



Department for Transport

# Sea Passenger Statistics: Final 2014

## About this release

This statistical release presents final statistics on the number of sea passengers on both international and domestic routes to and from the UK in 2014.

**International passengers** are broken down into those on short sea (ferry) routes and passengers travelling for pleasure on cruises and long sea journeys.

**Domestic passengers** include those on domestic sea crossings, river ferries and inter island journeys.

These statistics include all vehicle drivers, their passengers and foot passengers on ferries.

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**In 2014 total sea passenger numbers remained stable at 65.9 million, domestic passenger volume decreased by 1 per cent and international increased by 3 per cent.**

## International Sea Passengers

- In 2014 the total number of **International sea passengers increased by 3 per cent to 23.2 million.**
- **Cruise passengers decreased by 6 per cent to 1.8 million**, after fluctuating growth in recent years.

	<i>Thousand passengers</i>		
	2013	2014	Percentage change
Short Sea	20,490	21,317	<span style="color: green;">↑</span> 4%
Cruise Journeys	1,881	1,776	<span style="color: red;">↓</span> -6%
Long Sea	57	84	<span style="color: green;">↑</span> 47%

## Domestic Sea Passengers

- Total passenger numbers on **domestic routes decreased by 1 per cent to 42.7 million.** This figure has fluctuated in recent years but with little overall change; passenger numbers in 2014 were 4 per cent higher than in 2004.
- **Domestic sea crossing passenger numbers decreased by 2 per cent to 3.6 million.** Over the past decade domestic sea crossing passenger numbers have fluctuated with an overall downward trend.

## Sea Passengers on International Routes

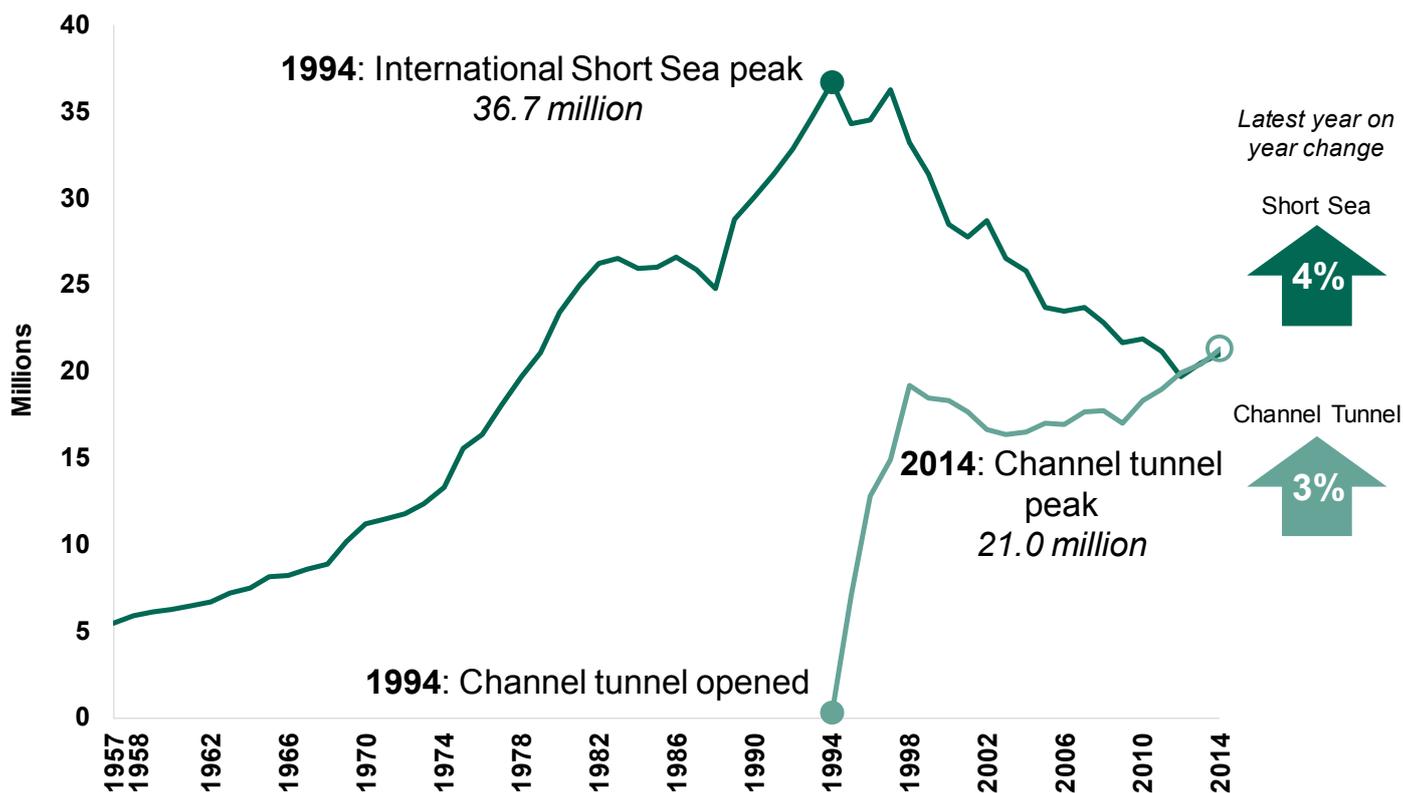
### Summary

- The **total** number of sea passengers on international routes is comprised of passengers on **international short sea** (ferry) routes, **cruises** and **long sea** journeys.
- In 2014 **international sea passenger** numbers **increased by 3 per cent to 23.2 million**, this the second year in a row the number has **increased**.
- Up until 2013 the overall trend in international sea passenger numbers was downward.

