

Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics 2023 – corrected March 2025

Key Points

Sea fish and shellfish landings in 2023

The unadjusted Scottish fishing industry value in 2023 was eight per cent higher than in 2022. However, when values are adjusted to 2023 prices, the value of the fishing industry increased by only one per cent from 2022. The general rate of inflation used to adjust values to 2023 prices is high and this will impact all monetary values and analysis. A summary of the headline numbers are:

- Scottish vessels landed 501 thousand tonnes of sea fish and shellfish in 2023. An increase of 17 per cent compared to 2022 and an increase of 27 per cent compared to 2019.
- Scottish vessels landed £683 million of sea fish and shellfish in 2023. An increase of 16 per cent in the unadjusted value of landings compared to 2019. However, the value of landings adjusted to 2023 prices fell by two per cent between 2019 and 2023
- Scottish vessels landed 190 thousand tonnes of sea fish and shellfish worth £175 million abroad in 2023. Landings abroad make up 38 per cent of tonnage and 26 per cent by value.

Performance of each sector

The pelagic and demersal sectors increased between 2022 and 2023, whereas the value of the shellfish sector decreased. The changes for each sector were:

- The value of pelagic landings, adjusted to 2023 prices, increased by seven per cent.
- The value of demersal landings, adjusted to 2023 prices, increased by one per cent.
- The value of shellfish landings, adjusted to 2023 prices, decreased by nine per cent.

The 17 per cent increase in tonnage landed by Scottish vessels between 2022 and 2023 results from an increase in landings for all three sectors:

- Demersal landings increased by 21 per cent.
- Pelagic landings increased by 18 per cent.
- Shellfish landings increased by two per cent.

Key species

- Mackerel remained the most valuable species in 2023 worth £248 million, making up 36 per cent of the total value of Scottish vessels' landings.

- Haddock was the most valuable demersal species and represented six per cent of the total value of Scottish vessels' landings.
- In 2023, 1,474 tonnes of creel-drawn Nephrops were landed by Scottish vessels with a value of £17 million. 19 thousand tonnes of trawled Nephrops were landed worth £69 million.

The Scottish fishing fleet

The number of active Scottish vessels was 2,006 in 2023, a decrease of one per cent compared to 2014:

- The Scottish fleet is dominated by vessels that are 10 metres and under in length with a total of 1,530 vessels falling into this category in 2023. There are 476 over 10 metre vessels.
- Compared to 2014, the 10 metre and under fleet has increased by six per cent while the over 10 metre fleet has decreased by 18 per cent.
- The over 40 metre Scottish vessels make up just one per cent of the number of vessels but landed 47 per cent of all landings by value.

Employment on Scottish fishing vessels

- In 2023, 3,793 fishers were working on Scottish vessels, down 326 fishers compared to 2022.
- Since 2014, employment on Scottish vessels has fallen 13 per cent.

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1 Introduction

Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics is an Accredited Official Statistics publication produced by the statistics team within the Scottish Government Marine Directorate to provide detailed information on the Scottish fishing industry. The statistics presented in this publication include the:

- Tonnage and value of all landings of sea fish and shellfish by Scottish vessels.
- All landings by any nationality of vessel into Scotland and the rest of the UK.
- Landings by UK vessels abroad.
- The size and characteristics of Scottish fishing vessels.
- Employment on Scottish vessels.

All landing tonnages are given in terms of live weight equivalent. Overall financial values in the publication text are generally provided adjusted to 2023 prices to account for inflation (real terms). Some financial values have also been provided unadjusted (nominal terms) to illustrate the impact of the high rate of inflation. Most of the financial values in the supplementary tables are provided unadjusted for inflation (nominal terms). Year on year percentage changes in financial values are calculated at 2023 prices to adjust for inflation unless otherwise stated.

This publication and associated supplementary tables were amended in March 2025 to correct the value of landings by Scottish vessels and minor errors to table 31. More information on this correction and its impact on the data is available on the Data and Methodology page.

An Accredited Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

These statistics are [accredited official statistics](#). The Office for Statistics Regulation has independently reviewed and accredited these statistics as complying with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#).

Scottish Government statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. More information about Scottish Government statistics is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

2 Landings by Scottish vessels

In 2023, Scottish vessels landed 501 thousand tonnes of sea fish and shellfish with a gross value of £683 million (Table 8). Compared to 2022 the value of landings adjusted to 2023 prices increased by one per cent and the tonnage landed has increased by 17 per cent. The value adjusted to 2023 prices of pelagic and demersal species increased, whereas the value of shellfish species decreased. There was an increase in landed tonnage for all three sectors.

The number of voyages made by Scottish vessels was similar to 2022 and 19 per cent fewer than in 2019 (Table 27). This has not resulted in a decrease in the total tonnage landed, with 27 per cent more landed than in 2019. The increase in tonnage landed between 2019 and 2023 was in the pelagic sector. Large pelagic boats make a small number of long voyages resulting in large landings by weight and value.

The total value of landings adjusted to 2023 prices fell by two per cent between 2019 and 2023. The increase in the value of fish landings between 2019 and 2023 is lower than the rate of inflation. The unadjusted value of landings increased by 16 per cent between 2019 and 2023 (Table 8).

Shellfish landed by Scottish vessels and included in this publication are crustaceans, molluscs and cephalopods. This includes species such as lobsters and crabs, which are commonly eaten in restaurants. In 2023, the tonnage of shellfish landed increased by two per cent compared to 2022. However, the value adjusted to 2023 prices decreased by nine per cent between 2022 and 2023.

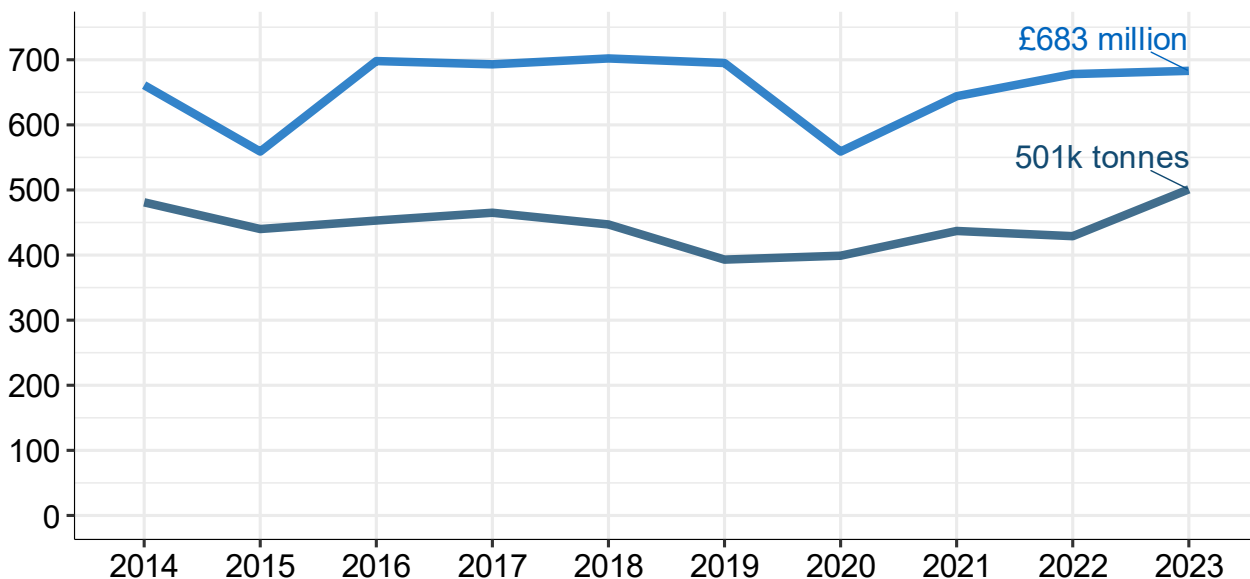
Demersal fish are those which live close to the seabed such as cod, haddock and monkfish. Increased quota allocation for species such as cod has resulted in a 21 per cent increase in demersal fish tonnage landed compared to 2022. However, the value adjusted to 2023 prices of the demersal sector increased by just one per cent between 2022 and 2023.

The pelagic sector are species found mainly in shoals in midwater or near the surface of the sea such as herring and mackerel. This sector is seasonal and generally operates with larger vessels. Annual changes in quota allocation for pelagic species have a big impact on the tonnage and value landed. In 2023, the tonnage of pelagic fish landed increased by 18 per cent compared to 2022. The value adjusted to 2023 prices increased by seven per cent between 2022 and 2023.

