

Overview of the NI Sea Fishing Sector - 2015

1. In 2015, vessels registered in Northern Ireland landed 47,700 tonnes of fish worth approximately £45.8 million into ports in the UK and abroad representing around 5.9% of the total value landed by UK vessels. Shellfish (e.g. nephrops, scallops, lobsters) accounted for 59% of the value of fish landed by NI vessels, pelagic (e.g. herring, mackerel) landings were 35% and demersal (e.g. haddock, cod) landings 6%.
2. In December 2015, there were 329 vessels licensed by Northern Ireland (41 based at Ardglass, 95 at Kilkeel, 47 at Portavogie and 146 elsewhere).

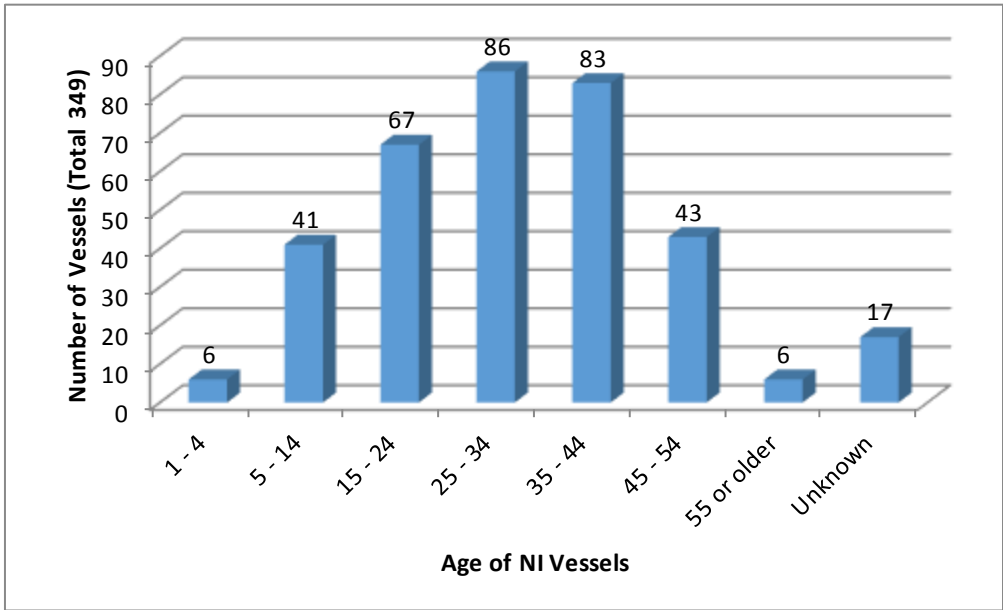
These figures represent a decrease in vessels from 2011 when there were 356 Northern Ireland licensed fishing vessels.