### International Short Sea Journeys

- In 2014 the number of **international short sea passengers increased to 21.3 million**, a 4 per cent rise from 2013. This is the first time there have been **two consecutive years of growth** since 1997.
- International short sea passenger numbers grew steadily, from **3.9 million movements in 1950**, the start of the series, up **until 1994 when journeys peaked at 36.7 million**. Between 1997 and 2014 international short sea passenger numbers **have steadily declined** at an average annual rate of 5 per cent, with only a few exceptions. There was an increase in 2010 which was in part linked to the eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull, which disrupted air travel and resulted in passengers using other modes of transport.
- In 2014 the number of passengers travelling via the **Channel Tunnel rose** by 3 per cent to 21.0 million, 309 thousand fewer passengers than on international short sea ferry journeys.
- Since opening in 1994, the trends in the **number of passengers** travelling via the **Channel Tunnel and by sea** have **steadily converged**. Channel Tunnel passengers exceeded those on international short sea journeys for the first time in 2012. However, since then, short sea passengers have increased at a faster rate than those travelling via the Channel tunnel.

## International short sea passengers and Channel Tunnel passengers, 1957-2014



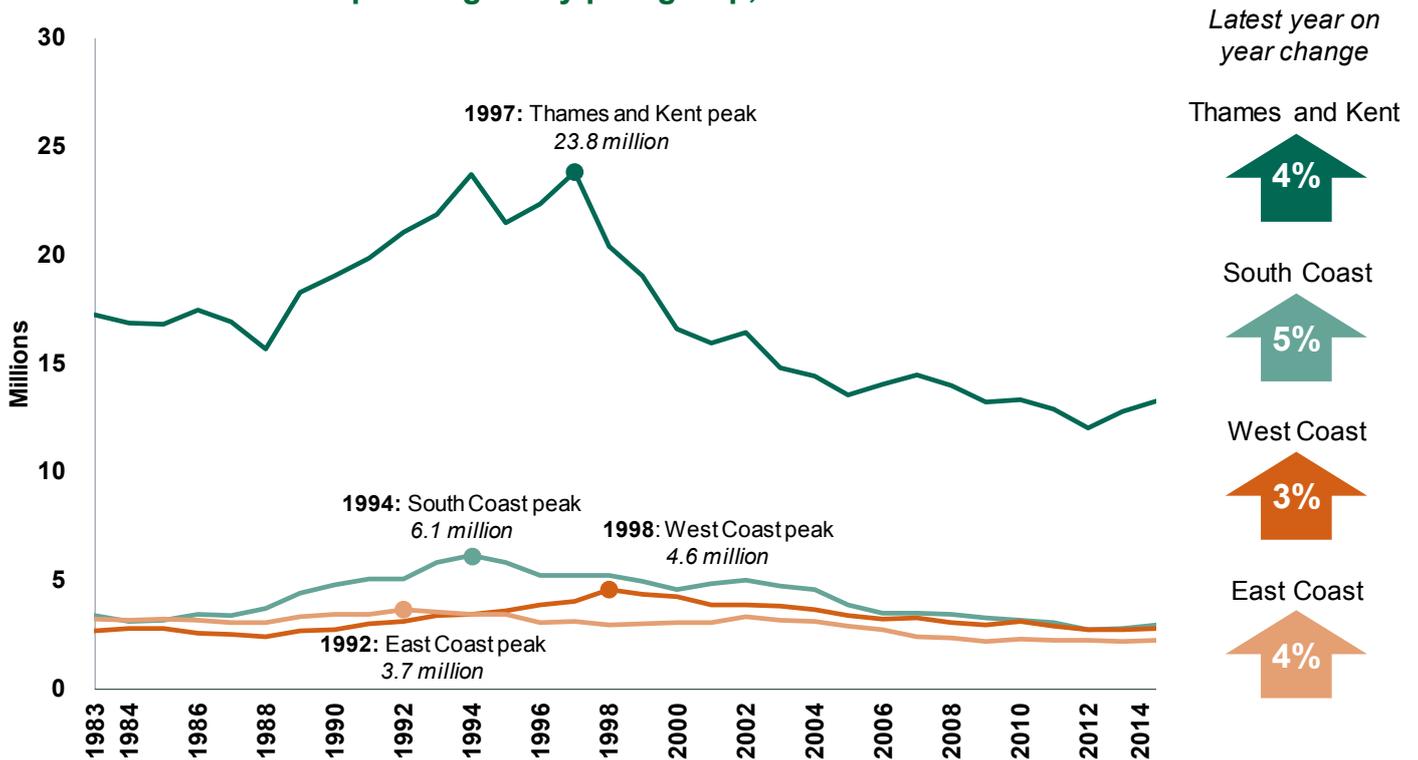
Detailed statistics on Channel Tunnel and International Short Sea Passengers can be found in web table [SPAS0301](#)

