



Introduction

Department for Transport statistics on UK port traffic are published in two stages: (1) provisional quarterly releases, published 10 weeks after the end of the quarter. (2) more detailed final annual release, published in September of the following year.

All port freight statistics are published through the maritime and shipping series on the DfT statistics web page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/maritime-and-shipping-statistics>.

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Coverage

These statistics relate to traffic to and from ports in the United Kingdom, unless otherwise stated, and do not cover ports in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.

Definitions and notes to tables

Major and minor ports

From 2000, major ports are those with cargo volumes of at least 1 million tonnes annually (plus a small number of ports with less tonnage). The current major and minor ports are listed on page 19. Prior to 2000 the threshold for 'major' ports was 2 million tonnes of cargo annually. More detailed data are collected for major ports than for the remaining 'minor' ports. Tables PORT0102 and PORT0201 have been supplemented by estimated breakdowns of the minor port traffic.

Weights

All weights are tonnes gross, including crates and other packaging. The tare weights of containers, road goods vehicles, trailers and other items of transport equipment (i.e. the unloaded weight of the vehicle or equipment itself) are excluded.

Cargo types

Major port traffic is classified by cargo type, which is the means by which goods are loaded onto or off the vessel. Although for some cargo types there is further subdivision into broad commodities, the method of loading takes priority. Detail of these classifications are set out on page 7.

Unitised goods

Goods which are lifted on or off the vessel in large (20 foot or longer) shipping containers, or rolled on or off in one of a variety of self propelled or towed units are said to be unitised cargoes. For these cargo types, the number of units as well as the weight of goods is recorded. A subset of unitised goods are main freight units – this group consists of all containers and those ro-ro units which are designed to carry freight (categories 51, 61 and 63 in the cargo type table on page 7). The purpose of the main freight unit classification is that it excludes those ro-ro units which are not freight carrying – i.e. passenger vehicles, trade vehicles, and other specialised vehicles and trailers.

Geographical classification

UK port traffic is classified geographically according to where the goods were last loaded or next unloaded at the other end of the sea journey. All traffic is either domestic or foreign. Domestic traffic is either coastwise or one-port. Foreign traffic is either short sea or deep sea, and short sea traffic may be further divided according to whether or not it is with another EU member state. A more detailed description of these terms is given in the following table.

Geographical classification of UK port traffic			
Domestic		Traffic between ports in the United Kingdom (and with the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands). The totals of inwards and outwards coastwise traffic, however, do not match exactly. This is mainly because traffic between major and minor ports, or between major ports and ports in the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, are not recorded at both ends (as is the case with coastwise traffic between major ports), but only at the major port end.	
	One-port	Dredged sand, gravel etc, landed at a port for commercial purposes; and traffic to and from UK offshore oil and gas installations (traffic with non-UK offshore oil and gas installations is recorded as foreign traffic). Formerly also included material shipped for dumping at sea, until this practice ceased.	
Foreign	Short sea	EU (as at 1 July 2013)	Traffic with Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark (including Faroe Islands), Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal (including Madeira and Azores), Republic of Ireland, Romania, Spain (including the Canary Islands), Slovenia, Sweden
		Other Europe &	Traffic with Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Egypt, Georgia, Gibraltar, Iceland, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Monaco, Morocco, Norway, Russia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine
	Deep sea	Rest of world	Traffic with all countries of Africa (excluding Mediterranean countries), America (both North and South America), Asia (excluding Mediterranean and Black Sea countries) and Australasia

Major port traffic by flag or owner nationality of carrying vessel

In table PORT0111 nationality refers to the nationality of the parent owner of the carrying vessel. In table PORT0112 the flag denotes the country authorising the registry of the vessel. (See Shipping Fleet Statistics tables for more information on shipping fleets at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/port01-uk-ports-and-traffic#table-port0111>).

Changes to classification of unitised traffic

The following effects of an important change to the categorisation of 'containers' and 'shipborne port-to-port trailers' between 1999 and 2000 should be noted.

Containers can be lifted onto ships using conventional services at container ports (Lift-on/Lift-off or Lo-Lo) or they can be loaded onto Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro-Ro) vessels – used principally for road goods vehicles, road goods trailers or passenger cars etc. The latter method often employs 'port-to-port trailers' used only within the port and which may return to the quay after loading or stay with the ship (either returning empty from the destination port or with another load).

Until 1999 Lo-Lo containers were included in 'containers on Lo-Lo and conventional services' whilst Ro-Ro containers were classified to 'containers on Ro-Ro services'. From 2000 the category 'containers on Ro-Ro services' was discontinued and a new category introduced called 'rail wagons, shipborne port-to-port trailers and barges'. Most containers previously recorded by respondents as Ro-Ro containers were subsequently recorded as 'rail wagons, shipborne port-to-port trailers and barges' but it is believed others were recorded as containers on Lo-Lo services. The effect of this definitional change can be seen in PORT0203.

It was evident by 2005 that some respondents operating at Ro-Ro ports were indeed incorrectly reporting containers transported on port-to-port trailers as Lo-Lo containers (rather than 'rail wagons, shipborne port-to-port trailers and barges') and had been doing so since the start of the new data system in 2000. This was corrected for 2005 when data providers were given further guidance.

This clarification resulted in a reduction of approximately 300,000 Lo-Lo container units in 2005, with a similar increase in 'rail wagons, shipborne port-to-port trailers and barges'. The discontinuity, which affected a number of East coast ports, is highlighted in the relevant tables.

Revised estimates for 2000 to 2004 for containers and shipborne trailers, etc. are provided in the following table:

Containers and shipborne trailers, etc: 2000–2007 (thousand units)								
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Containers (original)	4,325	4,464	4,506	4,533	4,919	4,754	4,883	5,381
Shipborne trailers, etc. (original)	361	344	348	374	383	665	668	744
Ro-Ro containers ¹								
Adjustment to containers	-116	-157	-230	-265	-299			
<i>of which London</i>	32	-74	-173	-158	-166			
Adjustment to shipborne trailers, etc.	116	157	230	265	299			
<i>of which London</i>	-32	74	173	158	166			
Containers (adjusted)	4,209	4,307	4,276	4,268	4,620	4,754	4,883	5,381
Shipborne trailers, etc. (adjusted)	477	501	578	639	682	665	668	744
1 Not separately identified after 1999								

The adjustment shown was calculated using updated information obtained from ports together with information from shipping lines and published sources. Comparative data is shown for 2005-07. Note that the original figures for 2000-2004 have not been adjusted in the published tables.

It should be noted that in both the previous and current data collection systems containers carried by road goods vehicle or road goods trailer are correctly classified as 'road goods vehicles' or 'unaccompanied trailers' and not as containers.

Major ports container traffic in TEUs and weight carried (Table port0201)

TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units) is a standardised measure to allow for the different sizes of container boxes. The standard units taken for each size of container box are as follows:

	Units
20 foot containers	1
40 foot containers	2
>20 foot and <40 foot	1.5
>40 foot	2.25

All ports container traffic in TEUs (Table PORT0209)

For 2000 onwards TEUs have been calculated as set out in the note to PORT0210. In 1999 and earlier only two categories were used, 20 foot (defined to be in the range of 15 to 24 feet) and 40 foot (defined to be in the range 25 feet or over) and these were given standardised units 1 and 2 respectively to calculate TEUs. Thirty foot containers (the main alternative size to 20 and 40 foot), and units over 40 feet were both assigned to the 40 foot category with a standard unit of 2.

Containers carried on board Ro-Ro vessels by shipborne port-to-port trailers are not included from 2000 onwards, although some operators incorrectly continued to include them until 2004 (see 'Changes to Classification of Unitised Traffic' above for more information).

Downloadable data files (PORT0498 and PORT0499)

These special files are designed to allow advanced users to filter for or download data for their own analyses. The data are disaggregated as far as is consistent with maintaining commercial confidentiality.

Table PORT0498 contains data by weight of goods and PORT0499 contains data by number of units. (Note that not all unitised cargo types are capable of carrying cargo – see the Unitised Traffic table below – therefore tonnage and units results should only be compared for those types of unit which can do so).

The tables contain data by year (from 2000), UK port, country of loading/unloading, cargo category (at two different levels of detail) and direction of movement. Very small flows have been aggregated to world region totals to help maintain confidentiality.

Revisions

Statistics during 2013 for freight handled by UK ports have been revised to correct a small error found in the final statistics published on 27 August 2014. The original statistics included some underreporting due to a data supply issue identified through ongoing quality assurance processes.

Stranraer port closed in November 2011 and its operations were transferred to neighbouring Loch Ryan port.

