocks that the UK holds quota in.

Stock code	Biological stock code	Link
ANF/07.	ank.27.78abd	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19013
ANF/07.	mon.27.78abd	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18893
BOR/678-	boc.27.6-8	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19231
COD/07A.	cod.27.7a	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18916
COD/07D.	cod.27.47d20	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18680
COD/2A3AX4	cod.27.47d20	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18680
COD/7XAD34	cod.27.7.e–k	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18963
HAD/07A.	had.27.7.a	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18953
HAD/2AC4.	had.27.46a20	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19014
HAD/5BC6A.	had.27.46a20	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19014
HAD/7X7A34	had.27.7.b–k	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18919
HER/07A/MM	her.27.nirs	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19281
HER/4AB.	her.27.3a47d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19293
HER/4CXB7D	her.27.3a47d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19293
HER/7G-K.	her.27.irls	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19119
HKE/2AC4-C	hke.27.3a46-8abd	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19042
HKE/571214	hke.27.3a46-8abd	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19042
JAX/4BC7D	hom.27.3a4bc7d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19217
L/W/2AC4-C	wit.27.3a47d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18728
L/W/2AC4-C	lem.27.3a47d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=14370
LEZ/07.	meg.27.7b-k8abd	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19287
LIN/04-C.	lin.27.3a4a6-91214	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=14347
LIN/6X14.	lin.27.3a4a6-91214	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=14347
MAC/2A34.	mac.27.nea	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19137
MAC/2CX14-	mac.27.nea	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19137
NEP/07.	nep.fu.14	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19273

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[30] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920035/2019_Main_stocks_and_their_level_of_exploitation.pdf.

Stock code	Biological stock code	Link
NEP/07.	nep.fu.2021	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19234
NEP/07.	nep.fu.22	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19190
NEP/2AC4-C	nep.fu.5	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19224
NEP/2AC4-C	nep.fu.6	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19251
PLE/07A.	ple.27.7a	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18969
PLE/2A3AX4	ple.27.420	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18688
PLE/7DE.	ple.27.7d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18736
PLE/7DE.	ple.27.7e	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19051
PLE/7FG.	ple.27.7fg	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18946
POL/07.	pol.27.67	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18957
POL/56-14	pol.27.67	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18957
RJC/07D.	rjc.27.3a47d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18342
RJC/2AC4-C	rjc.27.3a47d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18342
RJC/67AKXD	rjc.27.7afg	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19154
RJC/67AKXD	rjc.27.7e	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19129
RJH/04-C.	rjh.27.4c7d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18341
RJH/07D.	rjh.27.4c7d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18341
SAN/234_1R	san.sa.1r	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18515
SOL/07A.	sol.27.7a	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18931
SOL/07D.	sol.27.7d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18987
SOL/07E.	sol.27.7e	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18616
SOL/24-C.	sol.27.4	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18740
SOL/7FG.	sol.27.7fg	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18943
SOL/7HJK.	sol.27.7h-k	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18234
SPR/7DE.	spr.27.7de	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18575
T/B/2AC4-C	tur.27.4	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18654
T/B/2AC4-C	bll.27.3a47de	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18850
WHB/1X14	whb.27.1-91214	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=19138
WHG/07A.	whg.27.7a	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=17986
WHG/2AC4.	whg.27.47d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18694
WHG/7X7A-C	whg.27.47d	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18694
WHG/7X7A-C	whg.27.7b-ce-k	https://standardgraphs.ices.dk/ViewCharts.aspx?key=18966

Annex B: Methodology

The methodology for data from 2000 and earlier included in this publication is described in earlier versions of the methodology:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920038/Methodology.pdf.

Fleet (Section 1)
Statistics on the UK fishing fleet in this publication are based on the fleet of fishing vessels as registered with the Register of Shipping and Seamen. To this is added details of fishing vessels as registered with the Crown Dependencies (Isle of Man and the Channel Islands) to form the full UK fleet. The UK fleet has been broken down for analysis by individual country based on the administration ports where vessels were licensed as at the end of year the report covers. Vessels which are registered but do not have an administration port at this time are not counted against any country,

Fish Producer Organisation membership (Section 1)
In the UK, FPOs (Fish Producer Organisations) are granted responsibility by Fisheries Administrations for the management of fish quotas for vessels in their membership. Vessel owners notify UK Fisheries Administrations when transferring between FPOs for the purposes of quota management. A comprehensive database of membership of FPOs is maintained which augments the vessel data provided by the Register of Shipping and Seamen.