## International Short Sea Journeys by Port Group

- In 2014 international short sea passenger **movements increased** for all port groups.
- The number of passengers travelling to or from the **East Coast increased for the first time in three years** to 2.3 million passengers, a 4 per cent annual increase. This was mainly driven by increases in passengers at Hull, which accounted for 41 per cent of all East Coast passengers.
- **Thames and Kent** remained the **busiest port group** in 2014, accounting for 62 per cent of all international short sea passenger movements. Passenger numbers in Thames and Kent increased by **4 per cent to 13.3 million**. This was mainly caused by the **4 per cent increase at Dover**.
- Although overall passenger numbers in Thames and Kent increased in 2014, the volume of passengers who travelled from **Ramsgate fell from 18 thousand to 61 passengers**. This was due to the ferry provider who ran the Ramsgate - Ostende route going into administration in April 2013. No operators are currently covering this route.

- In 2014 **2.8 million international short sea passengers** travelled through the **West Coast** ports: an **increase of 3 per cent**. This was mainly due to the 6 per cent increase on the Holyhead - Dublin route, which dealt with 1.9 million passengers. This route accounted for 67 per cent of all West Coast passengers.
- The number of passengers who travelled from the **South Coast increased** by 5 per cent to 2.9 million in 2014. This figure also increased in the previous year, the first year on year increase following **10 years of decline**.

### International short sea passengers by port group, 1983 - 2014

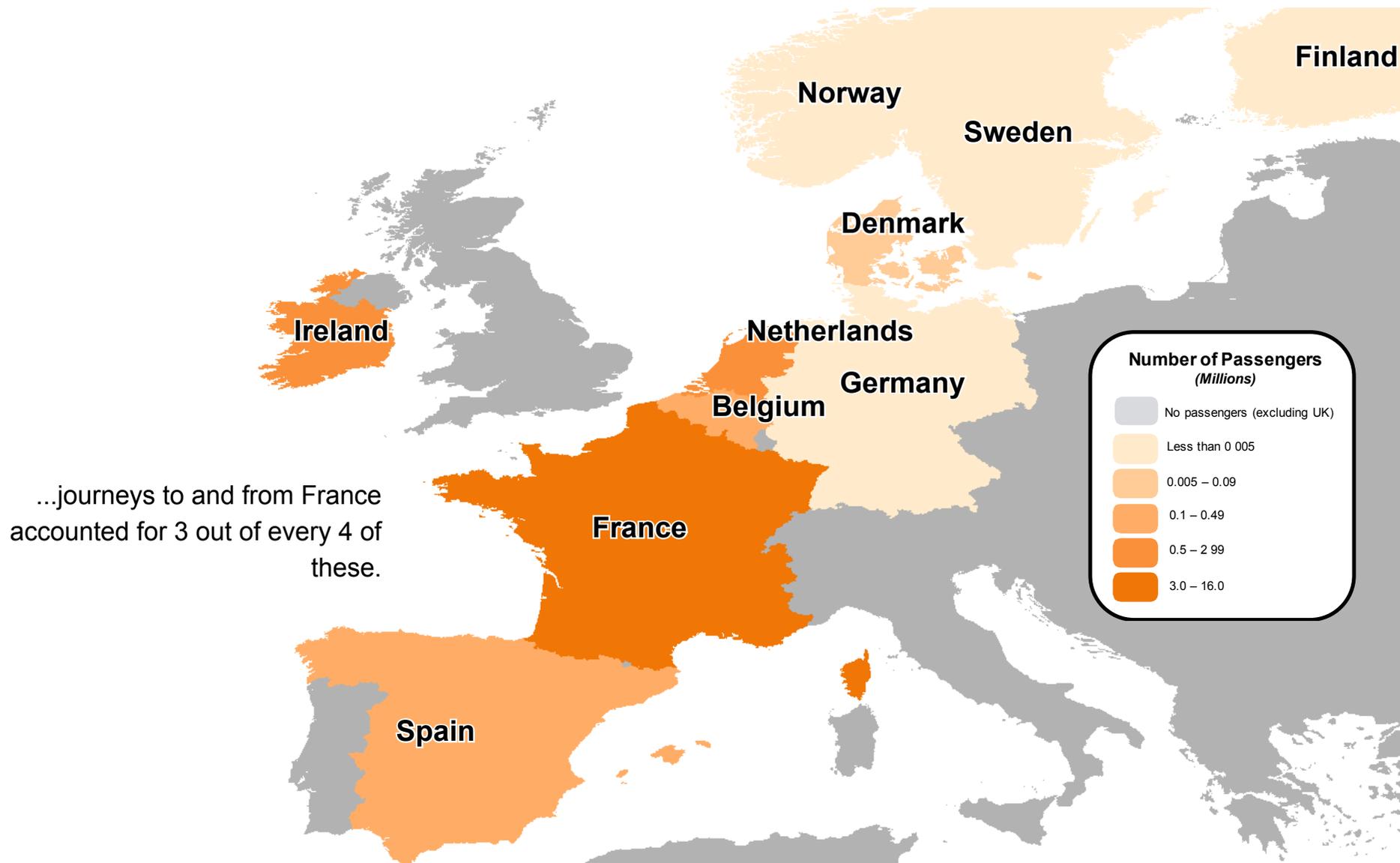


Detailed statistics on International Short Sea Passengers by port group can be found in web table [SPAS0101](#).