Data collection system for maritime freight traffic

Port freight traffic statistics are based on a combination of data reported to the DfT by port authorities and shipping lines or their agents. Prior to 2000 reporting was by port authorities only.

The current collection arrangements for port freight traffic statistics were introduced in 1 January 2000 to meet the requirements of the EC Maritime Statistics Directive (Council Directive 95/64/EC on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of goods and passengers by sea, recast as Directive 2009/42/EC).

Under the Directive, information is required quarterly on foreign and domestic tonnages and freight units, for major ports (i.e. those that have over one million tonnes of freight per annum) by route, flag and cargo type. Much less information is required for smaller ports.

Most of the detailed freight information is collected from shipping lines, operators and shipping agents, because the detailed route and ship flag information required by the Directive is only generally available from them. The ports supply more limited information quarterly and annually, which is used to provide control totals and also to publish more timely provisional results.

The full guidance for data providers is available via a dedicated section of the DfT web site: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maritime-statistics-directive-reporting-guidance>. Including the forms, instructions for their completion and code lists.

Shipping lines and agents information (Form MSD1)

Shipping lines or their agents complete detailed returns of their inwards and outwards traffic at each major port for each ship, on each route, quarterly, on form MSD1. Major ports are those handling more than 1 million tonnes a year, plus a few selected ports with less tonnage. The returns give the gross weight of goods in tonnes of liquid bulks, dry bulks, unitised traffic and other general cargo, by individual category. Additionally for unitised traffic, the returns give the numbers of units, broken down where appropriate into those with cargo and those which are empty. A full list of the cargo categories is given in Table 1 and a comparison with the categories used in the previous system is at Table 2.

Ports information (Forms MSD2, MSD2X and MSD5)

The port authorities or other undertakings at major ports complete quarterly (MSD2) returns comprising four figures: the gross weight of goods inwards, the gross weight of goods outwards, the total number of units inwards and the total number of units outwards. Units include containers, road goods vehicles, passenger cars, unaccompanied trailers etc. Results from the MSD2 returns have been used since the beginning of 2009 to produce provisional quarterly port freight statistics which are published via the DfT Transport Statistics web site.

More cargo details are supplied annually on form MSD2X, which uses the same cargo type categories as the MSD1. The MSD2X results are used to provide more detailed grossing totals for the final annual results, and are also the basis of the provisional annual results published about 6 months after the year end on the DfT Transport Statistics web site.

Minor ports provide information on total tonnages in and out, annually on form MSD5. Ports also provide quarterly returns listing the shipping agents, lines and operators active at the port (MSD3) and giving data on ship arrivals and departures (MSD4).

Classification of port freight traffic for the EC Directive on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of goods and passengers by sea (2009/42/EC)

Unitised traffic

Category	Description	Code	Statistics required for major ports			
			Number of units			Weight of goods
			Loaded	Empty	Total	
Containers	20 ft freight units	31	✓	✓	✓	✓
	40 ft freight units	32	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Freight units > 20 ft & < 40 ft	33	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Freight units > 40 ft	34	✓	✓	✓	✓
Roll-on/Roll-off (self-propelled)	Road goods vehicles with or without accompanying trailers	51	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Passenger cars, motorcycles and accompanying trailers/caravans	52			✓	
	Passenger buses	53			✓	
	Import/Export motor vehicles	54			✓	✓
	Live animals on the hoof	56			✓	✓
	Other mobile self-propelled units	59	✓	✓	✓	✓
Roll-on/Roll-off (non self-propelled)	Unaccompanied road goods trailers & semi-trailers	61	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Unaccompanied caravans and other road, agricultural and industrial vehicles	62			✓	✓
	Rail wagons, shipborne port to port trailers, and shipborne barges engaged in goods transport	63	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Other mobile non self-propelled units	69	✓	✓	✓	✓

Non-unitised traffic

Category	Description	Code	Statistics required for major ports	
			Weight of goods	
Liquid Bulk	Liquefied gas	11		✓
	Crude oil	12		✓
	Oil products	13		✓
	Other liquid bulk products	19		✓
Dry Bulk	Ores	21		✓
	Coal	22		✓
	Agricultural products	23		✓
	Other dry bulk	29		✓
Other general cargo	Forestry products	91		✓
	Iron and steel products	92		✓
	Other general cargo & containers < 20 ft	99		✓

Validation and quality assurance procedures

Data are mainly reported electronically, either as bespoke XML files (the GESMES system) or ASCII files, or via a web-based reporting tool (iSDES). A few senders still report by email or other methods. The guidance for data providers may be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maritime-statistics-directive-reporting-guidance>. The data are sent to a Collection Agency working on behalf of DfT, who collate the data, carry out initial validation checks, and also operate a helpdesk and identify and follow up non-respondents. Validation checks at this stage include checks on the validity of port codes and ship identities, and basic plausibility checks on types and sizes of certain cargoes.

Once data are transmitted securely to DfT additional checks are carried out, including the cross-comparison of MSD1, MDS2 and MSD2X records, and comparisons with previous time periods. Major anomalies are followed up with data providers.

Grossing procedures

MDS2, MSD2X or MSD5 returns are normally received from virtually all significant operators. It is not possible to measure the response rate for MSD1s except by comparing the resulting traffic totals with those from the MSD2 or MSD2X returns.

The MSD2X data from ports are used as control totals to gross up the information supplied by shipping lines and agents data, that is make an estimated adjustment to correct for any missing MSD1s. Each of the data variables for each port on the MSD2X, i.e. the cargo categories for unitised and non-unitised traffic (see table above) are divided by the corresponding estimates provided by shipping lines and agents to produce grossing factors.

These factors are then applied to all corresponding MSD1 data variables to provide grossed totals. This method allows the estimation of other variables, for example traffic by cargo type by port of loading and unloading, vessel characteristics, flag etc, which are unavailable from ports from the MSD2 or MSD2X. The grossing procedure applies to traffic to and from major ports; information for minor ports is added in separately.

From 2000 all freight estimates shown in the tables which have a geographic element, eg imports, exports, foreign, domestic traffic, have been estimated by the grossing procedures described above based on information supplied by shipping lines and agents. For 1999 and earlier years this information has been estimated by ports but only approximately in many cases. The new collection arrangements provide more reliable geographic information, i.e. estimates of imports, exports, foreign, coastwise, one-port traffic, traffic on individual routes etc.

The overall effect of grossing, and the spread of grossing factors, are summarised in the following table.

Implied grossing factors for a range of traffic types

	Number of major ports reporting	Total weight reported on MSD1 forms (million tonnes)	Published estimate after grossing (million tonnes)	Implied grossing factor
2006	52	526.5	568.8	1.08
2007	52	521.2	566.6	1.09
2008	52	493.1	548.1	1.11
2009	52	455.8	489.6	1.07
2010	52	463.5	498.5	1.08
2011	51	484.2	507	1.05
2012	51	484.5	489.5	1.01
2012 results for specific traffic types (major ports)				
Inwards	51	311.6	312.1	1.00
Outwards	51	172.9	177.4	1.03
Liquid Bulk	51	205.0	210.9	1.03
Dry Bulk	51	108.8	110.9	1.02
Other general cargo	51	17.5	18.3	1.05
Lo-lo containers	51	55.3	55.1	1.00
Ro-ro	51	97.9	73.4	0.75
Domestic	51	104.2	103.4	0.99
Short Sea	51	262.0	268.7	1.03
Deep Sea	51	118.3	117.3	0.99
Major ports	51	Smallest implied grossing factor among ports		0.70
	51	Lower quartile (port 13 of 51)		0.98
	51	Median		1.02
	51	Upper quartile (port 39 of 51)		1.05
	51	Largest implied grossing factor among ports		1.38

Publication arrangements and provisional results

Port freight statistics are published in two stages in order to put usable information in the public domain as early as possible:

(1) Provisional quarterly results are published approximately 10 weeks after the end of the quarter to which they relate. These statistics are based on the MSD2 forms provided by major ports. Data are available for total weight of goods and number of units, inwards and outwards for each responding port. These figures may be subject to revision if subsequent checks against MSD1 data provided by agents or MSD2X data provided by ports at the year end highlight anomalies. Typically a very small number of ports do not provide data in time for publication, in which case the national trend is estimated based on the trend for those ports which have provided data for the latest quarter. The table below shows how the published quarterly indices for traffic at major ports have changed in each successive quarter since Q1 2009. This illustrates the overall effect at national level of changes to the provisional figures after their initial publication.

(2) Final detailed results are published about 8 months after the year end. These statistics are based on the MSD2X and MSD5 returns provided at the end of the year by each major port and minor port respectively. A split into broad cargo type is available for each major port.