Distribution of licensed fishing vessels, by size, across Northern Ireland

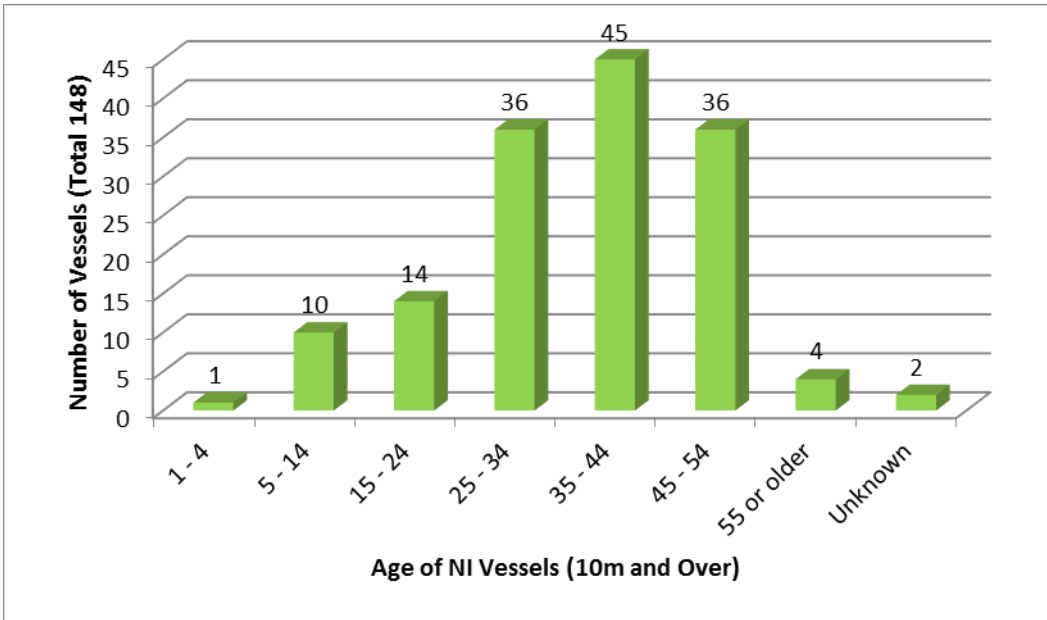
	10m and under		Over 10m		Total	
	Dec 2011	Dec 2015	Dec 2011	Dec 2015	Dec 2011	Dec 2015
Ardglass	19	13	26	28	45	41
Kilkeel	51	41	57	54	108	95
Portavogie	18	18	41	29	59	47
Other	128	120	16	26	144	146
Total	216	192	140	137	356	329

3. The Northern Ireland fishing fleet is generally comprised of older vessels with the majority of vessels over 25 years old. This high age profile raises a number of important issues for the local fleet, particularly with regard to ongoing seaworthiness, health and safety and fuel efficiency. The charts below are based on vessels registered to Northern Ireland in 2015.

Age of Vessels in the NI fleet



Age of Vessels in the Over 10m NI Fleet



4. The structure of the fleet has continued to change from previous years. Nephrops continues to be the main fishery for a large part of the NI fleet; there are now 81 vessels, featuring a mixture of single and multiple trawl vessels, fishing exclusively for nephrops. In addition there are some 25 vessels who also target other species alongside or as an alternative to nephrops. The strength of this fishery is based on Irish Sea nephrops stocks for which the Total Allowable Catches have been stable over recent years.

The structure of the over 10m NI fishing fleet at 31 December 2015*

Vessel Type (Main Gear Type)	Number
Whitefish (e.g. haddock, cod, whiting)	1
Nephrops (prawns)	81
Whitefish/Nephrops	7
Pelagic (e.g. herring, mackerel)	2
Scallopers	19
Nephrops/Scallopers	18
Others	9

*(Licensed Vessels)

5. The whitefish fleet has reduced significantly since 2000 in line with the decline in the cod stock and a succession of TAC cuts, fishing effort restrictions and the imposition of the spring cod spawning closure in the Irish Sea. In 2015 there was only one full time whitefish vessel targeting mainly haddock and taking advantage of fishing opportunities in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea and North Sea. Seven other vessels fished both whitefish gear & nephrop gear in 2015 targeting mainly haddock and hake using the TR1 gear. Although the outlook for some stocks such as haddock is good, and cod is improving, whiting stocks remain poor. This means there will be limited fishing opportunities for these stocks in the short to medium term.
6. The pelagic sector targets mainly mackerel and herring mostly in the Irish Sea, West of Scotland, and in the case of the largest vessel further afield into the Atlantic. These are profitable and sustainable fisheries and long term prospects are generally good.

7. The remainder of the fleet mainly fishes for shellfish in the Irish Sea and ranges from over 15m scallopers to “under 10m” vessels fishing for lobster and crab. This sector is considered reasonably stable and profitable, but data on shellfish stocks and catches from the under 10m vessels is limited and there is ongoing action to improve the knowledge of these stocks.

8. The vast majority of landings within Northern Ireland take place in the three Co. Down fishing villages of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie. In 2015, 22% of the total value of catches was landed into Ardglass, while Kilkeel and Portavogie accounted for 34% and 25% respectively. Only 19% of the total value was landed in other ports. Ardglass is the main centre for processing pelagic fish in NI.