### International Short Sea Journeys by Route

- **France remained the most popular destination** for international short sea routes, a trend which has been seen since the series began in 1950. In 2014, 74 per cent (15.8 million) of international short sea journeys were between the UK and France. This partly reflects the **high number of routes** between the **UK and France** (13 routes).
- However, the country with the second highest number of routes, **the Netherlands** (11 routes), only accounted for **9 per cent** of all international short sea passengers (1.8 million).

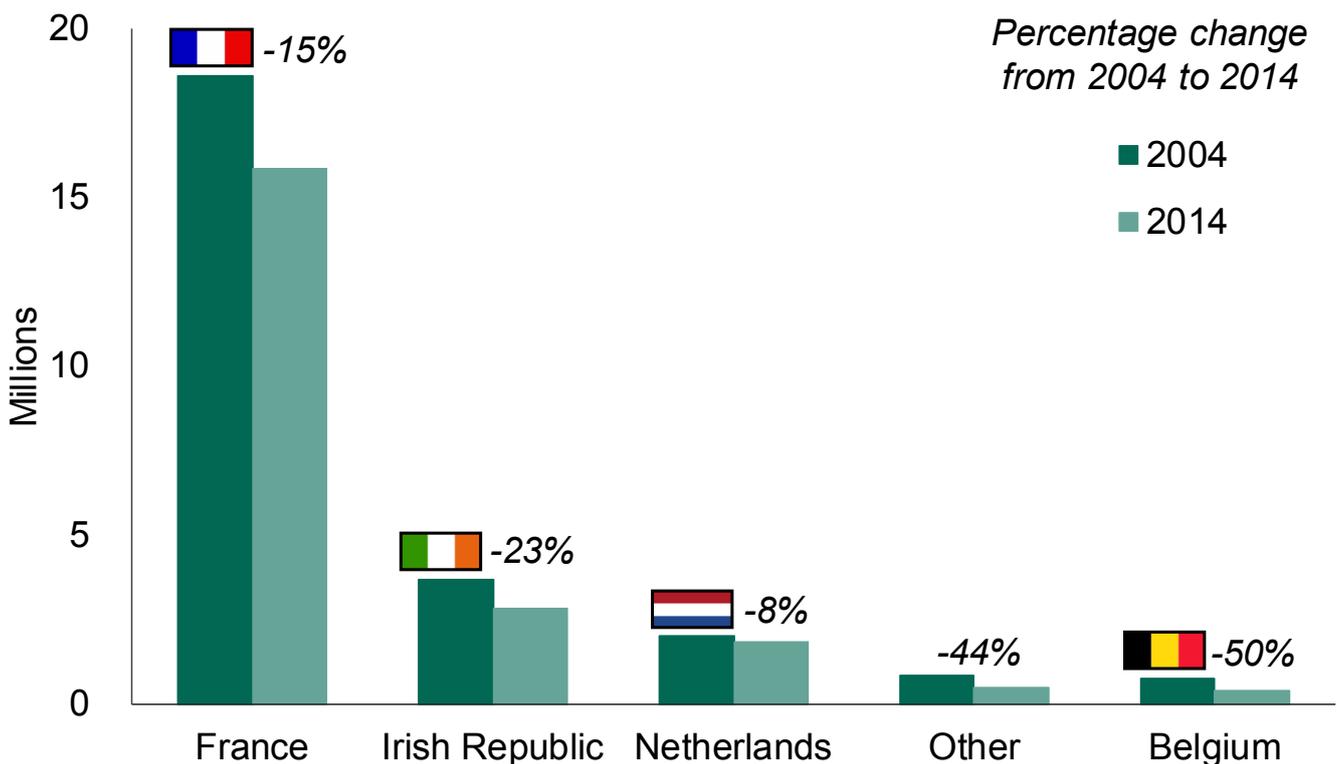
In 2014, there were 21.3 million **international short sea passenger journeys** to and from the UK...