At this stage a full reconciliation of port and shipping agent data will have been carried out, and full checks of MSD2/2X data against MSD1 data from shipping agents, and grossing of the final data completed and checked. The detailed results are based on this grossed data. At this stage the full range of analyses, including those by route and vessel type are available.

Variation of port traffic indices in successive editions of Quarterly Port Statistics

Index Publication Date	Four quarter rolling total, index value (Q4 2000 = 100)									
	2014				2015				2016	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Total tonnes index										
June 2014	88.5									
September 2014	88.8	88.6								
December 2014	88.8	88.6	87.9							
March 2015	88.9	88.9	88.1	88.2						
June 2015	88.9	88.9	88.1	88.2	88.4					
September 2015	89.0	89.1	88.4	88.5	88.6	87.4				
December 2015	89.0	89.1	88.4	88.5	88.6	87.4	87.4			
March 2016	89.0	89.1	88.4	88.5	88.6	87.4	87.4	87.1		
June 2016	89.0	89.1	88.4	88.5	88.6	87.4	87.4	87.0	86.0	
September 2016	89.0	89.1	88.4	88.5	88.7	87.6	87.7	87.4	86.3	86.3
Total units index										
June 2014	104.0									
September 2014	104.9	106.1								
December 2014	104.9	106.1	107.7							
March 2015	105.1	106.6	107.7	109.0						
June 2015	105.1	106.6	107.7	109.0	110.5					
September 2015	105.5	107.5	109.2	110.9	112.0	112.4				
December 2015	105.5	107.5	109.2	110.9	112.0	112.4	112.7			
March 2016	105.5	107.5	109.2	110.9	112.0	112.3	112.8	113.1		
June 2016	105.5	107.5	109.2	110.9	112.0	112.3	112.8	113.1	113.8	
September 2016	105.5	107.5	109.2	110.9	112.5	113.3	114.3	115.2	115.3	115.7

Previous data collection systems

Annual statistics on freight handled at GB ports have been collected by the Department for Transport since 1980. (Statistics for Northern Ireland ports were collected by the Department for Economic Development, Northern Ireland from 1988 to 1999, and have been collected by DfT within the UK system since 2000). Prior to this, similar statistics were collected by the National Ports Council from 1965. There were various relatively modest changes to the collection system during this period, and these notes relate mainly to the previous data collection system as it was in its final form, from 1995 to 1999.

Although the published data series from before 2000 are considered to be largely comparable with the current system, the change in collection methodology resulted in some discontinuities in the data between 2000 and previous years.

The current system includes more detail than previously on vessels and routes (in terms of the port of loading/unloading) used, and on unitised traffic by weight; but less commodity detail for non-unitised traffic.

Prior to 2000 all freight information was collected from ports annually. There was no quarterly collection and no collection from shipping agents. A PS4 form was sent to major ports asking for detailed information on weight of traffic in and out, by cargo category and whether these were foreign, coastwise or one port cargoes. A detailed commodity analysis was also required for bulk traffic, and a broad commodity analysis for coastwise traffic. Separate information was required on unitised traffic i.e. the number of units in and out by unitised cargo categories and by broad route.

The major ports covered by the PS4 were taken to be ports with least 2 million tonnes of cargo a year. A few selected ports with smaller volumes were also included, which were required to provide only total weight of cargo, in and out, in a simplified form.

Main differences between the freight collection systems in 1995–1999 and from 2000

Difference	Freight collection system from 2000	Freight collection system in 1995–1999
Traffic breakdown	More detail on unitised traffic by weight (e.g. by size of container) but less commodity detail on non-unitised traffic. Change to definition of containers on Roll-on/Roll-off services (see table below for full comparison)	Less detail on unitised traffic by weight but more commodity detail on non-unitised traffic (see table below for full comparison)
Route and vessel information	Information on individual trips from shipping lines and agents, including port of load and unload, so geographic information should be more accurate. Also vessel details available e.g. LRN and flag. Summary data only from ports, on traffic in and out of ports, quarterly.	No information from shipping lines and agents and no vessel data. Detailed information annually from ports, but aggregated – no individual trips identified, so geographic information is likely to be less accurate.
Definition of major port	Major ports (52 in 2000) are defined as ports with annual cargo volumes of at least 1 million tonnes, plus a few selected ports with less tonnage. Otherwise ports are classified as minor ports.	Major ports (39 in 1999) defined as ports with annual cargo volumes of at least 2 million tonnes, plus a few selected ports with less tonnage. Otherwise ports classified as minor ports.

Comparison of cargo categories used in port statistics up to 1999 and from 2000

1) Weight of unitised cargo

Cargo categories in use until	Cargo categories in use from 2000	
Containers on Lift-on/Lift-off or conventional services	Containers	20 ft freight units 40 ft freight units Freight units > 20 ft & < 40 ft Freight units > 40 ft
Containers on Roll-on/Roll-off services	Containers	<i>Only if lifted on or off vessel by crane.</i> Container sub-categories as above.
	Roll-on/ Roll-off (non self-propelled)	<i>If loaded aboard using any type of roll-on/roll-off trailer.</i> Rail wagons, shipborne port to port trailers, and shipborne barges engaged in goods transport
Powered road goods vehicles and unaccompanied road goods trailers	Roll-on/ Roll-off (self-prop)	Road goods vehicles with or without accompanying trailers
	Roll-on/ Roll-off (non self-prop)	Unaccompanied road goods trailers & semi-trailers
Rail wagons and barges carried on ships	Roll-on/ Roll-off (non self-prop)	Rail wagons, shipborne port to port trailers, and shipborne barges engaged in goods transport
Vehicles for import and export on Roll-on/Roll-off services	Roll-on/ Roll-off (self-prop)	Import/Export motor vehicles
Other wheeled and Roll-on/Roll-off freight	Roll-on/ Roll-off (self-prop)	Other mobile self-propelled units
	Roll-on/ Roll-off (non self-prop)	Unaccompanied caravans and other road, agricultural and industrial vehicles Other mobile non self-propelled units

2) Weight of non-unitised cargo

Cargo categories in use until 1999		Cargo categories in use from 2000	
Liquid bulks	Crude petroleum	Liquid bulks	Crude oil
	Petroleum products and gas		Oil products
	Animal and vegetable oils and fats, beverages, chemicals, chemical fertilisers, crude minerals, material shipped for dumping at sea, sugar and sugar preparations, and other liquid bulks		Liquefied gas Other liquid bulks
Dry bulks	Ores and scrap	Dry bulks	Ores
	Coal, coke and briquettes		Coal
	Foodstuffs and tobacco (including animal feeding stuff, dairy products and eggs, fruit and vegetables, meat and meat preparations, milled cereals and cereal preparations, sugar and sugar preparations and unmilled cereals), animal and vegetable oils and fats, and oil seeds and nuts		Agricultural products
	Cement lime etc, chemicals, crude and manufactured fertilisers, crude minerals, iron and steel, material shipped for dumping at sea, non-ferrous metals, other non-metallic mineral manufactures, petroleum products and gas, sea dredged aggregates, wood lumber and cork, and other dry bulks		Other dry bulks
Semi-bulks	Unitised forest products	Other general cargo	Forestry products
	Other semi-bulk traffic (for example, iron and steel, and palletised cargo)		Iron and steel products
Conventional traffic			General cargo and containers < 20 ft
Non-oil traffic with UK offshore installations			

3) Number of units

Cargo categories in use until 1999		Cargo categories in use from 2000	
Containers on Lift-on/Lift-off or conventional services	20 ft	Containers	20 ft freight units
	30/40 ft	Containers	40 ft freight units Freight units > 20 ft & < 40 ft Freight units > 40 ft
Containers on Roll-on/Roll-off services	20 - 40 ft	Roll-on/ Roll-off (non self-propelled)	Rail wagons, shipborne port to port trailers, and shipborne barges engaged in goods transport (including containers loaded using special port trailers/shipborne port to port trailers). <i>Note – number of roll-on/roll-off units is counted, as opposed to the number of containers carried (change from 2000)</i>
Powered road goods vehicles		Roll-on/ Roll-off (self-prop)	Road goods vehicles with or without accompanying trailers
Unaccompanied road goods trailers		Roll-on/ Roll-off (non self-propelled)	Unaccompanied road goods trailers & semi-trailers
Rail wagons and barges carried on ships		Roll-on/ Roll-off (non self-propelled)	Rail wagons, shipborne port to port trailers, and shipborne barges engaged in goods transport
Vehicles for import and export on Roll-on/Roll-off services		Roll-on/ Roll-off (self-prop)	Import/Export motor vehicles
Accompanied passenger cars		Roll-on/ Roll-off (self-prop)	Passenger cars, motorcycles and accompanying trailers/caravans
Accompanied passenger buses and coaches		Roll-on/ Roll-off (self-prop)	Passenger buses

United Kingdom ports

Includes some where freight operations have ceased.