Scotland's commercial fishing industry comprises a significant proportion of the United Kingdom's fishing industry. Landings by Scottish vessels accounted for 63 per cent of the value and 70 per cent of the tonnage of all landings by UK vessels in 2023 (Table 25a).

Chart 1. The real value of the fish landed by Scottish vessels has decreased from a high of £702 million in 2018, to a low of £559 million in 2020 due to the impacts of Covid-19. The value has since increased to £683 million in 2023.

Total tonnage and value (adjusted to 2023 prices) of all landings by Scottish vessels, 2014 to 2023.



Data source: Table 3.

As can be seen in Chart 1, the long-term trend for the tonnage of the fish landed by Scottish vessels has been generally stable, at around 450 thousand tonnes, since 2015.

2.1 Key species landed

There was a one per cent change in the real terms value (values for previous years adjusted to 2023 prices) of landings by Scottish vessels between 2022 and 2023. The increase in value of pelagic and demersal species was balanced by a decrease in the value of shellfish species. The value adjusted to 2023 prices of pelagic landings increased by seven per cent, demersal landings increased by one per cent and shellfish landings decreased by nine per cent.

The tonnage landed by Scottish vessels increased by 17 per cent between 2022 and 2023. Demersal landings increased by 21 per cent by tonnage, pelagic landings increased by 18 per cent and shellfish landings increased by two per cent.

Table 1. The value adjusted to 2023 prices of cod landings increased by 27 per cent and tonnage increased by 54 per cent between 2022 and 2023. The value adjusted to 2023 prices of Nephrops landings decreased by ten per cent but tonnage increased by six per cent between 2022 and 2023.

Change in total tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels between 2022 and 2023.^{1,2,3}

¹ Values are based on 2023 prices and percentage changes reflect real changes after adjusting for inflation. The deflator applied can be found here: [GDP deflators at market prices, and money GDP June 2024 \(Quarterly National Accounts\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-june-2024)

² Percentages are based on unrounded data and may differ from calculations using rounded data in tables.

³ Values may not sum to their respective totals due to rounding.

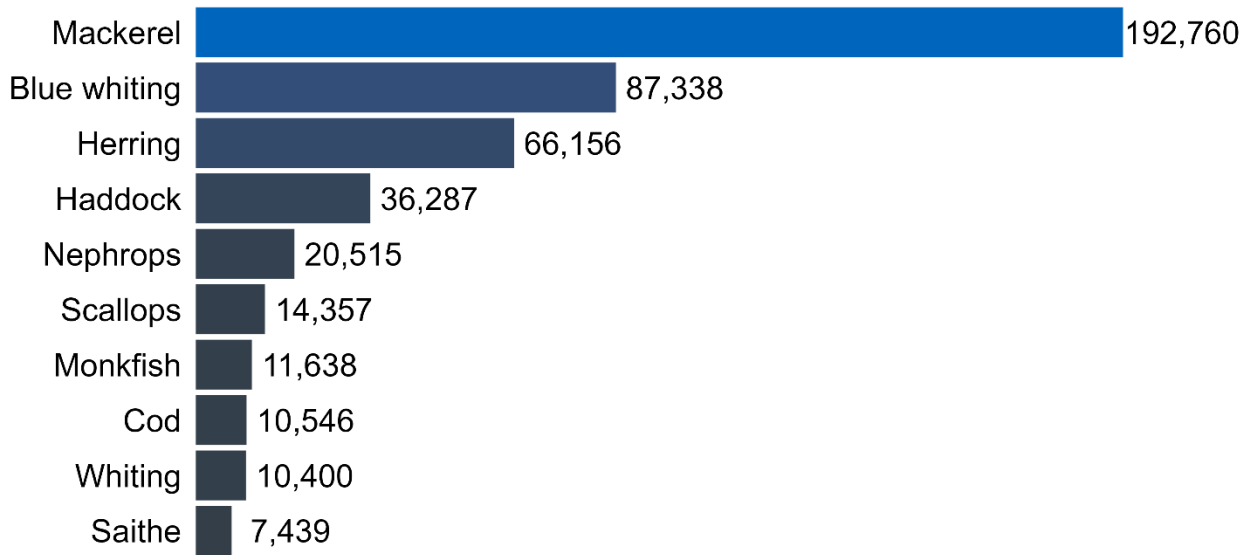
Species	Tonnage 2023	Tonnage change from 2022 (percent)	Value (thousands of pounds) 2023	Value change from 2022 (percent)
Haddock	36,287	35	38,519	5
Monkfish	11,638	-3	36,453	-6
Cod	10,546	54	35,161	27
Whiting	10,400	17	10,566	-18
Other demersal	31,287	11	64,310	-5
Total demersal	100,156	21	185,009	1
Mackerel	192,760	11	248,265	9
Herring	66,156	-9	45,137	-16
Other pelagic	87,835	87	21,949	96
Total pelagic	346,750	18	315,351	7
Nephrops	20,515	6	85,415	-10
Scallops	14,357	-14	32,056	-19
Edible crabs	6,904	-10	18,615	-18
Lobsters	1,361	16	20,551	13
Other shellfish	10,833	32	26,159	2
Total shellfish	53,969	2	182,795	-9
Total	500,875	17	683,155	1

Mackerel remained the most valuable species with £248 million landed, accounting for 36 per cent of the total value of Scottish landings. The increase in mackerel tonnage in 2023 is in line with an increase in available quota. Quota is the share of the fish catch allowed to vessels. Scottish vessels' landings accounted for just over four fifths (83 per cent) of UK mackerel landings by tonnage and 85 per cent by value.

Scottish vessels commonly catch a wide variety of demersal species, including more than a dozen species with landings that are worth over £2 million annually (Table 8). Haddock was the most valuable demersal species and represented six per cent of the total value of Scottish vessels' landings and 21 per cent of the value of demersal landings in 2023.

Chart 2. Mackerel is the most common fish species landed by Scottish vessels by weight. 193 thousand tonnes of mackerel were landed in 2023, more than double the next most common species by weight, Blue whiting.

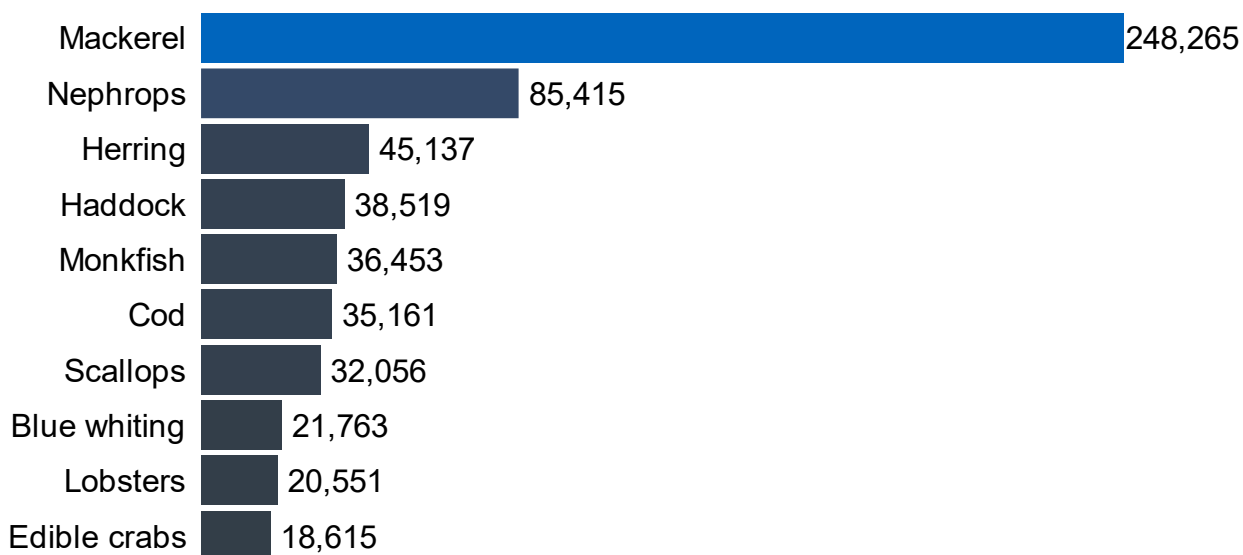
Scottish vessel's most commonly landed fish species by tonnes landed in the UK and abroad, 2023.