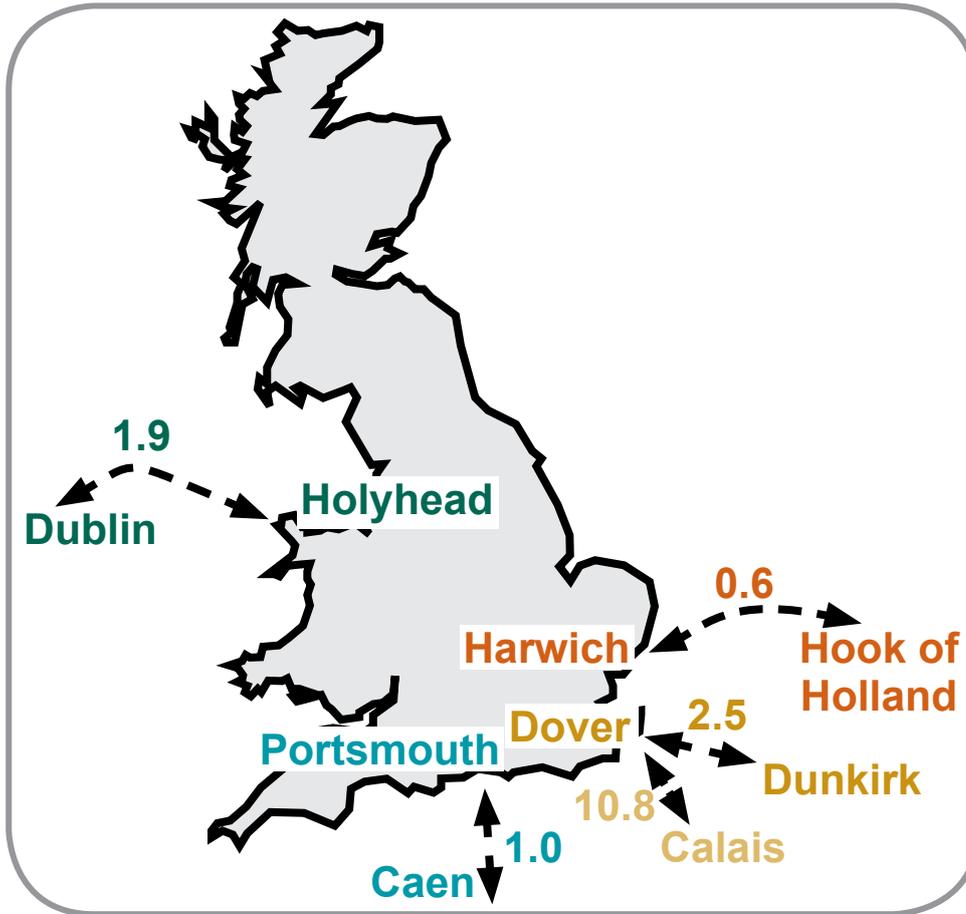
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- Despite the **year on year** increase in passenger traffic to and from France in both 2013 and 2014, numbers had largely decreased over the last decade. In 2014 there were 15 per cent fewer passenger trips made than in 2004. This is mirrored in the **17 per cent decline** of all **international short sea passengers** over the same period.
- Routes to countries such as **Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway and Sweden** have **declined rapidly decline over the decade to 2014**, at an average rate of 10 per cent per year. The closure of routes with these countries may be a result of competition from low-cost airlines and Eurostar growth. For instance passengers travelling to and from Belgium have halved in the last decade, with 369 thousand passengers travelling in 2014 compared to 739 thousand in 2004.
- The **Irish Republic** remained the **second most popular destination** for international short sea passengers in 2014. The number of passengers travelling to the Irish Republic rose to **2.8 million** in 2014, 13 per cent of all passenger traffic.

#### UK international short sea passengers by country of origin/destination, 2014



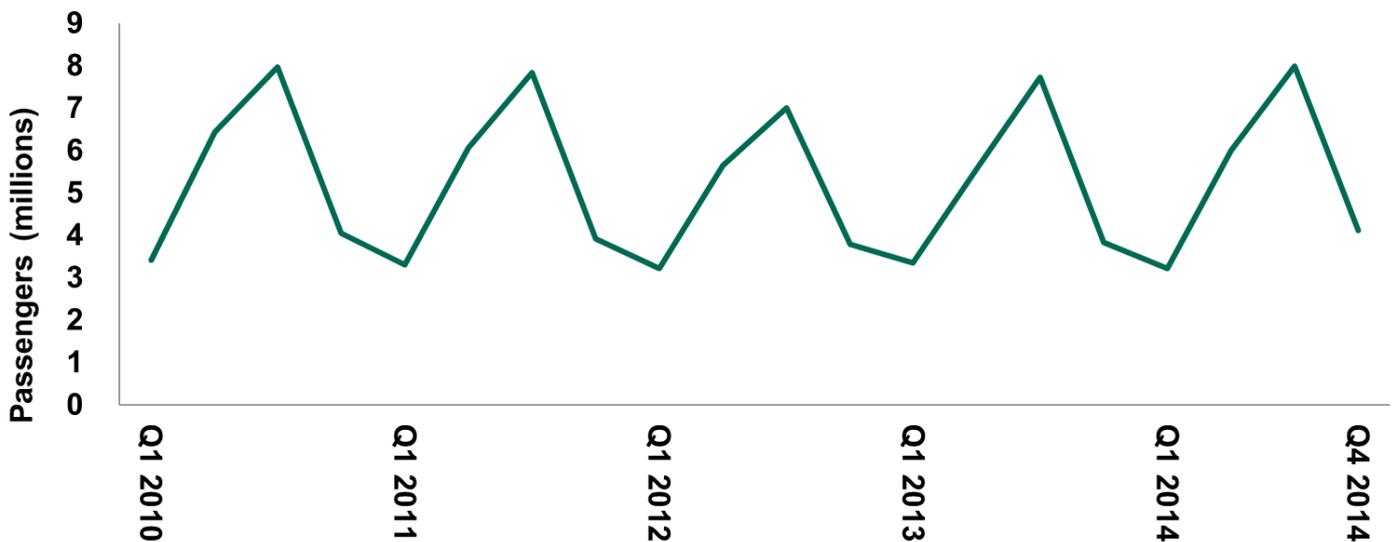
## Top 5 busiest short-sea routes by number of passengers (millions), 2014



- Over the past decade **Dover-Calais** has consistently handled the **largest amount of passengers** of all international short sea ferry routes.
- Ten years ago **Dover - Dunkirk** was the tenth most popular route. Since then passenger numbers have steadily increased. In **2014** approximately **four times as many** passengers used the route **than in 2004**.