United Kingdom Port	Description	Country of the United Kingdom	Major port for freight
Aberdeen	Wharves within Aberdeen Harbour	Scotland	Yes
Appledore	Wharf at Appledore Harbour	England	No
Ardrishaig	Wharf at Ardrishaig Harbour on the Crinan Canal	Scotland	No
Ayr	Wharves within Ayr Harbour	Scotland	No
Barnstaple	Wharves at Barnstaple and Yelland Harbours	England	No
Barrow	Wharves within Barrow Harbour (including the Furness peninsula)	England	No
Barry	Wharves within Barry Harbour	Wales	No
Belfast	Wharves within Belfast Harbour	Northern Ireland	Yes
Berwick	Wharves within Berwick Harbour	England	No
Bideford	Wharves at Bideford Harbour	England	No
Blyth	Wharves within Blyth Harbour	England	No
Boston	Wharves within Boston Harbour	England	Yes
Bridgwater	Wharves on River Parrett	England	No
Brightlingsea	Wharves at Brightlingsea Dock	England	No
Bristol	About 40 wharves at Avonmouth and along River Avon	England	Yes
Buckie	Wharves within Buckie Harbour	Scotland	No
Burghead	Wharves at Burghead	Scotland	No
Burry Port	Wharves within Burry Port Harbour	Wales	No
Cairnryan	Wharf within Cairnryan Harbour, on Loch Ryan	Northern Ireland	Yes
Cardiff	Wharves within Cardiff Harbour	Wales	Yes
Charlestown	Wharf within Charlestown Harbour	England	No
Chichester	Wharves at Chichester and Langstone Harbours	England	No
Clyde	Wharves on River Clyde and Forth of Clyde, including Clydeport, Hunterston and Ardrossan, and those on Loch Fyne and Loch Long	Scotland	Yes
Colchester	Wharves on River Colne	England	No
Coleraine	Wharves within Coleraine Harbour	Northern Ireland	No
Corpach	Wharf at Corpach at south end of the Caledonian Canal	Scotland	No
Cowes	Wharves on River Medina at Cowes Harbour, Isle of Wight	England	No
Cromarty Firth	Wharves along Cromarty Firth, including Nigg and Invergordon	Scotland	Yes
Dartmouth	Wharves at Dartmouth, Kingswear and Totnes on River Dart	England	No
Dean Point	Wharf at Dean Point near Helston	England	No

United Kingdom Port	Description	Country of the United Kingdom	Major port for freight
Dover	Wharves within Dover Harbour	England	Yes
Dundee	Wharves within Dundee Harbour on River Tay	England	Yes
Exmouth	Wharf at Exmouth on River Exe	England	No
Falmouth	Wharves at Falmouth Docks and within Falmouth Harbour (excluding Truro and Penryn on River Fal)	England	No
Fareham	Wharf at Fareham Harbour	England	No
Felixstowe	Wharves within Felixstowe Harbour	England	Yes
Fishguard	Wharf within Fishguard Harbour	Wales	Yes
Fleetwood	Wharves within Fleetwood Harbour	England	Yes
Folkestone	Wharves within Folkestone Harbour	England	No
Forth	Wharves along the Firth of Forth including Houndpoint, Grangemouth, Leith, Rosyth and Braefoot	Scotland	Yes
Fosdyke	Wharf at Fosdyke Bridge, River Welland	England	No
Fowey	Wharves within Fowey Harbour	England	Yes
Fraserburgh	Wharves within Fraserburgh Harbour	Scotland	No
Garston	Wharves at Garston (port separate from Liverpool and Manchester)	England	No
Gills Bay, Scotland	Wharf at Gills Bay Harbour (Caithness)	Scotland	No
Girvan	Wharf within Girvan Harbour	Scotland	No
Glensanda	Wharf at Glensanda on Loch Linnhe	Scotland	Yes
Goole	Wharves at Goole Docks on River Ouse	England	Yes
Great Yarmouth	Wharves within Great Yarmouth Harbour	England	Yes
Grimsby & Immingham	Wharves at Grimsby and Immingham Harbours, including Killingholme, on south side of the River Humber	England	Yes
Gweek	Wharf on River Helford	England	No
Harwich	Wharves at Parkeston Quay and Navyard Wharf within Harwich Harbour	England	Yes
Heysham	Wharves within Heysham Harbour	England	Yes
Holyhead	Wharves at Holyhead and on Isle of Anglesey	Wales	Yes
Hull	Wharves at Hull Harbour on the north side of the River Humber	England	Yes
Inverkeithing	Wharves at Inverkeithing Harbour	Scotland	No
Inverness	Wharves within Inverness Harbour	Scotland	No
Ipswich	Wharves at Ipswich harbour on River Orwell	England	Yes
Kilroot	Salt Wharf at Kilroot (separate from the major port of Kilroot Power Station Jetty)	Northern Ireland	No

United Kingdom Port	Description	Country of the United Kingdom	Major port for freight
Kilroot Power Station Jetty	Wharves for power station at Kilroot Jetty	Northern Ireland	Yes
King's Lynn	Wharves within King's Lynn Harbour	England	No
Kyle of Lochalsh	Wharf at Lochalsh Harbour	Scotland	No
Lancaster	Wharves at Glasson Dock, Lancaster	England	No
Larne	Wharves within Larne Harbour	Northern Ireland	Yes
Lerwick	Wharves within Lerwick Harbour and other harbours on Shetland Islands excluding Sullom Voe and Scalloway	Scotland	No
Littlehampton	Wharf within Littlehampton Harbour	England	No
Liverpool	Wharves along the River Mersey eastwards to and excluding Garston and the Manchester Ship Canal (includes Seaforth Dock, Bromborough and Tranmere Oil Terminal)	England	Yes
Llandulas	Wharves at Llandulas	Wales	No
Lochaline	Wharf at Lochaline	Scotland	No
Loch Ryan	Stranraer port closed in November 2011. Its operations were transferred to neighbouring Loch Ryan Port.	Scotland	Yes
London	The Port of London Authority area of the River Thames between Teddington and the North Sea (excluding the River Medway). Includes Tilbury, London gateway, Purfleet, Dartford and Dagenham.	England	Yes
Londonderry	Wharves within Londonderry Harbour	Northern Ireland	Yes
Lowestoft	Wharves within Lowestoft Harbour	England	No
Macduff	Wharves within Macduff Harbour	Scotland	No
Magheramorne	Wharf at Magheramorne Harbour	Scotland	No
Maldon	Wharves on River Blackwater	England	No
Manchester	Wharves along Manchester Ship Canal	England	Yes
Medway	Rivers Medway and Swale and their tributaries: about 29 wharves, including those at Sheerness, Thamesport, Rochester, Chatham, Ridham Dock and Queenborough	England	Yes
Milford Haven	Wharves at Milford Haven, including Pembroke Dock and Pembroke Port	Wales	Yes
Mistley	Wharf on River Stour (Mistley Quay)	England	No
Montrose	Wharves within Montrose Harbour	Scotland	No
Mostyn	Wharves within Mostyn Harbour	Wales	No
Neath	Wharves on River Neath	Wales	No
Newhaven	Wharves within Newhaven Harbour	England	Yes
Newlyn	Wharves within Newlyn Harbour	England	No