Data source: Table 8.

Chart 3. Mackerel is the most common fish species landed by Scottish vessels by value. £248 million of mackerel were landed in 2023, triple the next most common species by value, Nephrops.

Scottish vessel's highest value landed fish species by thousands of pounds landed in the UK and abroad, 2023.



Data Source: Table 8.

Nephrops are the most valuable shellfish stock and the only shellfish species currently subject to quota. Scottish vessels fish for Nephrops by creeling and by trawling. Creeled Nephrops are often caught and exported live. Creeled Nephrops represent a smaller tonnage of landings, but attract an average price per tonne three times that of trawled Nephrops. Some trawled Nephrops are sold whole but the majority are sold as tails for turning into scampi. In 2023, 1,474 tonnes of creeled Nephrops were landed by Scottish vessels with a value of £17million⁴. 19 thousand tonnes of trawled Nephrops were landed worth £69 million. These data are presented in Table 30c.

2.2 Long term sector trends

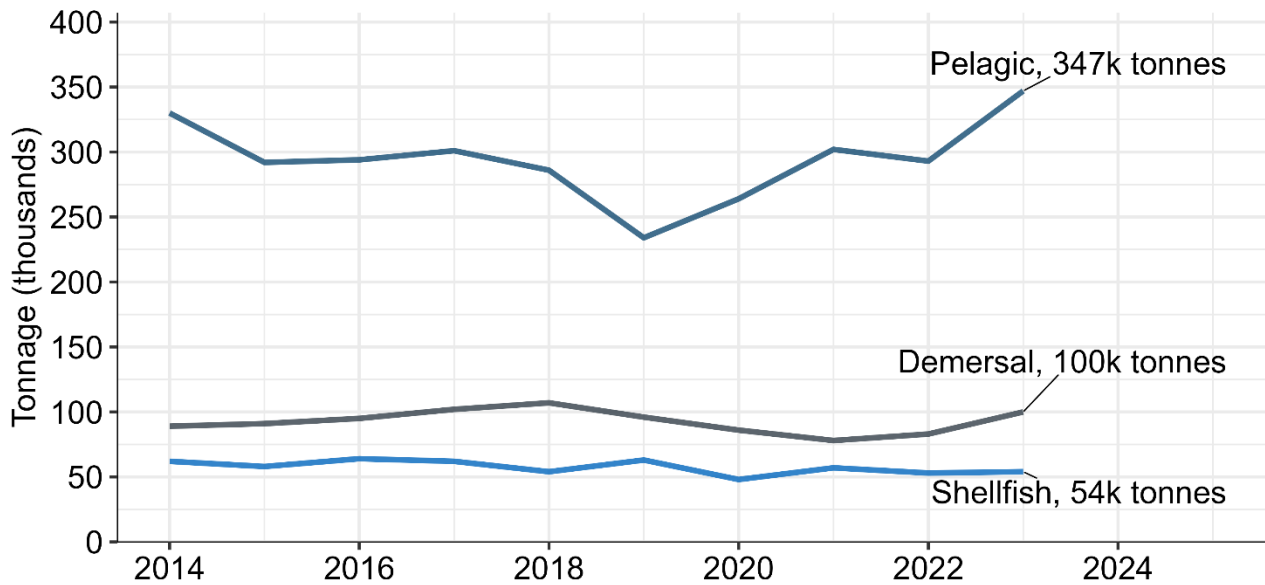
Over the past 10 years, 2014 to 2023, the tonnage of pelagic landings has increased by five per cent with real terms value (value adjusted to 2023 prices) increasing by 11 per cent. Pelagic landing tonnage is largely driven by the available quota (Tables 36a to 36d).

Compared to 2014, the tonnage of demersal landings increased by 13 per cent with the value adjusted to 2023 prices increasing by one per cent. Demersal landing tonnage is affected by available quotas, affecting some species, such as cod, more than others (Tables 36a to 36d). Over the period 2014 to 2023, the tonnage of shellfish landings fell by 12 per cent with the value adjusted to 2023 prices decreasing by six per cent.

⁴ The values in Table 30c. Scottish vessels' landings by gear type are slightly lower than Table 8, because some Nephrops are also caught by demersal gear types. Other species may also be affected by this.

Chart 4. Landings of pelagic species by Scottish vessels decreased gradually from 330 thousand tonnes in 2014 to 234 thousand tonnes in 2019 before increasing to 347 thousand tonnes in 2023.

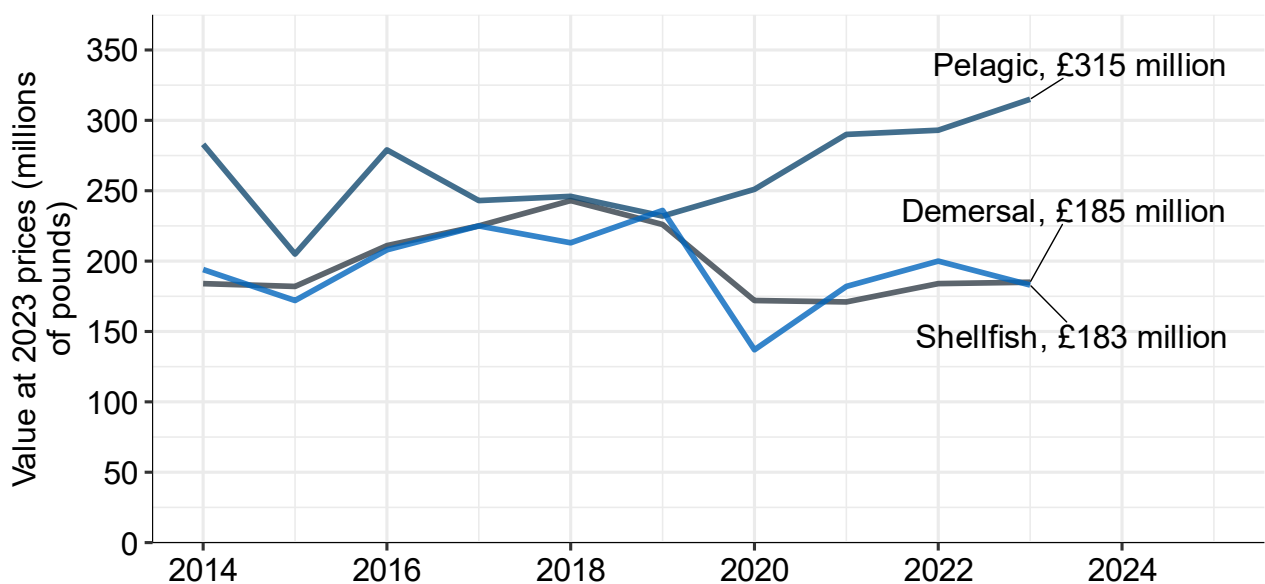
Tonnage of landings by Scottish vessels by species type, 2014 to 2023.



Data source: Table 3.

Chart 5. The value adjusted to 2023 prices of shellfish species landed by Scottish vessels increased from £194 million in 2014 to £236 million in 2019. The landed shellfish value adjusted to 2023 prices then plummeted to £137 million in 2020 before increasing to £183 million in 2023.

Value (adjusted to 2023 prices) of landings by Scottish vessels by species type, 2014 to 2023



Data source: Table 3.

2.3 Fish prices

Scottish vessels land a vast range of different species throughout the year and they all achieve different prices at auction. The price achieved will vary by species, individual market, supply, demand, seasonality and the condition of the fish. Table 2 shows the average price per tonne for a selection of species landed by Scottish vessels.

Mackerel is the highest value species for Scottish vessels yet has a much lower price per tonne than many other species. It is the vast tonnage of mackerel caught that leads to the value being so high.

Lobsters have a high price per tonne yet a fairly low value compared to other main species. This is due to seasonality, lobster is not in season during several months of the year resulting in a lower tonnage landed throughout the year compared to other species. They are also considered a luxury food and tend to be purchased mainly by the hospitality sector.

Table 2. There is great variation in the prices achieved across the different species. Lobsters have a high price, at £15,103 per tonne in 2023, whereas blue whiting has a low price, at £249 per tonne in 2023.