- **One out of every three** (8.0 million) international short sea journeys took place in the summer, quarter three (July – September), making this the **busiest quarter** of the year for international ferry journeys in 2014. This was more than double the 3.2 million journeys in **quarter one** (January – March) 2014, the **least busy quarter**.

## International short sea passengers by quarter, 2010 - 2014



## Long Sea and Cruise Passengers

### Definitions

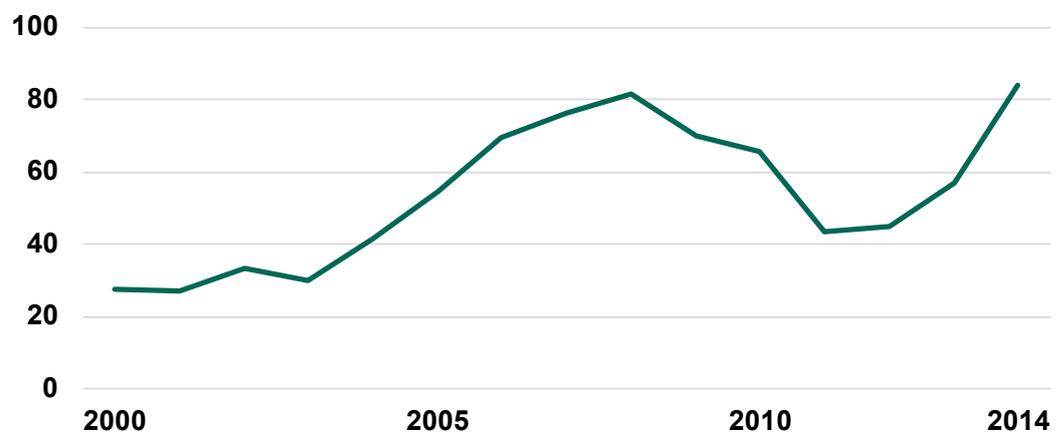
**Long sea** voyage passengers are those travelling on one-way scheduled voyages to and from ports outside Europe/Mediterranean. In general, the long sea passengers were travelling on the Southampton to New York route: over 60 per cent in 2014.

### Definitions

**Cruise** passenger figures include all passengers on international cruise journeys who start and finish their cruise journey at a UK port as well as cruises which begin or end at a European or Mediterranean port.

- **Long sea** passenger numbers have risen substantially in recent years, in 2013 rising 28 per cent and in 2014 **rising again, by 47 per cent to 84 thousand**.
- Long sea figures vary greatly over time, in part because operators can use these trips to reposition vessels around the world as needed. The number of long sea passengers increased through the early 2000's to a peak of 82 thousand in 2008 before falling to 44 thousand in 2011. Passenger numbers in 2014 were 2 per cent higher than in 2008.