United Kingdom Port	Description	Country of the United Kingdom	Major port for freight
Newport	Alexandra Dock and Newport Harbour: wharves on Alexandra Dock and River Usk	Wales	Yes
Newport IOW	Wharf at Newport, on River Medina (Isle of Wight)	England	No
Orkney	All wharves on the Orkney Islands including Kirkwall, Flotta (oil terminal), Scapa Flow and Stromness	Scotland	Yes
Padstow	Wharf at Padstow Harbour	England	No
Par	Wharf at Par Harbour	England	No
Penryn	Wharf at Penryn on the River Fal above Falmouth	England	No
Penzance	Wharves within Penzance Harbour	England	No
Perth	Wharves within Perth Harbour	Scotland	No
Peterhead	Wharves within the whole of Peterhead Harbour including the off-shore wharves	Scotland	Yes
Plymouth	Wharves at Millbay Docks and within Cattewater Harbour	England	Yes
Poole	Wharves within Poole Harbour	England	Yes
Port Askaig	Wharves on Islay island	Scotland	No
Port Penrhyn	Wharf within Port Penrhyn	Wales	No
Port Talbot	Wharves at Port Talbot Harbour	Wales	Yes
Porthoustock	Wharf at Porthoustock Quarry	England	No
Portrush	Wharf at Portrush Harbour	Northern Ireland	No
Portsmouth	Wharves within Portsmouth Harbour	England	Yes
Ramsgate	Wharves within Ramsgate Harbour	England	Yes
River Ouse	Wharves on River Ouse, including Selby but excluding Goole	England	No
River Trent	Wharves on River Trent, including Kingsferry, Flixborough, Neap House and Gunness	England	Yes
Rivers Hull & Humber	Wharves on River Hull and River Humber, including those at New Holland and Tetney (oil terminal) but excluding Hull and Grimsby & Immingham	England	Yes
Rye	Wharf within Rye Harbour	England	No
Sandwich	Wharf at Richborough on the River Stour	England	No
Scalloway	Wharves at Scalloway Harbour	Scotland	No
Scrabster	Wharf within Scrabster Harbour	Scotland	No
Seaham	Wharves at Seaham Harbour	England	No
Sharpness (including Gloucester)	Wharves at Sharpness and Gloucester (River Severn upstream to Gloucester)	England	No
Shoreham	Wharves within Shoreham Harbour	England	Yes
Shotton	Wharf on River Dee	England	No
Silloth	Wharves within Silloth Harbour	England	No

United Kingdom Port	Description	Country of the United Kingdom	Major port for freight
Southampton	Wharves on Southampton Water and Rivers Itchen and Test, including Fawley and Hamble (oil refinery and terminal) and Southampton Container Terminals	England	Yes
Stornoway	Wharves within Stornoway Harbour	Scotland	No
Stranraer	Wharf is now above Cairnryan (still on Loch Ryan). Stranraer port closed in November 2011. Its operations were transferred to neighbouring Loch Ryan Port.	Scotland	Yes
Sullom Voe	Sullom Voe oil terminal	Scotland	Yes
Sunderland	Wharves within Sunderland Harbour	England	Yes
Sutton Bridge	Wharves at Sutton Bridge on River Nene	England	No
Swansea	Wharves within Swansea Harbour	Wales	Yes
Tees & Hartlepool	Wharves along River Tees, including Middlesbrough, Billingham and Redcar, and at Hartlepool Harbour	England	Yes
Teignmouth	Wharves within Teignmouth Harbour	England	No
Torquay	Wharf at Torquay Harbour	England	No
Troon	Wharves within Troon Harbour	Scotland	No
Truro	Wharves at Truro on the River Fal above Falmouth	England	No
Tyne	Wharves along River Tyne, including Newcastle	England	Yes
Wallasea	Wharves on River Crouch and River Roach	England	No
Warrenpoint	Wharves within Warrenpoint Harbour	Northern Ireland	Yes
Watchet	Wharf within Watchet Harbour	England	No
Wells	Wharves within Wells Harbour	England	No
Weymouth & Portland	Wharves within Weymouth Harbour and at Portland Port	England	No
Whitby & Scarborough	Wharves at Scarborough and Whitby	England	No
Whitehaven	Wharf within Whitehaven Harbour	England	No
Whitstable	Wharves within Whitstable Harbour	England	No
Wick	Wharves within Wick Harbour	Scotland	No
Wisbech	Wharves on River Nene excluding Sutton Bridge	England	No
Workington	Wharves within Workington Harbour	England	No

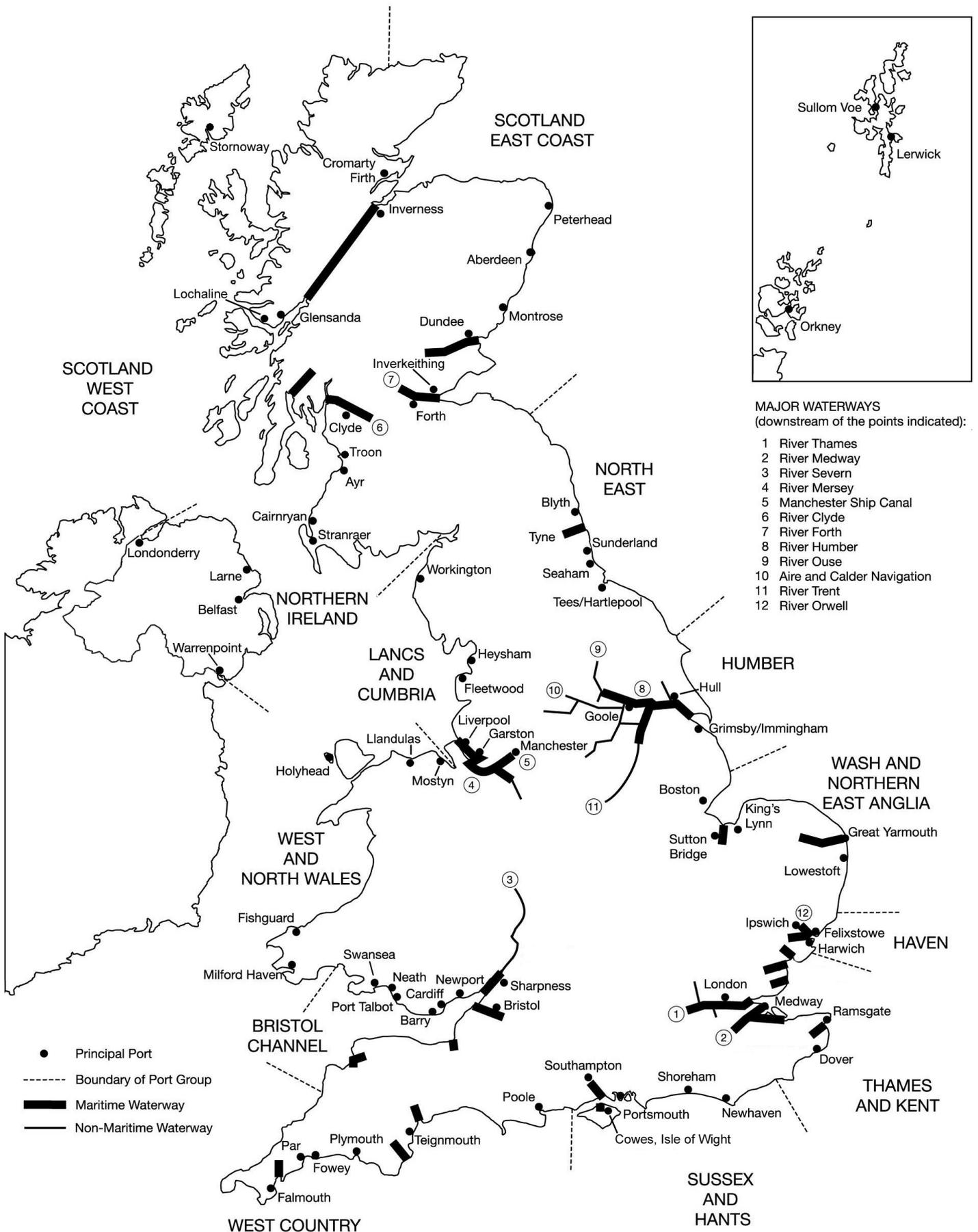
List of major ports in 2015

Aberdeen	Grimsby and Immingham	Orkney
Belfast	Harwich	Peterhead
Boston	Heysham	Plymouth
Bristol	Holyhead	Poole
Cairnryan	Hull	Port Talbot
Cardiff	Ipswich	Portsmouth
Clyde	Kilroot Power Station Jetty	Ramsgate
Cromarty Firth	Larne	Rivers Hull and Humber
Dover	Liverpool	River Trent
Dundee	Loch Ryan	Shoreham
Felixstowe	London	Southampton
Fishguard	Londonderry	Sullom Voe
Forth	Manchester	Sunderland
Fowey	Medway	Swansea
Glensanda	Milford Haven	Tees & Hartlepool
Goole	Newhaven	Tyne
Great Yarmouth	Newport	Warrenpoint

List of minor ports in 2015

Appledore	Inverkeithing	River Ouse
Ardrishaig	Inverness	Rye
Ayr	Kilroot	Scalloway
Barrow	King's Lynn	Scrabster
Barry	Kyle of Lochalsh	Seaham
Berwick	Lancaster	Sharpness
Bideford	Lerwick	Silloth
Blyth	Littlehampton	Stornoway
Bridgwater	Llandulas	Sutton Bridge
Brightlingsea	Lowestoft	Teignmouth
Buckie	Maldon	Troon
Burry Port	Mistley	Truro
Chichester	Montrose	Wallasea
Coleraine	Mostyn	Weymouth & Portland
Corpach	Neath	Whitstable
Cowes, Isle of Wight	Newport, Isle of Wight	Wick
Falmouth	Padstow	Wisbech
Fraserburgh	Penzance	Workington
Garston	Perth	Yelland
Gill's Bay Scotland	Port Penrhyn	
Hughtown (St Mary's)	Porthoustock	