Employment data (Section 1)
The MMO usually provides a summary of the estimated number of fishers working within the UK fleet collected from the annual Fishermen's Survey. The data that was collected in relation to 2023 have been determined to be unreliable for English vessels, with the resulting estimates contrary to long term trends, coherent publications and anecdotal industry intelligence. Therefore, the results of the Fisherman's Survey 2023 will not be published.

Data for 2022 and earlier continue to be the most reliable estimate of the number of fishers for UK vessels for that time period and have still been included within the published accompanying tables for this section. For analysis of the longer term trends please refer to last year's release of UK Sea fisheries statistics 2022[31] The number of fishers for Scottish vessels will continue to be published as part of the Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics[32], and Seafish have published information about employment in the fishing industry in the Economics of the UK Fishing Fleet[33].

Activity and landings (Section 2)
The data in Section 2 is administrative data which the UK is legally required to collect to enable management of the seas. The data collected via these means is used for the majority of MMO statistical products, not just this annual publication.
The data collection and processing for this administrative data is described here:
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fishing-activity-and-landings-data-collection-and-processing.

Amendments to the administrative data collected (Section 2)
Following quality assurance, MMO statistics make some amendments to the administrative data collected ahead of producing the datasets and tables for the Sea Fisheries Statistics publication. Amendments were made this year to the 2023 value data. Firstly, where sales note mismatches were identified as causing gaps in landed value, the affected sales note's value information were manually inputted into the final data sets by applying an average price per tonne derived from the mismatching sale notes to affected landings. This primarily affected ICES area 27.1 cod landed value. Further

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[31] Section 1 - Fleet - GOV.UK
[32] Sea fisheries statistics - gov.scot
[33] Economics of the UK Fishing Fleet 2023 — Seafish

records were identified as missing value (primarily for mackerel and blue whiting landings). For these records a general annual average price per tonne was applied to the relevant live weight landings to produce estimated landed value. For example, mackerel landings were assigned value based on a price per tonne of £991 for 2020. For context on scale, this fix was applied to around 6,000 tonnes of mackerel landings in 2020 which equates to approximately 3% of UK mackerel landings that year.

All mussel landings with a zero landings value have been removed from the dataset used to create Section 2 and the underlying datasets. These landings were identified to be landings of mussel seed which, rather than being sold for human consumption at this point are re-laid for aquaculture. They are then harvested and sold at a later stage. As these landings are not sold at the point of initial dredging they have been removed and the data recalculated.

Estimated landings by EEZ (Section 2)
Most figures in Sections 2 are based on administrative data collected direct from vessels, with some amendments to improve the quality (described above). From 2021, data relating to the area of capture (EEZ) are based on reported areas, however prior to this period, the data relies on estimated areas to determine the EEZ. For years prior to 2021 the MMO hold robust data on catches by ICES rectangle. This rectangle data is used as the basis for estimating landings by EEZ.

An example to illustrate follows:
> *If an ICES rectangle is fully in UK waters, we can assume 100% of the catch assigned to that rectangle is from UK waters. However, EEZ lines intersect and cut across ICES rectangles so this assumption cannot be applied in all instances.*
> *For example, in the English Channel, the ICES rectangles span both UK and French waters. Imagine the sea surface of an ICES rectangle falls in a way so that exactly 50 per cent of the ICES rectangle is in UK waters and 50 per cent is in French waters.*
> *Based on the per cent of the sea surface that falls in each nation's EEZ we can make an assumption that 50 per cent of the catch reported against that ICES rectangle was from French waters and 50 per cent was from UK waters. This same calculation can be done for all ICES rectangles and aggregated up to various groupings to estimate e.g., the percentage of landings by the UK fleet from UK waters compared to the percentage of landings from EU waters.*

In reality, in the example of the English Channel described above, a vessel may have actually landed 100% of their catch on the UK side of the EEZ. Because of this, for each estimate we can calculate a confidence interval around the estimated value. When considering individual vessel landings, these estimates will have very wide confidence intervals. However, when we aggregate this data to the UK fleet level (for example), the confidence in our estimates is much higher.

The method described above relies on us knowing what fraction of the sea surface of an ICES rectangle falls in each nation's EEZ. To obtain this information a spatial dataset containing the boundaries of all world EEZs was segmented by a spatial dataset containing the boundaries of the ICES rectangles. From this, the fraction of total sea surface area, excluding any land area, occupied by each national EEZ was calculated for each rectangle.

The underlying dataset titled *UK fleet landings by rectangle stock port and EEZ_2019_2023* published alongside this report includes the estimated EEZ and region of capture based on the method described above. In this dataset there are a small number of unapportioned landings – i.e. landings which cannot be attributed to an EEZ or region. This is because these landings have an unknown ICES rectangle. They are included in the dataset for completeness but only make up 0.04 per cent of all landings.