### Long sea passenger numbers 2000-2014 (thousands)



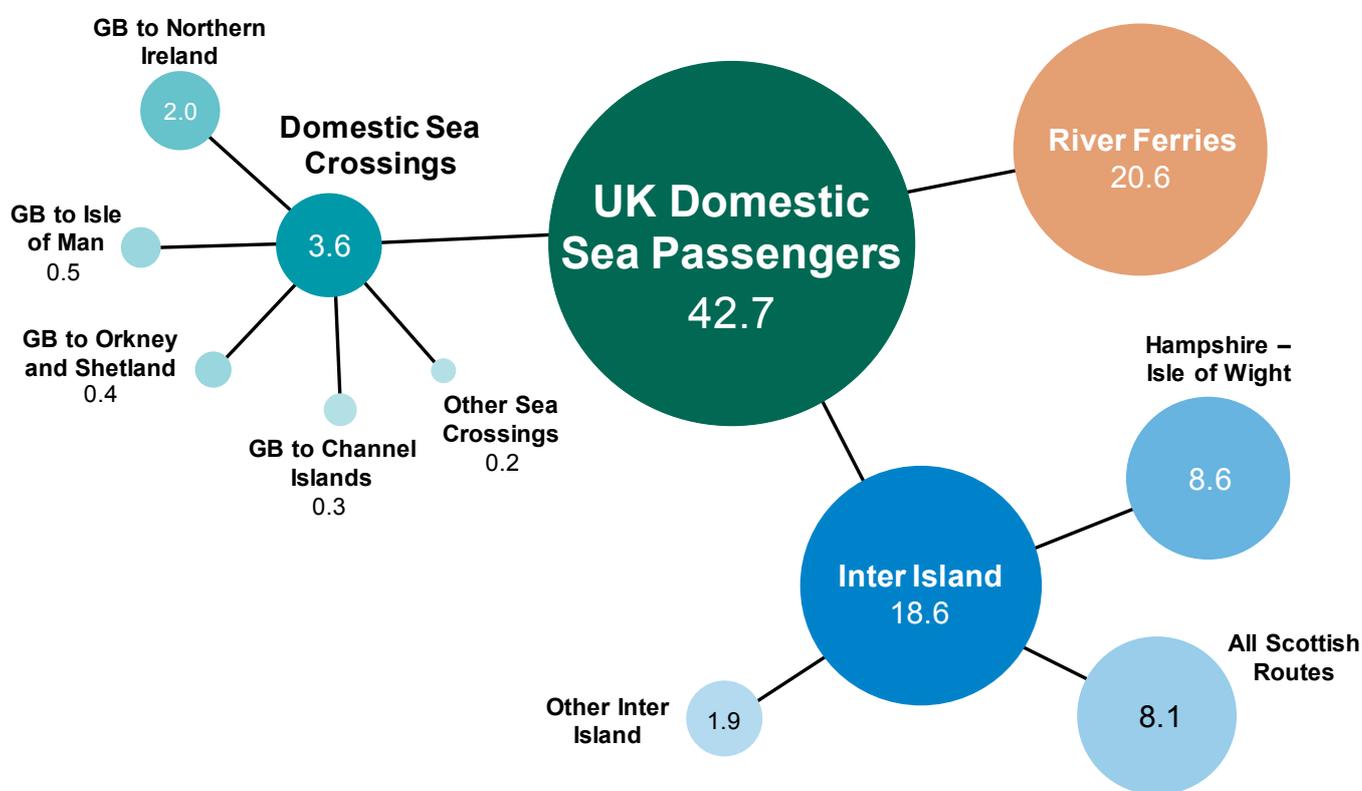
- In 2014 **Cruise passenger** numbers **decreased by 6 per cent to 1.8 million**, after largely continuous growth over the previous 30 years.
- The majority of cruise passengers, **79 per cent**, passed through **Southampton**. In 2014 the number of passengers through Southampton **declined 4 per cent to 1.4 million**. Passenger numbers through Southampton consistently increased through from 2000 to a peak at 1.5 million in 2012 and then declined by 4 per cent in 2013.
- The data supplied in the tables for 2014 has been revised, for 2000 to 2013, because it became possible to identify a number of long sea journeys which were previously included with cruises. This has significantly increased the passenger numbers on long sea routes and revealed the recent upward trend. The **total number** of international passengers remains **unchanged**.

## Sea Passengers on Domestic Routes

### Summary

- The **total** number of sea passengers on **domestic** routes in 2014 was **42.7 million**, a **decrease of 1 per cent** on 2013. Much of this decrease is due to a **3 per cent decrease in passengers on river ferries**. Over the past 10 years the total number of passengers on domestic routes has fluctuated: from a decline of 1 per cent in 2008 up to increase of 3 per cent in 2013.
- The largest components of domestic sea passenger numbers in 2014 were river ferry journeys (48 per cent) and Inter Island (43 per cent).

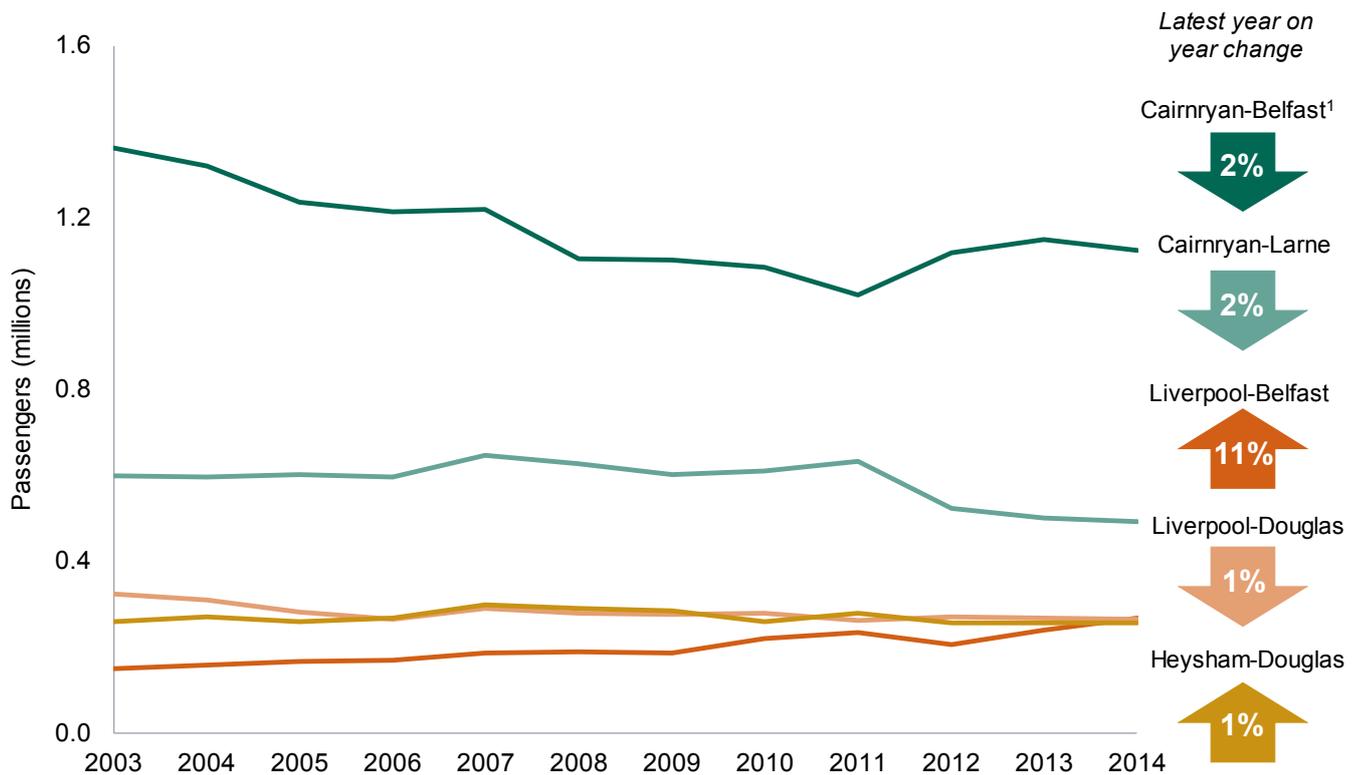
### Domestic Sea Passengers by Route (millions)