Ports, port groups and freight waterways



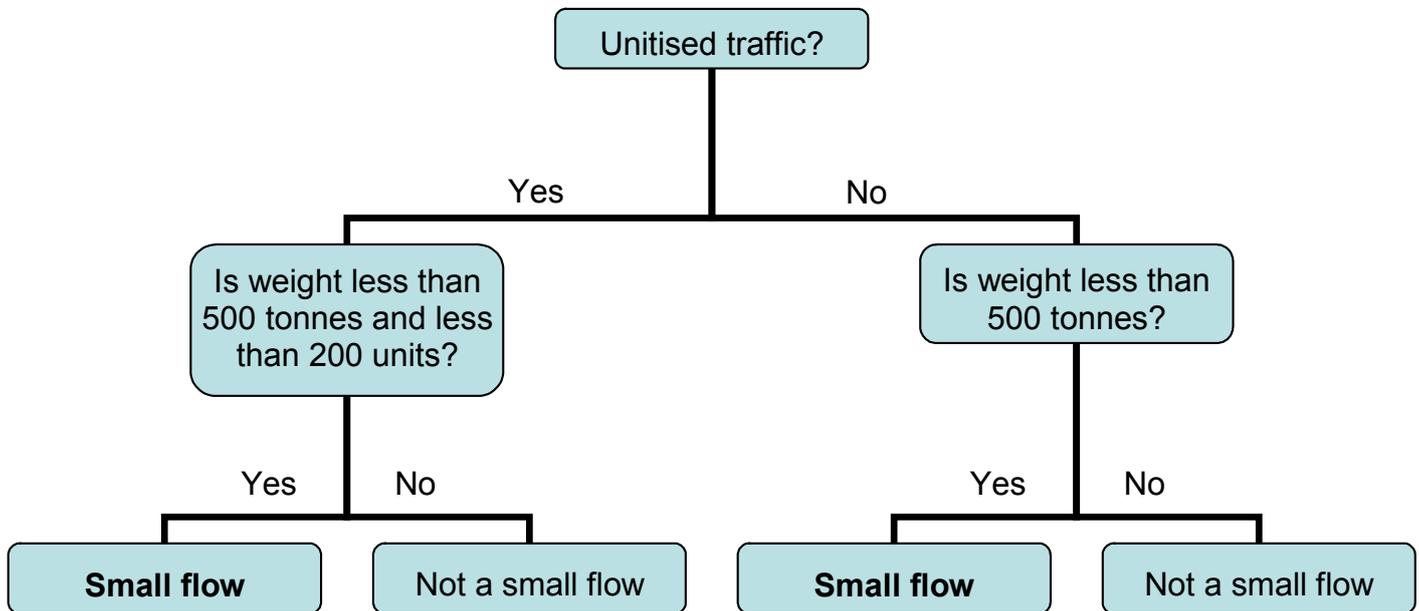
International Classification of Ships by Type (ICST(94))

Level 4		Level 3		Level 2	Level 1	Level 0	
Crude oil tanker Crude/products tanker Oil products tanker Oil/chemical tanker		Oil tanker	1	LIQUID	MERCHANT SHIP STRUCTURES	MARINE STRUCTURES	
Chemical tanker		Chemical tanker	2				
LNG carrier LPG carrier Other liquefied gas carrier		Liquefied gas carrier	3				
Single hull Double hull Double-sided Double-bottomed Other tank barge		Tank barge	4				
Asphalt, bitumen carrier Molasses tanker Vegetable oil tanker Other tanker nei		Other tanker	5				
Ore/bulk/Oil Ore/Oil Bulk/Oil		Bulk/oil carrier	6				DRY BULK
Ore carrier Bulk/container carrier Other bulk carrier		Bulk carrier	7				
Container (FC)		Container (FC)	9				
Barge carrier Chemical carrier Irradiated fuel carrier Livestock carrier Vehicle carrier Other specialised carrier		Specialised carrier	8				OTHER DRY CARGO
Reefer	12	General cargo					
Ro-Ro passenger	10						
Ro-Ro container	11						
Other Ro-Ro cargo							
Gen cargo/passenger	13						
Gen cargo/single deck	14						
Gen.cargo/container Gen cargo/other multi deck	15						
Deck barge Hopper barge Lash/seabee barge Open dry cargo barge Covered dry cargo barge Other dry cargo barge		Dry cargo barge		16			
Cruise	17	Passenger	MISCELLANEOUS TYPES				
Other passenger	18						
Fish processing Fish catching		Fish processing and catching		19			
Off-shore drilling Off-shore support		Offshore production and support		20			
Tug Push-boat		Tow-boat (tug in MS)		21			
Research/Survey	22	Other types					
Dredger	23						
Other nei	24						
NAVAL (MILITARY CRAFT)							
NON-SHIP STRUCTURES							

Note: Shaded cells indicate the main groupings used in this report

Classification of small flows (PORT0498-99)

Small flows are defined by direction of travel and consist of unitised traffic weighing less than 500 tonnes and containing less than 200 units, or non-unitised traffic weighing less than 500 tonnes. This definition is illustrated by the flow chart below:



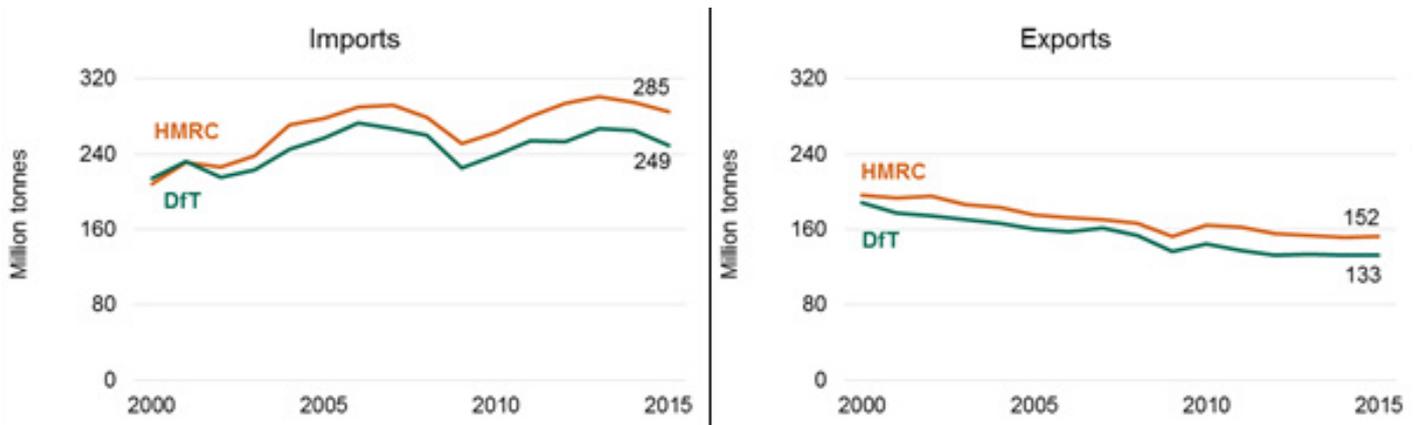
Comparison of Port freight statistics with other sources

Port freight statistics undergo an extensive data validation exercise comparing data obtained from UK ports with data from shipping agents and operators. It is also possible to assess the quality of port freight statistics by comparing with other National Statistics, such as those produced by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC). HMRC statistics record the movement of goods for trade purposes between the UK and both the EU and non-EU countries. Detailed documentation of this system is available on the UK trade info website: <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/Intrastat/AboutIntrastat/Pages/AboutIntrastat.aspx>

The two datasets can be compared to investigate whether there are similarities in reporting coverage and whether international port freight trends for imports and exports are consistent over time.

The two data sources follow a similar trend in recent years, however, HMRC statistics tend to be higher than those from DfT port freight statistics. There is also a larger difference for imports than exports, and this difference has increased over time.

UK major port international imports and exports from HMRC and DfT, 2000-2015



It is possible to look at these data sources at the cargo category level, by looking at statistics produced in the Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics (DUKES) by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). These statistics are produced using HMRC data plus some additional data from surveys of energy companies and suppliers.