Change in price per tonne of selected species landed by Scottish vessels between 2022 and 2023^{5 6}

Species	Price per tonne 2023 (pounds)	Price per tonne 2022 at 2023 prices (pounds)	Price per tonne change from 2022 (percent)
Mackerel	1,288	1,317	-2
Nephrops	4,164	4,905	-15
Herring	682	738	-8
Haddock	1,062	1,358	-22
Monkfish	3,132	3,244	-3
Cod	3,334	4,029	-17
Scallops	2,233	2,358	-5
Blue whiting	249	227	10
Lobsters	15,103	15,424	-2
Edible crabs	2,696	2,944	-8

⁵ Values are based on 2023 prices and percentage changes reflect real changes after adjusting for inflation. The deflator applied can be found here: [GDP deflators at market prices, and money GDP June 2024 \(Quarterly National Accounts\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁶ Percentages are based on unrounded data and may differ from calculations using rounded data in tables.

2.4 Total Allowable Catches quota and uptake

Total Allowable Catches (TAC) are limits set at annual international negotiations for individual fish stocks and represent the maximum of each fish stock that can be caught. Up until 2020, while the UK was still a member of the European Union (EU) the majority of stocks were managed and fished only by EU member states. Member States' access to management and fishing of stocks were based on a number of factors, including historic track record. The TACs for these stocks were set by the European Commission through internal negotiations between EU member states with an interest and based on independent scientific advice from ICES.

The remaining stocks were managed and shared with other Coastal States: Norway, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Russia, with TACs for these set at separate negotiations. The amounts corresponding to this share, known as quotas, are shown at the UK and at the Scottish Producers Organisations' (POs) level in tables 36a to 36d. Some Scottish vessels are not within Scottish Producer Organisations and Scottish Producer Organisations can contain some UK but non-Scottish vessels. This means that the totals in table 37, which relate to Scottish vessels may not agree with the totals from tables 36a to 36d, which relate to Scottish Producer Organisations.

Uptake of key commercial quota stocks by all Scottish vessels by tonnage and value landed are presented in table 37.

In general, Scottish POs had high quota uptake in 2023 for key demersal and pelagic species. Uptake of mackerel stocks in the North Sea was 95 per cent and uptake of mackerel stocks in the West of Scotland exceeded quota⁷.

For demersal stocks, uptake in the North Sea was generally high with cod quota uptake at 99 per cent and monkfish at 98 per cent. West of Scotland cod has a nil quota and is managed as a bycatch.

The only shellfish species subject to quota is Nephrops. In 2023, Scottish PO quota uptake for North Sea Nephrops was 57 per cent and for West Coast Nephrops it was 73 per cent. This is 23 percentage points down compared to 2022 for the North Sea and six percentage points up for the West Coast.

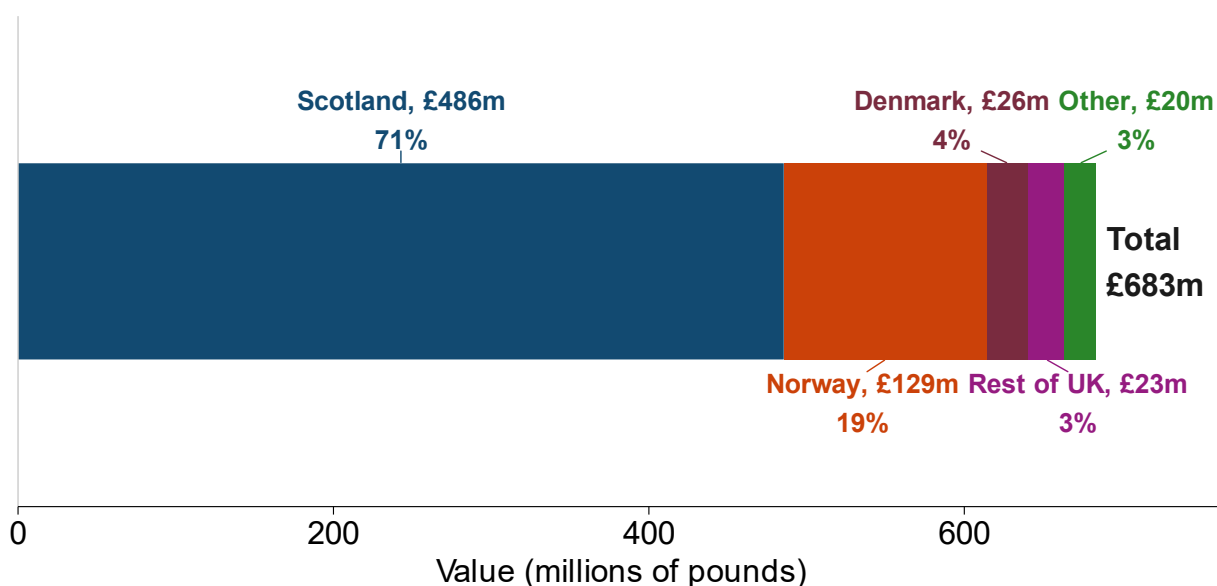
⁷ Landings can exceed quota if POs or vessels 'carry over' some quota from a previous year into the next year, within agreed limits. There is also an allowance so that a country can exceed up to ten per cent of its quota on a particular stock and the excess is deducted from the following year's quota allocation.

2.5 Where Scottish vessels land their fish

Scottish vessels land their catches into Scotland, the rest of the UK and several countries abroad. In 2023, Scottish vessels landed 190 thousand tonnes of sea fish and shellfish worth £175 million abroad.

Chart 6. Scottish vessels landed 71 per cent of their catch by value, worth £486 million in 2023, into Scotland. A further 19 per cent by value, worth £129 million in 2023, was landed into Norway.

Top countries Scottish vessels landed their catch into by value (millions of pounds), in 2023.



Data source: Table 4, Table 5, Table 8, Table 28.

Landings abroad accounted for 38 per cent of all landings by Scottish vessels by tonnage and 26 per cent by value. Of this, 95 per cent of the tonnage landed abroad was pelagic.

The main species landed abroad was mackerel, representing 71 per cent of the total value of fish landed abroad in 2023. There were 92 thousand tonnes of mackerel worth £123 million landed abroad, which is 48 per cent of the total tonnage and 50 per cent of the value of mackerel landed by Scottish vessels.

Norway is by far the largest destination for Scottish vessels' landings abroad, accounting for 19 per cent by value of all Scottish vessels' landings and 74 per cent by value of all landings abroad by Scottish vessels. In 2023, 83 per cent of the value of landings into Norway was for mackerel, amounting to 81 thousand tonnes with a value of £108 million.

2.6 Area of capture

Scottish vessels are most active in two main ICES areas⁸ : the Northern North Sea (ICES Area IVa) and the West Coast of Scotland (ICES Area VIa).

In 2023, 275 thousand tonnes of sea fish and shellfish with a value of £399 million were landed from the Northern North Sea (IVa), representing 55 per cent of the tonnage and 58 per cent of the value of all landings by Scottish vessels (Table 31). 29 per cent of landings by Scottish vessels, by tonnage were caught in the West Coast of Scotland (VIa), providing 27 per cent of the total value of all Scottish landings. Area VII accounted for nine per cent of the tonnage of all landings and five per cent of value.

3 Landings into Scotland

In 2023, 332 thousand tonnes of sea fish and shellfish with a value of £535 million were landed into Scotland. This represents a 14 per cent increase in tonnage and a one per cent increase in real terms value (adjusted to 2023 prices) from 2022.

Pelagic species accounted for 52 per cent of the tonnage landed into Scotland in 2023, whilst demersal species made up 35 per cent and shellfish species 14 per cent. By value in 2023, 39 per cent of landings into Scotland were demersal species, 30 per cent were pelagic species and 30 per cent were shellfish. The differences in shares by tonnage and value reflect the differences in average prices per tonne (for landings by Scottish vessels) across the species types: shellfish sell at relatively higher average prices per tonne, whilst pelagic species receive the lowest average prices per tonne (Table 26).

Figures 2 and 3 show landings by all vessels into the eighteen Scottish port districts. The top three districts in Scotland by total tonnage landed were Peterhead (east coast), Shetland (northern island) and Scrabster (north-east coast). Peterhead is the single largest fishing port in the UK by tonnage and value of landing. Information on landings into all the Scottish districts can be found in table 32.

⁸ ICES is the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea.

Figure 2. Peterhead on the east coast of Scotland had the largest tonnage of landings, at 181 thousand tonnes in 2023.