## Domestic Sea Crossings

- In 2014 there were **2.1 million journeys** between the **UK mainland and Northern Ireland**. The most popular route between the UK mainland and Northern Ireland in 2014 was **Cairnryan to Belfast**: 1.1 million passengers used the route, although it decreased by 2 per cent compared to the previous year. The **route opened in November 2011** replacing the route between **Stranraer and Belfast**.

### UK's top 5 busiest domestic sea crossing routes, 2003 - 2014



1. Passengers on the route Cairnryan to Belfast travelled from Stranraer to Belfast before 2012.

- Journeys to and from the **Isle of Man** remained similar to the previous year, **0.5 million passengers** used routes between Liverpool or Heysham and Douglas. Passenger numbers on this route have been falling since 2008, with a slight increase in 2011.
- In 2014, domestic sea passengers crossing between the **Channel Islands** and the UK mainland **declined by 3 per cent to 0.3 million passengers**. The number of passengers on these routes have decreased by 25 per cent over the previous decade.

## Seasonal trends in Domestic Sea Crossing Journeys

- **Quarter three** (July-September) was the **busiest season** for all reporting domestic routes (Great Britain to Northern Ireland, GB to Isle of Man, GB to Channel Islands). In contrast Quarter one (January-March) was the quietest. Many ferry operators work to a winter timetable during the first quarter of the year due to the small number of passengers travelling.

## Passengers on inter-island Domestic Routes

- Passenger numbers on **Inter-island domestic routes** remained stable at **18.6 million**.
- **Scottish inter island routes increased by 1 per cent to 8.1 million**. Passenger numbers also increased in the previous year, by 7 per cent.
- Passenger numbers between **Hampshire and the Isle of Wight** also remained stable at **8.6 million**.
- **Other inter island** routes remained stable at **1.9 million** after the downward trend of recent years.

## Passengers on River Ferries

- Passenger numbers on **river ferries decreased by 3 per cent to 20.6 million**. Over the past decade passenger numbers have increased by 13 per cent with consecutive increases in the three years preceding 2014.
- In 2013 the passenger numbers rose by 5 per cent, primarily as the result of improved reporting methods.

### Definitions

#### Inter-Island:

Covers routes between the mainland and UK islands, such as Isle of Skye and the Isle of Wight. It also covers internal ferry routes on lochs such as Strangford to Portaferry in Northern Ireland.

#### River Ferries:

Figures for river ferries are collected annually from the operators. Routes are generally included in this statistical release when the passenger km figure is greater than 500 passenger kms.

Detailed statistics on Domestic Sea Passengers can be found in web tables [SPAS0201](#) and [SPAS0202](#).

## Strengths and weaknesses of the data

- ▶ The data for international ferry passenger routes, domestic sea crossings and inter-island routes are collected regularly from the operators or, in the case of the crossings to Orkney and Shetland and Scottish inter-island routes, supplied by the Scottish Government. These data sets are checked in detail and considered to be very robust.
- ▶ The data for International Short-Sea passengers is collected from 14 ferry operators and validated on a monthly basis. The response rate for 2014 is 100% for all months. At the end of the reference year the annual data is then validated for a final time for this publication.
- ▶ Passenger numbers on river ferries are collected from the operators and cover major routes, which are reviewed periodically. Data are considered to be fit for purpose.
- ▶ The cruise and long sea data are also supplied by the operators and are regularly reviewed. The data are considered to be fit for purpose.

## Background notes

- ▶ The web tables for sea passenger statistics can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/maritime-and-shipping-statistics#data-tables-associated-with-this-series>
- ▶ Full guidance on the methods used in the publication of these releases, and the quality of the data, can be found in the Technical Note at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maritime-and-shipping-statistics-guidance>
- ▶ National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.
- ▶ Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-release-access-lists-for-maritime-and-shipping-series>
- ▶ Provisional summary totals for international sea passenger traffic are released monthly via the DfT website at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/spas01-uk-international-sea-passengers#table-spas0107>