



Sea Fisheries Statistics: Notice of the cancellation of the accredited official statistics designation

Publication Date: 27 October 2026

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has previously requested to temporarily suspend the accredited official statistics designation of both its [annual](#)¹ and [monthly](#)² UK Sea Fisheries Statistics releases and [committed](#)³ to an Official Statistics Development Programme in order to regain this designation.

The MMO has asked to cancel the accredited official statistics designation for these releases, to allow sufficient time to make the necessary improvements. This was agreed by the OSR on 27 October 2026.

This statistical notice includes further details on why the accredited designation has been cancelled and information about the improvements made to date.

The MMO has also published its [statistical development plan](#), covering the expected improvement activities in the next 12 months.

Cancellation of the accredited official statistics designation

The MMO previously announced a temporary suspension to the accredited official statistics designation of both its annual and monthly UK Sea Fisheries Statistics releases. The MMO committed to an Official Statistics Development Programme in order to regain the accredited designation. This was [agreed](#)⁴ by the Director General for Regulation on 3 December 2024.

Several improvements have been introduced to the Sea Fisheries Statistics following the suspension of the accredited official statistics designation, including improvements to the data quality for under 10m vessels in England, Wales and Isle of Man, updates to the presentation of the trade section of the annual Sea Fisheries Statistics and improved navigation of the statistical releases on the MMO website. More details of these improvements are provided in the next section.

However, there are still improvements required to meet the standards of the Code of Practice, including those highlighted in the original request to suspend the accredited designation. These include improvements to the average price methodology, improvements to the fisher's survey and developing a disclosure control policy.

The MMO has further identified gaps in the monthly sea fisheries statistics release, in particular the omission of landings by Scottish vessels resulting from a problem with the Scottish Government's fisheries management database. This results in a significant volume of Mackerel and Herring landings missing from the published provisional statistics. Given the decrease in Mackerel quotas for 2026, this means that any changes in fishing activity are not being effectively captured in the monthly statistics. Manual amendments

¹ [UK sea fisheries annual statistics - GOV.UK](#)

² [Monthly UK sea fisheries statistics - GOV.UK](#)

³ [UK Sea Fisheries Statistics: temporary suspension of the accredited official statistics designation - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ [Ed Humpherson to Rebekah Paul: Temporary suspension of accredited official statistics status of Sea Fisheries Statistics – Office for Statistics Regulation](#)

are made to quota monitoring statistics to mitigate any impacts on fishers or quota monitoring, but these amendments are not yet supplied in a way that is compatible with the monthly SFS.

Given the expected time needed to realise improvements across all the areas originally committed to, the MMO has [asked](#)⁵ to cancel the accreditation designation of its official statistics releases. The cancellation was [agreed](#)⁶ by the Director General for Regulation at the OSR on 27 October 2026.

The MMO is still committed to improving its official statistics offering in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics and will be continuing to make improvements in the coming months to address some of the original issues raised within the official statistics development programme. Once these improvements have been made the MMO will seek to reapply for accreditation from the OSR.

Progress to date

The MMO has introduced several improvements to the published official statistics since the suspension to the accredited official statistics designation was agreed. A summary of the improvement activities follows.

Catch recording data quality

In 2024, a new data source for reporting landings by English, Welsh and Isle of Man vessels under 10m in length was introduced. From 2024, these data were captured via [catch recording](#)⁷. Previously, these data were estimated using data supplied on Sales Notes, which are submitted at the first point of sale.

In 2025, the MMO completed a [statistical quality assessment](#)⁸ of data submitted via the catch recording application. The intention of this report was to inform users of any structural differences in the new dataset, to support interpretation over time.

However, the review highlighted substantial quality issues with catch recording data. Where there had been ongoing challenges with the Catch Recording App, data submitted by fishers were not being received by, and were therefore missing from, the MMO databases.

A report on the full findings of the review was published on 9 October 2025, showing the extent of the differences between the two data sources (sales notes and catch recording) for under 10m vessels, and the significance of these differences on the overall fishing trends in the UK fleet.

To address these quality concerns, the MMO implemented a technical solution that uses sales notes as the primary source for landing weight and value data for under 10m vessels from England, Wales and Isle of Man, and uses activity data from catch records where available.

These revisions were introduced in the publication of Sea Fisheries Statistics 2024, on 3 December 2025, as well as revisions to the provisional statistics published to this date.

The solution will be continued to be used in official statistics reporting while the catch recording service is under review. More details can be found in the UK Sea Fisheries Statistics 2024 methodology ([Annex B](#)).

Improving the presentation of Sea Fisheries Statistics

The statistical commentary and presentation of the trade section was updated for the SFS 2024 release.

⁵ [Cancellation of AOS status for Sea Fisheries statistics - Office for Statistics Regulation](#)

⁶ [Cancellation of AOS status for Sea Fisheries statistics - Office for Statistics Regulation](#)

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/record-your-catch>

⁸ [UK Sea Fisheries Statistics: Catch Recording Data Statistical Quality Assessment - GOV.UK](#)

The commentary has been expanded to improve the description and consistency of results throughout the section. This makes it easier for users to interpret the data and understand trends over time.

The presentation of imports and exports has been aligned with standard practice for reporting international trade and is now consistent with the national accounts. There is also greater clarity on the data source used and how it differs to other government publications on international trade.

Improving website navigation

Improvements have been made to the layout and structure of the website. This simplifies navigation and makes it easier for users to find the statistics they need.

This includes a new '[Statistics at MMO](#)' page, with clear identifiers for each release. Out-of-date information has been removed and there is a new section for statistical governance documentation.

The new layout also allows for clearer distinction between MMO's official statistics publications and management information published to provide transparency about the operational management of fisheries.

Improving production efficiency

The statistical process for producing landing data within the annual UK SFS publication has been rewritten and has expanded the use of reproducible analytical pipeline. This has generated substantial efficiencies in the production process and has increased resilience and removed reliance on unsupported applications.

This new process has already been deployed in the production of the Sea Fisheries Statistics 2025, with benefits being realised from the improved efficiency.

Creating these efficiencies in the production process is the first step to unlocking the longer-term methodology improvements, such as introducing a new methodology for imputing missing prices.

Publication of LEAPFISH – a new official statistics release

A [new statistical release called LEAPFISH](#)⁹ (Landings Enriched Approach for Positional FISHerries data) was published as official statistics in development on 7 October 2026.

LEAPFISH data provides information about the geographical distribution of fishing activity by UK over-12m vessels, combining spatial location data collected from Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) with fisheries landings data. This provides a clearer and more detailed picture of where fishing takes place and what is being caught in those areas. It addresses a key gap in the publicly available fisheries evidence.

This first publication provides data for 2024. Following publication, there is an opportunity for users to provide feedback to shape future editions.

Responsible Statistician: Rebekah Paul

Contributor: Callum Etridge

Statistics and Analysis Team, Marine Management Organisation

Email: statistics@marinemanagement.org.uk

Media enquiries: 0300 123 1032

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/landings-enriched-approach-for-positional-fisheries-data-leapfish>