Tonnage landed into Scotland by all vessels by district in 2023

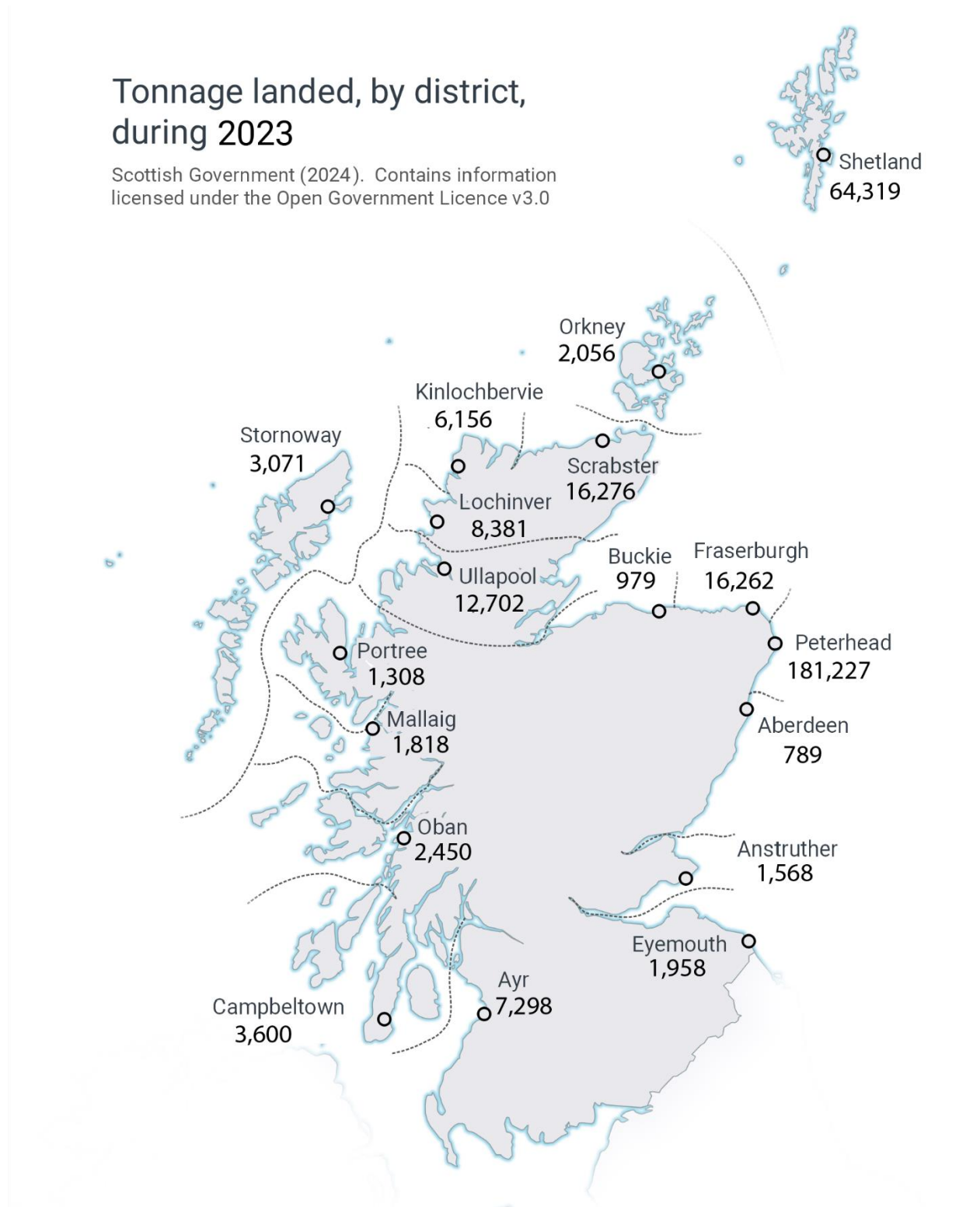
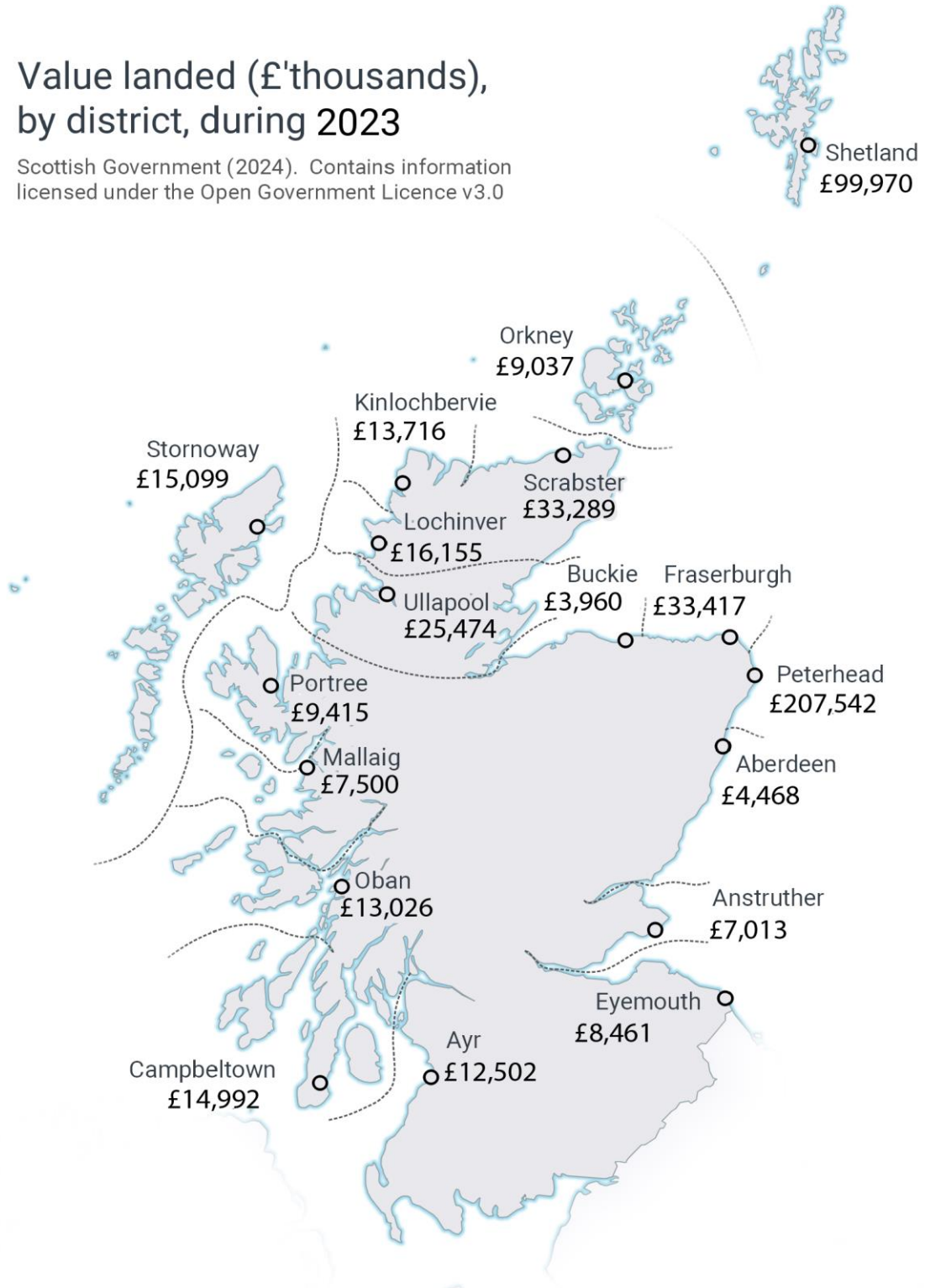


Figure 3. Peterhead on the east coast of Scotland had the largest value of landings, at £208 million in 2023.

Value (thousands of pounds) landed into Scotland by all vessels by district in 2023.

Value landed (£'thousands), by district, during 2023

Scottish Government (2024). Contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0



4 The Scottish fishing fleet

UK fishing vessels are required by law to be registered with the Registry of Shipping and Seamen (RSS), part of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Fishing vessels must also have a licence that specifies conditions that must be adhered to. For the purpose of this publication, active vessels are those that are both registered and licensed as at 31st December of that year. Scottish-based vessels are those registered to a port in Scotland licensed and administered by a Scottish district. Each district contains a Marine Scotland Fishery Office which is responsible for administering the vessels and licences within that area. UK fishing vessel licences authorise the sea areas in which a vessel can fish and the species of fish that can be caught.