There are four subgroups for which it is possible to make simple comparisons; Coal, Crude oil, Oil products and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). A comparison of data for 2015 shows that Coal and LNG have very similar tonnages in the two sources, however Oil Products and Crude oil data show some fairly large differences.

Comparison of DfT port statistics and DUKES, UK energy commodity traffic, 2015

Data source	Million tonnes							
	Coal		Crude Oil		Oil Products		Liquefied Gas	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
DfT Port Freight Statistics	22.3	0.8	36.6	24.9	35.7	26.3	11.2	3
DUKES Statistics	23.5	0.5	44.6	37	31.7	22.8	10.6	z
Difference								
Tonnage	-1.2	0.3	-8	-12.1	4	3.5	0.6	z
Percentage	-1%	67%	-18%	-33%	11%	13%	6%	z

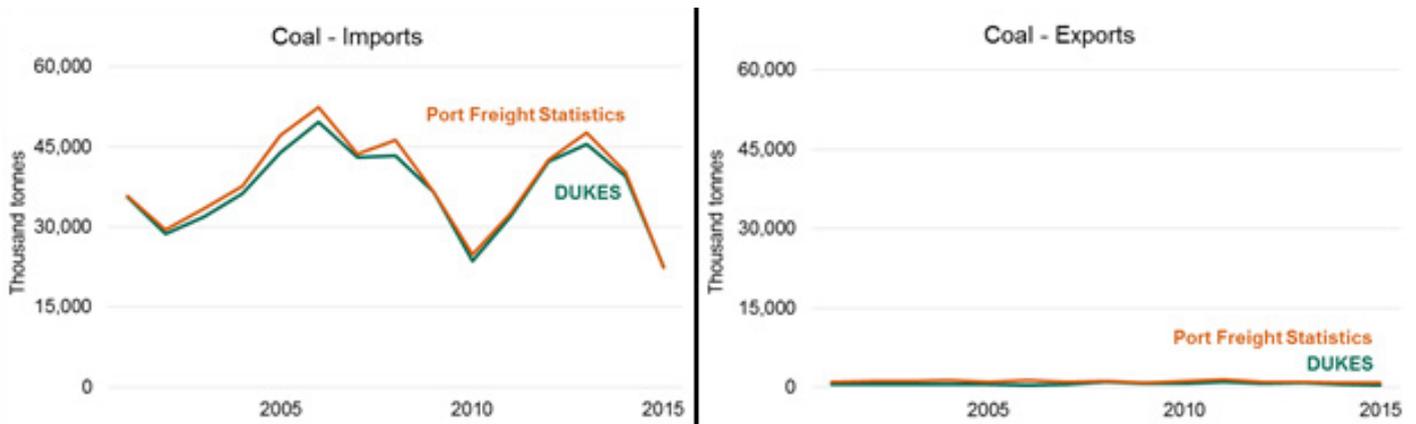
z symbol refers to "not applicable".

It Data from both sources for 2001 to 2015 for each subgroup were analysed with the findings discussed in detail below. Note that all comparisons are for international UK major port traffic only.

Coal

For the Coal cargo category we can see that the two data sources have very similar trends and the reported tonnages are extremely similar. There is a slight difference in the coverage of the two sources – DUKES categorises Coke separately from Coal - meaning that we would expect figures from DUKES to be lower than DfT port freight statistics.

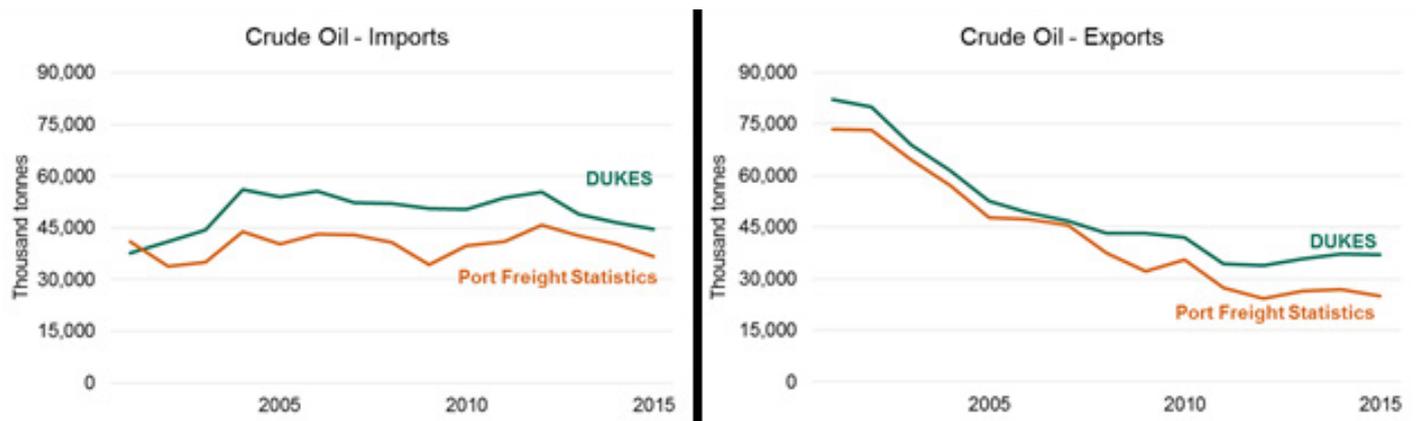
UK major port international imports and exports of Coal, DUKES and DFT, 2001-2015



Crude oil

Data from both sources consist of exclusively Crude oil, however statistics in both directions are higher in DUKES than in port freight statistics, suggesting that there may be under reporting occurring in port freight statistics. The trends of the two series' are broadly similar, except for the time around the 2008 recession when the two series' changes were quite different.

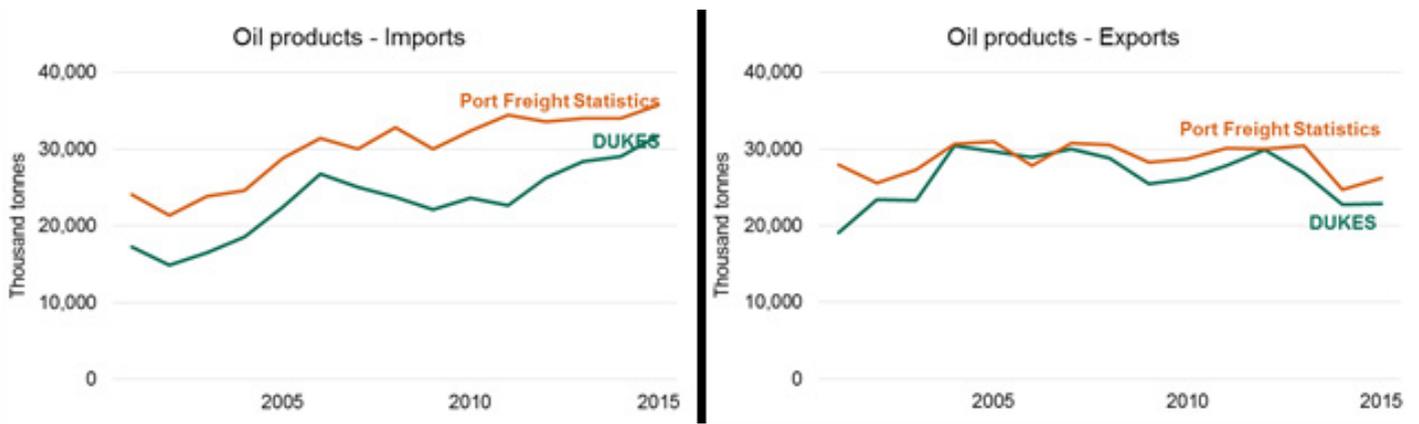
UK major port international imports and exports of Crude oil, DUKES and DfT, 2001-2015



Oil products

The coverage of both sources for Oil products are very similar, with the exception of liquefied propane, butane and other similar gases which are included in this category in DUKES, but are classed as Liquefied Natural Gas in port freight statistics. Looking at the long-term trend, there is a clear disparity between the two sources for imports, but the sources are fairly similar for exports. The most likely explanation for the differences by direction is that port freight statistics has better coverage, compared with DUKES, of a commodity which has much larger import quantities than exports.

