

The fishing business

The UK fishing industry employs 14,500 fishermen working on 7,000 vessels. In 2001 the UK fleet landed 738 thousand tonnes of fish worth £574 million into the UK and abroad.

Source: UK Sea Fisheries Statistics 2001, DEFRA

Fish can be divided into three broad categories:

- demersal - whitefish which live at or near the bottom of the sea such as cod, haddock, whiting, plaice;
- pelagic - oil rich fish which swim midwater such as mackerel and herring;
- shellfish - these can be sub-divided into:
 - crustacea such as prawns and crabs; and
 - molluscs which includes mussels and scallops.

This table shows how much of the most popular species of fish was landed by UK vessels into the UK in 2001.

Species	Quantity ('000 tonnes)	Value (£ million)
Cod	28.1	37.4
Haddock	42.3	36.3
Monkfish	15.1	33.8
Saithe (Coley)	9.7	4.3
Whiting	15.1	9.9
Blue whiting	20.0	0.9
Plaice	7.7	9.0
Herring	43.8	10.4
Mackerel	63.9	23.9
Nephrops (langoustine/scampi)	28.4	68.4
Crabs	25.0	27.8
Scallops	19.5	29.9
Total all species	458.3	423.7

Source: UK Sea Fisheries Statistics 2001, DEFRA.

Although there are around 280 ports, harbours and creeks around the UK where fish is landed, the major fishing ports in the UK in terms of value of fish landed are:

1. Peterhead - chiefly haddock, cod, monkfish, mackerel, nephrops, herring.
2. Lochinver - blue ling, ling, nephrops.
3. Fraserburgh - haddock, herring, mackerel, nephrops.

Sources: Statistics of fish landings into ports in England, Wales and Northern Ireland by port 2001, Defra website.

UK Seafood Industry Annual Statistics 2001, Seafish.

Scottish Fishery Harbour Background Study, Seafish Policy and Economic Unit.

Legislation restricts fishermen in what and where they can fish.

The most significant legislation with respect to fisheries is the European Union Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) but legislation on fisheries matters comes from three sources:

- the EU;
- the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), or Scottish Executive (Seerad) in Scotland; and
- Sea Fisheries Committees for local legislation in England and Wales.

See the sections on [Fisheries legislation](#) and on [Managing fisheries](#) for more information on this.