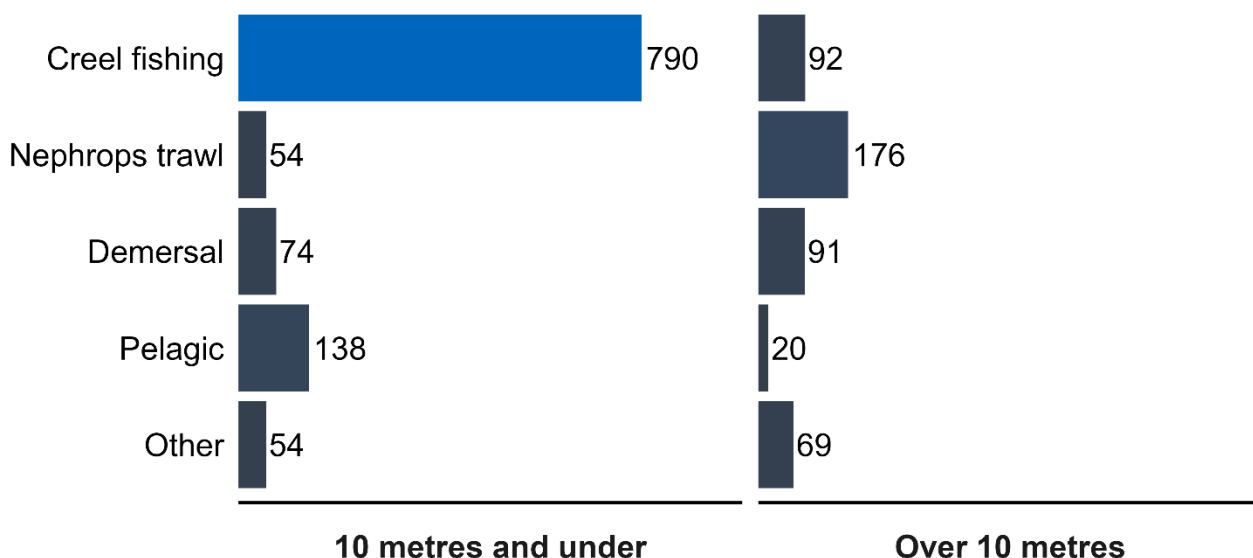
The capacity of fishing vessels in terms of gross registered tonnage and kilowatt engine power is also controlled through licences. With a finite amount of licence capacity in existence and no plans to make new capacity available, this restricts the total number and capacity of vessels in the UK fishing fleet. In order to licence new vessels, fishers must acquire existing licences from other previously licensed vessels. They also have the option of aggregating or disaggregating licence components to fit the requirements of the vessel in question.

4.1 The size of the Scottish fleet

The number of active Scottish based vessels has decreased to 2,006 vessels in 2023, a reduction of 32 vessels since 2022. The Scottish fleet is dominated by vessels that are 10 metres and under in length with a total of 1,530 vessels falling into this category in 2023, accounting for 76 per cent of the Scottish fleet. There are 476 over 10 metre vessels.

Chart 7. Creel fishing was the main fishing method for most, 790 of the 10 metre and under vessels.

Number of active Scottish vessels by main fishing method and length, 2023.



Data source: Table 43.

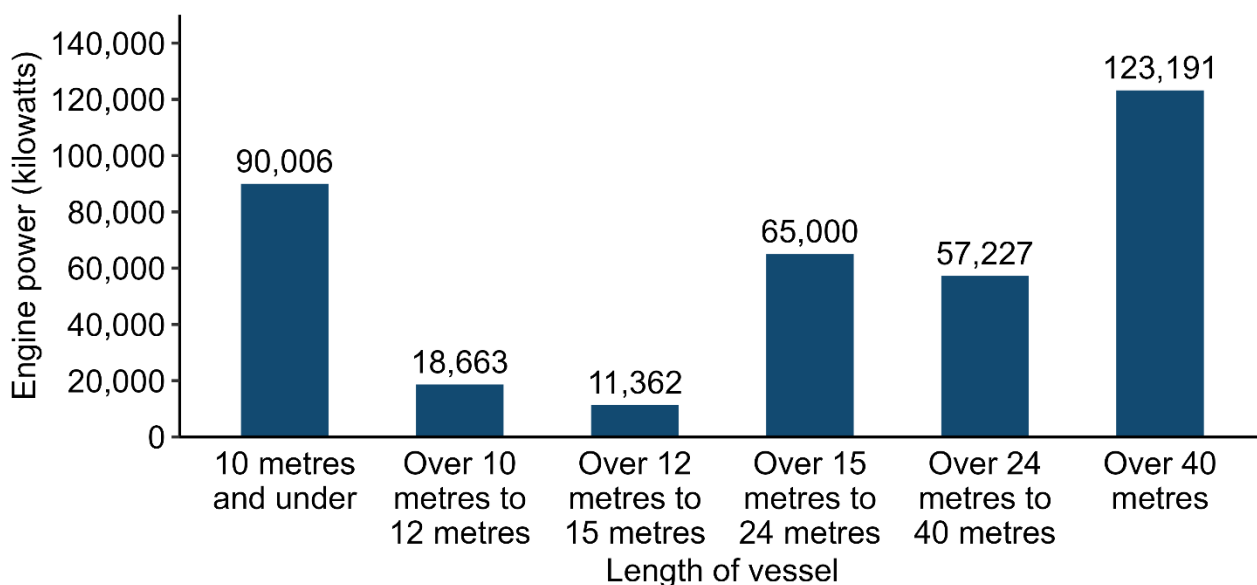
Chart 7 excludes active Scottish vessels that did not land any fish in 2023, these are recorded as non fishing in the tables. In 2023, there were 448 non fishing vessels, 420 were 10 metres and under vessels.

The 10 metre and under fleet mostly fish using creels (sometimes called pots), which are traps in the form of cages or baskets, typically baited and used to catch shellfish. Creels catch some shellfish species such as crabs, lobsters and Nephrops, but other species like scallops are predominantly caught through dredging. Nephrops are also caught through trawling. In 2023, 52 per cent of the 1,530 10 metre and under vessels were fishing mainly using creels.

Of the 476 over 10 metre vessels, 71 per cent (337 vessels) mainly targeted shellfish, whilst 91 vessels (19 per cent) mainly targeted demersal species. Only 20 vessels mainly targeted pelagic species, with all 20 being trawlers. Creel fishing vessels and Nephrops trawlers form the majority of the over 10 metre shellfish group, whilst trawlers dominate the demersal group (Table 41). Compared to 2014, the 10 metre and under fleet has increased by 92 vessels (six per cent) while the over 10 metre fleet has decreased by 107 vessels (18 per cent).

Chart 8. The two vessel length categories with the largest total engine power in 2023 were the 10 metres and under vessels and the over 40 metre vessels.

Engine power (kilowatts) of Scottish vessels by length category, 2023.



Data source: Table 39c.

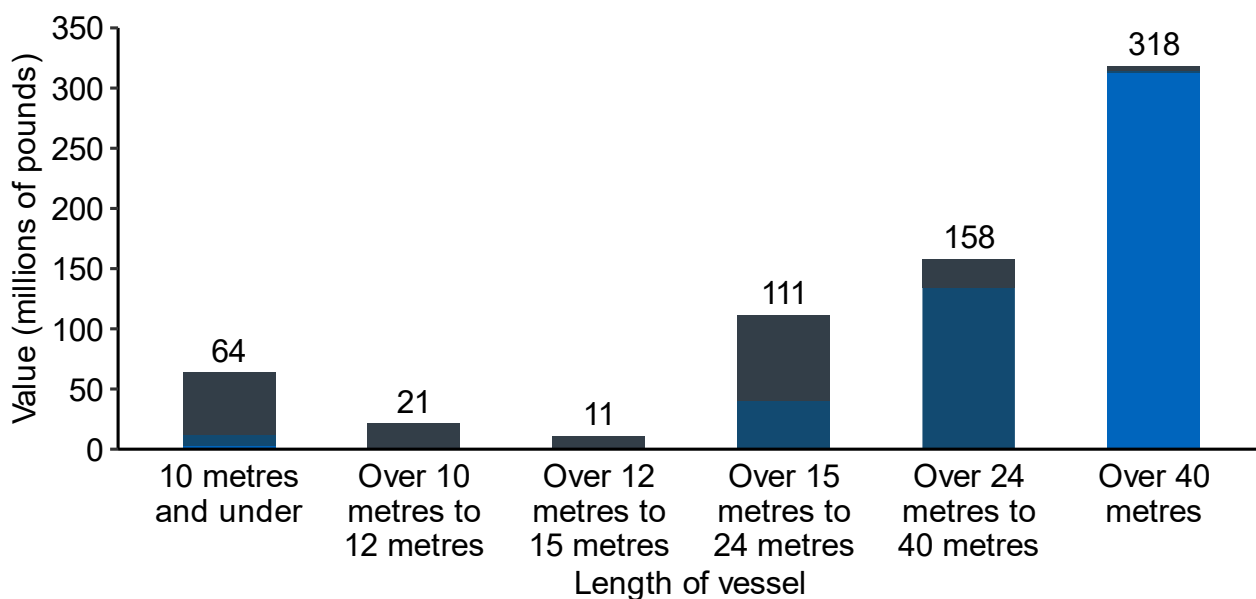
The total engine power of the Scottish fleet has remained broadly consistent at 365 thousand kW. The average power for the over 10 metre fleet as a whole was 579 kW per vessel compared to 59 kW per vessel for the 10 metres and under vessels.