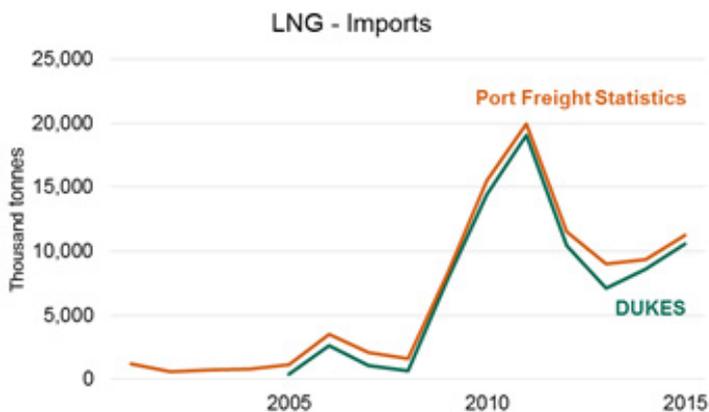
UK major port international imports and exports of Oil products, DUKES and DfT, 2001-2015



Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)

Statistics for LNG are similar for both sources, with port freight statistics having slightly higher tonnages than figures from DUKES. The trends are very similar showing that the two sources are broadly reporting the same amount of LNG imports.

UK major port international imports of LNG, DUKES and DfT, 2001-2015



Note: DUKES data not available for exports

In conclusion, these comparisons show that these two National Statistics on energy products are broadly quite similar. Further investigation of possible under-reporting of Crude oil figures in port freight statistics, and the cause of the discrepancy for Oil products, could lead to better coverage in port freight statistics.

Introduction

The PORT06 series of tables present statistics on the number of arrivals of commercial cargo and passenger ships at UK ports. These statistics are based largely on different sources of data to the statistics on cargo handled obtained through the MSD system described above. The data are considered a reasonably accurate estimate of the number of commercial shipping movements at UK ports, but are not necessarily exact, and the coverage of certain vessel or traffic types may be variable at the margins. The data are not classified as National Statistics. The methods for compiling the statistics were substantially revised for 2010 data (and 2009 was also re-cast on the new basis, so that 2009 estimates are available on both bases for comparison). These changes improved the coverage of the data, and therefore also resulted in some discontinuities in the series. The methods and changes are described in more detail below.

Method until 2009

The scope of these estimates was cargo carrying trading vessels – as shown in the table below accompanying the discussion of the new method.

The primary source used was commercially obtained vessel movement data from Lloyds List Intelligence (LLI). LLI maintain a global vessel movement database, based on a variety of sources, principally daily reports from an established network of Lloyd's Agents and sub-agents, and increasingly also vessel tracking data from transponders which most vessels are now required to carry under maritime safety rules. LLI aim to cover "the deployment of all self-propelled sea going merchant vessels over 99gt engaged in international seaborne trade". The data obtained by DfT certainly includes domestic movements between UK ports, but it may be reasonable to suppose that data coverage could be less comprehensive in this category, particularly for small vessels, and/or those on very local or inshore routes.

The LLI data do not cover individual movements on frequent services (those with more than one call per day at the same port – mainly ferry services), so information on the number of these movements was compiled for DfT by a separate contractor and added to the total.

Method from 2009 - summary

In March 2012 new tables were released for 2009 and 2010 using a similar, but revised, method. The purposes of the change were to:

1. replace a source of information on 'frequent services' no longer available
2. make better use of information already held
3. expand the scope of the table to cover other types of vessel, and to make coverage more consistent with that of DfT's port freight and sea passenger statistics

Results are available for 2009 using both old and new methods, allowing a comparison to be made (see PORTS0601 and PORTS0602). In summary:

- The new method adds about 5,000 vessel movements not identified by the old method (a 4% increase in the total)
- The new method additionally includes over 13,000 movements by vessel types not previously included in the table (shown separately in PORTS0601)
- Over 1,000 arrivals of general cargo ships with container capacity, many of which are probably running container services, shifted from the 'fully cellular container' to the 'other general cargo' category.

A new table, PORT0603, has been added which shows the total deadweight tonnage of all vessels calling by port and type. This calculation excludes vessels whose deadweight is not available (the numbers of these can be seen in PORT0601).

LLI data continues to be an important basis of the method. However, it is now merged with other information on ship movements obtained by DfT through the MSD system (all cargo or passenger carrying movements at major ports) and its sea passenger survey (movements on regular seagoing ferry services). The three data sources are merged at the level of individual vessels calling at each port. The maximum number of calls from any of the three sources is taken as the final estimate. In the small proportion of cases where it is not possible to match vessels to other sources, these movements are also included in the total for the relevant port.

Method from 2009 – detailed discussion

Tests using 2009 data showed that the new method gave very good agreement with the frequent service information previously used. In addition the new method captured some additional vessel movements at major ports which had not been captured by the previous method. In most cases however, there was very good agreement between the three sources used, giving re-assurance that the new method produces good quality results.

The scope of the MSD system is theoretically limited to seagoing traffic – therefore traffic entirely within inland waters is excluded. Therefore the principal examples of inland waters traffic – Isle of Wight ferry services – are also excluded from the ship arrivals tables. It is possible that a small number of inland waters movements remain in the tables, but it is thought that the numbers involved will be relatively insignificant.

The new method provides statistics for an expanded range of vessel types. The intention is to match the scope of the arrivals tables as closely as possible to the scope of the port freight and sea passenger data published by the department. The four categories of cargo vessel included under the old method are retained. Two new categories are added, for 'passenger vessels' and 'other vessels'.

Ship types used in ship arrival tables under new method (2009 on)		
Ship type in PORT06 tables	Trading status	Vessel types included (based on IHS Global world fleet data)
Tankers	Trading	Oil tanker, oil-chemical tanker, chemical tanker, liquid gas tanker, other tanker
Ro-ro vessels	Trading	Ro-ro passenger, ro-ro containers, ro-ro other cargo
Fully cellular container vessels	Trading	Container (fully cellular)
Other dry cargo vessels	Trading	Bulk carrier, bulk-oil carrier, refrigerated cargo, specialised carrier, general cargo, general cargo-passenger
Passenger*	Trading	Passenger, cruise
Other vessels*	Non-trading	Offshore supply, dredging, bunkering tanker
Not included	Non-trading	Fish catching, other fishing, offshore (except supply), towing/pushing craft, research, other work vessels, non-seagoing ships, non-merchant ships, non-propelled vessels, non-ship structures, vessels of unknown or unrecorded type
* Not included in tables under old method up to 2009.		

'Other vessels' only includes those vessel types which may be carrying cargo which falls within the scope of the MSD system – e.g. offshore industry supply vessels (including dual purpose vessels such as anchor handling tug/supply vessels), or dredgers. Work boats which are unlikely to be carrying cargoes falling with the scope of the MSD system are still excluded from the table – e.g. tugs, offshore vessels other than supply ships, such as drilling vessels, pilot vessels, research ships, fishing boats, military vessels. It is not possible to match the scope of the MSD system exactly using the vessel type classifications available, and the treatment of some vessels is ambiguous (e.g. dredgers may be considered outside the scope of maritime statistics as being 'work boats' – however if they land cargo in a port they are within scope of MSD freight statistics. Tugs are also excluded, but the cargo in any barges they are towing is again within the scope of MSD freight statistics).

The new versions of tables PORT0601 and 0602 include arrivals by vessels whose deadweight tonnage is not available. Previously these were excluded. The numbers are fairly small.

A further difference in the new method is that in nearly all cases vessel type is based on IHS Global world fleet data. Under the old method vessel type information came largely from LLI, except for those vessels on frequent services which did not appear in the LLI data set. This change was made because data were being merged from more data sets. In general LLI and IHS Global sources agree on vessel type, but there are some cases where they differ – since some vessels can be employed in a variety of roles. Generally this does not make a significant difference to the overall results, but one relatively major change is for smaller container ships. The old method classified LLI's 'General cargo with container capacity' category as container vessels. In general the vessels in question were employed on container services. However, they were not 'fully cellular' – that their container cell guides were not fixed, allowing the vessels to be configured for other cargoes. Therefore these vessels appear under the 'other general cargo' category in the new tables. Consideration was given to whether vessels identified by IHS Global as having container capacity should be included under the 'container' category, but this would have led to much larger discontinuities in the opposite direction, with the probability that many vessels operating as general cargo ships would be misclassified as container ships.

Between 2009 and 2010 LLI increased the coverage of their data. The impact of this on the DfT tables results is probably significantly reduced, because many of the additional movements recorded by LLI would already have been captured in one of the other sources used in the DfT statistics.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The data are thought to give a very good general indication of the overall level of significant seagoing commercial ship movements in the UK, but they are not necessarily completely precise.

The main limitations on the quality of the data are the accuracy with which major ports report traffic under the MSD system, and the completeness of the LLI data.

Merging three data sources and taking the maximum result could in theory overstate the results, if the matching of vessels is imperfect. However, checks suggest that the scope for this is in practice limited. The results could also be affected by the level of disaggregation of the ports used at the data matching stage.