9. There was a slight increase in fish landings in 2015 from the previous year with prices remaining quite similar

The quantity of fish landed in NI by port 2011 – 2015

	2011 tonnes	2012 tonnes	2013 tonnes	2014 tonnes	2015 tonnes
Ardglass	9,997	6,807	7,839	6,875	4,347
Kilkeel	6,071	5,288	5,189	4,466	5,346
Portavogie	2,630	3,671	3,379	3,250	3,438
Other	3,205	5,222	2,962	3,469	5,632
TOTALS	21,883	20,988	19,369	18,058	18,763

The value of recorded landings in NI by port 2011 - 2015

	2011 (£'000)	2012 (£'000)	2013 (£'000)	2014 (£'000)	2015 (£'000)
Ardglass	9,829	7,850	6,934	6,270	5,590
Kilkeel	8,992	9,090	7,661	8,227	8,673
Portavogie	5,518	7,236	5,551	6,472	6,413
Other	2,507	4,570	3,120	3,833	5,056
Totals	26,846	28,746	23,266	24,802	25,732

10. The top ten landings into NI ports by UK Vessels in 2015 (by weight and value)

Top 10 landings in NI ports by live weight(T) with value (£)

Species	'000 tonnes	£ million
Nephrops (Norway Lobster)	7.5	15.6
Herring	3.4	1.0
Scallops (King and Queen)	2.3	3.3
Mackerel	1.6	1.1
Crabs	1.2	1.1
Mussels	0.9	0.7
Haddock	0.6	0.7
Dogfish	0.4	0.1
Monks or Angler	0.2	0.5
Lobster*	0.1	0.9
Total	18.2	25

* (Cod and Hake live weight are also 0.1t)

Top 10 landings in NI ports by value (£) with live weight (T)

Species	£ million	'000 tonnes
Nephrops (Norway Lobster)	15.6	7.5
Scallops (King and Queen)	3.3	2.3
Mackerel	1.1	1.6
Crabs	1.1	1.2
Herring	1.0	3.4
Lobsters	0.9	0.1
Mussels	0.7	0.9
Haddock	0.7	0.6
Monks or Anglers	0.5	0.2
Hake	0.2	0.1
Total	25.1	17.9

11. Employment within the Northern Ireland catching sector is given in the tables below.

Employment by the NI catching sector 2006 - 2015

Year	Full Time	Part Time	Total
2006	547	66	613
2007	557	101	658
2008	532	93	625
2009	541	113	654
2010	535	113	648
2011	578	110	688
2012	654	154	808*
2013	675	139	814*
2014	683	149	832*
2015	708	151	859*

*** From 2012 the methodology for gathering information on employment in the catching sector changed and complete inshore potting data is now included**

Catching sector employment distribution 2014 - 2015

District	Full time		Part time		Total	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Ardglass	112	120	9	8	121	128
Kilkeel	328	338	71	71	399	409
Portavogie	205	215	45	44	250	259
North Coast	38	35	24	28	62	63
Totals	683	708	149	151	832	859

Data Sources

UK Sea Fisheries Statistics 2015

Paragraph 1 - derived from Table 3.1 Landings into UK and abroad by UK Vessels: 2011 to 2015

Paragraph 3 - derived from Tables 2.4a and 2.4c Age of NI Vessels and Age of Over 10m NI Vessels

Paragraph 8 – derived from Table 3.14d – Landings into major ports in Northern Ireland by UK Vessels 2015

Paragraph 10 – derived from Table 3.2d – Landings into Northern Ireland by UK Vessels: 2011 to 2015

Paragraph 11 – derived from Table 2.6 Number of UK Fishermen: 1938 to 2015 (plus data from NI Port Offices)

DAERA Fisheries Statistics

Paragraph 2 - Distribution of licensed fishing vessels, by size, across Northern Ireland

Paragraph 4 – The Structure of the Over 10m NI Fishing Fleet for licensed vessels