4.2 The performance of the Scottish fishing fleet

In 2023, Scottish fishing vessels landed 501 thousand tonnes of sea fish and shellfish with a gross value of £683 million. Chart 9 shows the total value achieved by each length category as well as the split between demersal, pelagic and shellfish species landed.

Chart 9. The over 40 metre vessel length category had the highest value of landings. These vessels landed in total £318 million in 2023 with 99 per cent being pelagic species.

Value of fish and shellfish landed by Scottish vessels by length category, 2023.



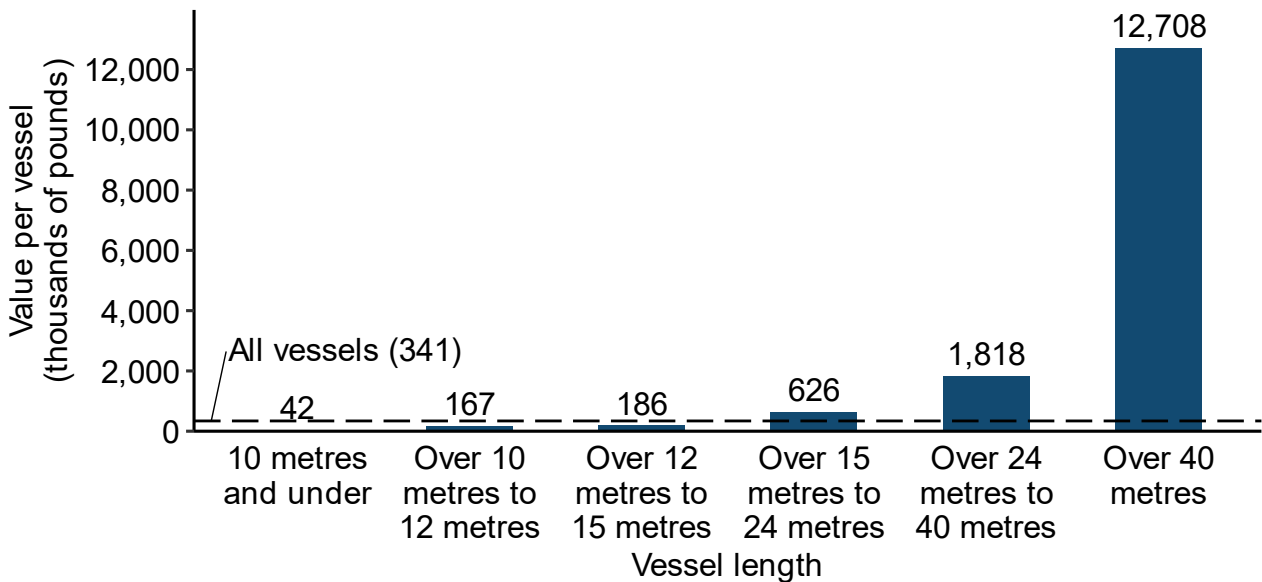
Data source: Table 29.

The over 40 metre vessels are the large pelagic vessels which land the majority of the mackerel, Scotland's most valuable species. The over 15 metre to 40 metre vessels catch a mix of different species whilst the 10 metre and under vessels mostly land shellfish. In 2023, the 10 metre and under Scottish vessels landed £64 million worth of fish and shellfish with 82 per cent being shellfish.

The 10 metres and under vessels landed below average, landing an average of just £42 thousand per vessel despite being the 4th most valuable length category. This is due to the fleet being made up of a large number of vessels which are restricted in the amount they can catch due to their size.

Chart 10. The over 40 metre Scottish vessels landed the highest value of fish and shellfish per vessel, landing an average of £13 million per vessel in 2023. This is well above the average of all vessels which was £341 thousand per vessel.

Average value landed per Scottish vessel (in thousands of pounds) by length category, 2023



Data source: Tables 29 and 38a.

5 Employment

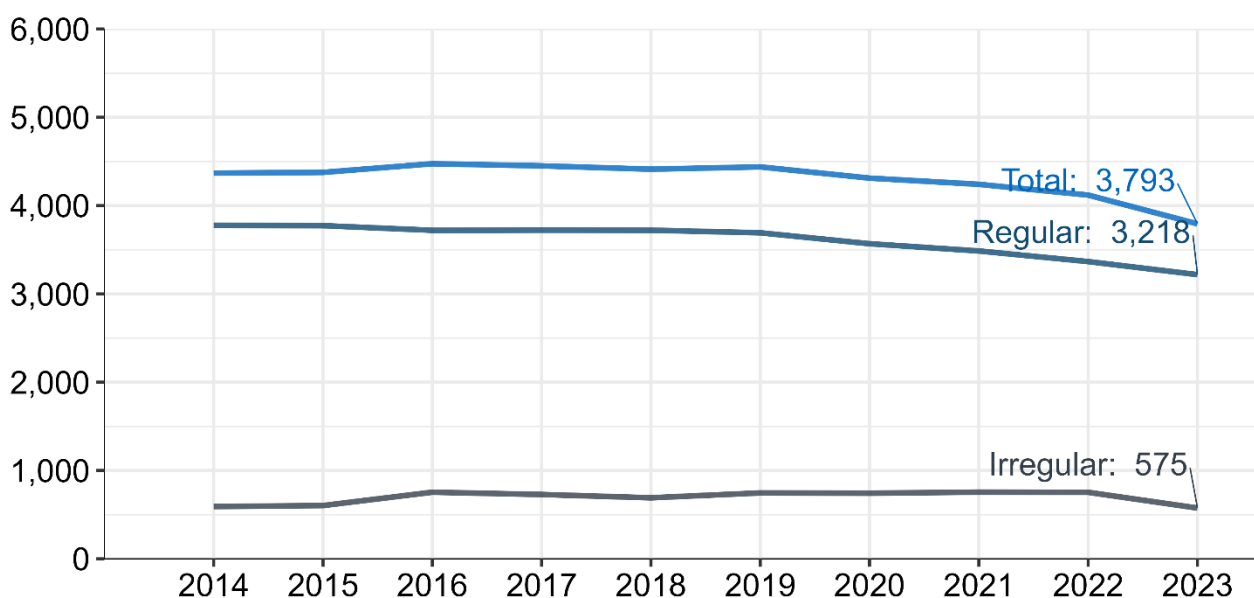
In 2023, 3,793 fishers were working on Scottish vessels, representing 0.1 per cent of the total Scottish labour force⁹. The number of fishers working on Scottish vessels fell by eight per cent (down 326 fishers) between 2022 and 2023 (Table 44 and Chart 11).

Although employment in the fishing fleet is a small percentage of total employment in Scotland, employment in fishing accounts for a higher percentage of employment in island communities (Shetland three per cent, Orkney one per cent, Na h-Eileanan Siar two per cent) and in Argyll and Bute (one per cent) (Table 46).

Fraserburgh is the district with the largest number of fishers (705) accounting for 19 per cent of the total in 2023. It is also the district with the largest number of fishers who work regularly, with 623 regularly employed fishers. Shetland had the most irregular fishers (92), accounting for 16 per cent of the total fishers in this category.