Please refer to the published Economic Exclusive Zone analysis report[34] for further details on the methodology and assumptions used for these figures.

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[34] UK commercial sea fisheries landings by Exclusive Economic Zone of capture report 2019 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Trade (Section 4)

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is responsible for collecting the UK's international trade in goods data. The data are compiled from trade declarations made using commodity codes from the UN Tariff (HS Nomenclature) and its EU derivative the Intrastat Classification Nomenclature (ICN). These data are sent annually to the MMO, who process the data for this publication.

Landings of fish into the UK by foreign vessels are typically included in import statistics; however, statistics on imports and landings by foreign registered vessels may not strictly be comparable. Arrivals of fish should be reported where the economic owner of the vessel is outside the UK. In some cases, the countries of vessel registration and economic ownership may differ. A further complication is that import statistics do not include fish landed into the UK by foreign vessels which have a final destination outside the UK. Lastly, in some cases there exists a value threshold for declaration of imports. For these reasons it is possible that imports of fish may be below the quantity of landings reported for foreign registered vessels.

Exports include dispatches of fish by UK economically owned vessels when landing outside the UK. For similar reasons to those for imports, these are not directly comparable with landings by UK registered vessels abroad.

Annex C: Revisions policy

The Marine Management Organisation policy is to revise or produce revised figures each year to ensure that users have access to the latest data available. Revisions typically affect fishing effort, catches and trade data, where data from logbooks, landing declarations, sales notes and trade declarations may occasionally be received or amended several months after the event. The magnitude of revisions to tables is typically larger for more recent years although the size of revisions is usually very small.

There are several causes of the revisions made in this publication:

1. **Receipt of additional data.** Despite strict data reporting requirements, some data are not received or entered at the time of publication. This typically affects data for more recent years.

2. **Revisions to data sources.** Corrections are made to database entries throughout the year where these are found to be incorrect. In addition, for landings data systematic corrections are made to implausible quantities and values prior to production of the publication to reduce the influence of outliers.

3. **Rectification of data processing errors.** Where data are found to have been incorrectly processed for a previous publication, these errors are corrected as soon as possible.

Users should always refer to the latest figures published by the Marine Management Organisation. Previous editions of all publications are made available online on the Marine Management Organisation website should users wish to examine the effect of revisions in further detail.

The Marine Management Organisation adheres to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' policy on revisions and errors. Further information can be found in the Statement on Revisions and Errors at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-policy-statement-on-revisions-and-corrections.

Annex D: Associated publications

Annual Sea Fish Statistics

All associated tables, underlying datasets and documents relating to this publication can be **downloaded here:**
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-sea-fisheries-annual-statistics-report-2023

MMO Official Statistics publications

- Monthly UK sea fisheries statistics: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monthly-uk-sea-fisheries-statistics

- UK fishing vessel lists: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-vessel-lists

- Effort use statistics: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/effort-use-statistics

- Quota use statistics: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/quota-use-statistics

- Provisional Non-Quota uptake by UK vessels in EU waters: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/provisional-non-quota-uptake-by-uk-vessels-in-eu-waters

Sea fisheries publications by other UK nations and international bodies

- Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics: https://www.gov.scot/collections/sea-fisheries-statistics/

- Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland, fisheries policy and statistics: Animal health, inland fisheries, food and forestry statistics | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)

- FAO Yearbook of Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics: FAO Yearbook of Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics - Fisheries and Aquaculture

- Eurostat Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Statistics: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-statistical-books/-/KS-FK-17-001

Other Useful websites

- Sea Fish Industry Authority: https://www.seafish.org/

- Maritime and Coastguard Agency: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency

- Marine Accident Investigation Branch: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-accident-investigation-branch-current-investigations

- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/centre-for-environment-fisheries-and-aquaculture-science

- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES): https://www.ices.dk/Pages/default.aspx

- FQA Register: https://www.fqaregister.service.gov.uk/

- HMRC Trade data tool: https://www.uktradeinfo.com/

Annex E: Further Information

Pre-release access to statistics

Some ministers and officials receive access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release. Details of the arrangements for doing this and a list of the ministers and officials that receive pre-release access to these statistics can be found in the DEFRA statement of compliance[35] with the Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008.

Contact

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- Email: statistics@marinemanagement.org.uk

- Media enquiries: 0300 123 1032

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[35] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-group-pre-release-access-to-official-statistics-compliance-statement