Chart 11. Since 2014, employment on Scottish fishing vessels has fallen by 13 per cent. There was a 15 per cent decrease in regular employment and a three per cent decrease in irregular employment since 2014.

Number of fishers working on Scottish vessels, 2014 to 2023.



Data source: Table 44.

⁹ Figures for the Scottish labour force come from the Annual Population Survey 2023 by ONS.

Supplementary Tables

The following supplementary tables are available alongside this publication in Excel format. These can be downloaded here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-sea-fisheries-statistics-2023/documents/>

- Table 1: Change in total tonnage and value in real terms of landings by Scottish vessels between 2022 and 2023.
- Table 2: Change in price per tonne in real terms of selected species landed by Scottish vessels between 2022 and 2023.
- Table 3: Landings by Scottish vessels in real terms by species type 2014 to 2023.

- Table 4: Tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels into Scotland by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 5: Tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels into the rest of the UK by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 6: Tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels into all of the UK by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 7: Tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels abroad by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 8: Tonnage and value of all landings by Scottish vessels anywhere by main species 2019 to 2023.

- Table 9: Tonnage and value of landings by rest of the UK vessels into Scotland by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 10: Tonnage and value of landings by rest of the UK vessels into the rest of the UK by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 11: Tonnage and value of landings by rest of the UK vessels into all of the UK by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 12: Tonnage and value of landings by rest of the UK vessels abroad by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 13: Tonnage and value of landings by rest of the UK vessels anywhere by main species 2019 to 2023.

- Table 14: Tonnage and value of landings by all UK vessels into Scotland by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 15: Tonnage and value of landings by all UK vessels into the rest of the UK by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 16: Tonnage and value of landings by all UK vessels into all of the UK by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 17: Tonnage and value of landings by all UK vessels abroad by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 18: Tonnage and value of landings by all UK vessels anywhere by main species 2019 to 2023.

- Table 19: Tonnage and value of landings by foreign vessels into Scotland by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 20: Tonnage and value of landings by foreign vessels into the rest of the UK by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 21: Tonnage and value of landings by foreign vessels into all of the UK by main species 2019 to 2023.

- Table 22: Tonnage and value of landings by all vessels into Scotland by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 23: Tonnage and value of landings by all vessels into the rest of the UK by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 24: Tonnage and value of landings by all vessels into all of the UK by main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 25a: Landings by Scottish vessels anywhere as a percentage of landings by all UK vessels, by species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 25b: Landings by Scottish vessels into Scotland as a percentage of landings by all Scottish vessels, by species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 25c: Landings by Scottish vessels into the rest of the UK as a percentage of all landings by Scottish vessels, by species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 25d: Landings by Scottish vessels into the whole of the UK as a percentage of all landings by Scottish vessels, by species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 25e: Landings by Scottish vessels abroad as a percentage of all landings by Scottish vessels, by species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 25f: Landings by all vessels into Scotland as a percentage of all landings into the UK, by species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 25g: Landings into Scotland by Scottish vessels as a percentage of all landings into Scotland, by species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 25h: Landings into Scotland by rest of UK vessels as a percentage of all landings into Scotland, by species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 25i: Landings into Scotland by all UK vessels as a percentage of all landings into Scotland, by species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 25j: Landings into Scotland by foreign vessels as a percentage of all landings into Scotland, by species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 26: Value and price per tonne in real terms of the main species landed by Scottish vessels 2019 to 2023.
- Table 27: Number of voyages and tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels by landing district 2019 to 2023.
- Table 28: Tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels abroad by country of landing and species type 2019 to 2023.
- Table 29: Tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels by main species and vessel length group 2023.
- Table 30a: Tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels anywhere by Demersal gear type by main species 2023.
- Table 30b: Tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels anywhere by Pelagic gear type by main species 2023.
- Table 30c: Tonnage and value of landings by Scottish vessels anywhere by Shellfish gear type by main species 2023.
- Table 31: Tonnage and value of all landings by Scottish vessels by ICES area and main species 2023.
- Table 32: Tonnage and value of all landings into Scotland by district and main species 2019 to 2023.
- Table 33: Tonnage and value of all landings into Scottish local authorities 2019 to 2023.
- Table 34: Tonnage and value of all landings into Scotland by main species 2019 to 2023.

- Table 35: Tonnage and value of landings into Scotland by foreign vessels by species type by nationality 2019 to 2023.
- Table 36a: Total allowable catches, UK and Scottish quota and uptake for the North Sea 2019 to 2023.
- Table 36b: Total allowable catches, UK and Scottish quota and uptake for the West of Scotland 2019 to 2023.
- Table 36c: Total allowable catches, UK and Scottish quota and uptake for Area VII 2019 to 2023.
- Table 36d: Total allowable catches, UK and Scottish quota and uptake for Other areas 2019 to 2023.
- Table 37: Tonnage and value of landings of key commercial stocks by Scottish vessels 2019 to 2023.
- Table 38a: Number of active Scottish registered vessels by length group as at 31st December 2014 to 2023.
- Table 38b: Tonnage of active Scottish registered vessels by length group as at 31st December 2014 to 2023.
- Table 38c: Engine power (kilowatts) of active Scottish registered vessels by length group as at 31st December 2014 to 2023.
- Table 39a: Number of active Scottish registered vessels by length group and age group as at 31st December 2023.
- Table 39b: Tonnage of active Scottish registered vessels by length group and age group as at 31st December 2023.
- Table 39c: Engine power of active Scottish registered vessels by length group and age group as at 31st December 2023.
- Table 40: Number of active Scottish registered vessels by district and length group as at 31st December 2023.
- Table 41: Number of active Scottish registered vessels by main fishing method as at 31st December 2019 to 2023.
- Table 42: Number of active Scottish registered vessels by district and main fishing method as at 31st December 2023.
- Table 43: Number of active Scottish registered vessels by main fishing method and length group as at 31st December 2023.
- Table 44: Number of fishers employed on Scottish registered vessels 2014 to 2023.
- Table 45: Number of fishers employed on Scottish registered vessels by district 2023.
- Table 46: Number of fishers employed on Scottish registered vessels by local authority 2023.

Data and Methodology

In March 2025, corrections were made to all tables which include landings by Scottish vessels. The value of landings by Scottish vessels in the last five years have been corrected to impute landed values for Scottish vessels with missing sales information. The average price of landings into Scotland by species and year was used to impute these missing values. The tonnage landed by Scottish vessels was unchanged.

The total value landed by Scottish vessels anywhere (Table 8) in 2022 and 2023 increased by five per cent (between the original December publication numbers and the corrected March numbers). The overall increase in the total value landed by Scottish vessels anywhere pre 2022 was lower, at around two to three per cent. Total demersal and shellfish landings by Scottish vessels anywhere in 2023 increased by nine per cent. However, the value of pelagic species increased by less than 0.5 per cent.

Landings by Scottish vessels abroad (Table 7 and Table 28) were impacted the most by this correction. The value of landings abroad in 2023 increased by seven per cent between the original and corrected publication numbers. The impact on the value of individual species varied considerably, however demersal and shellfish species that are frequently landed abroad have the largest changes. The value of Plaice landed by Scottish vessels abroad in 2023, increased by £2.5 million following the correction.

In addition, a minor correction was made to table 31 to fix a coding error. This resulted in small changes to tonnages in some ICES areas.

All tables presented here and in previous publications are available for download from the Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics publications section of the Scottish Government website¹⁰.

Spatial information on fish and shellfish caught by Scottish vessels is available on [Marine Scotland interactive maps](#) and [Marine Scotland Data Publications](#). Links to map layers and data are available from the [fishing activity data and statistics page](#). This also includes [experimental gridded data from Scottish under-12 metre vessels](#) based on daily latitude and longitude positions provided by fishers.

Additional landings which were previously excluded, due to missing or incorrect information on the source database, have been included in this publication. On 8 October 2024, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) published [unscheduled corrections](#) to the UK Sea Fisheries Statistics from 2018 to 2022. The corrections made by MMO, to the rest of the UK data, have been included in this publication. Landings into Scotland and landings by Scottish vessels were unaffected by this correction as we had already incorporated manual corrections.

More information about the data and methodology used to produce the Scottish sea fisheries statistics publication is provided in a stand-alone technical manual. This also includes a glossary of terms. The technical manual can be found here: [Scottish sea fisheries statistics: technical manual - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#).

¹⁰ Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics Publications: [Sea fisheries statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

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