



Sea Passenger Statistics: 2012

This statistical release presents the provisional statistics on sea passenger movements to and from the UK in 2012.

The release provides statistics for passengers on international short sea (ferry) routes and passengers on domestic sea crossings. These statistics includes all vehicle drivers, their passengers and foot passengers on ferries.

Final sea passenger statistics will be published in autumn 2013, including data for passengers on international cruises and long sea journeys and passengers on domestic river crossings and inter-island domestic routes, which are currently not available for 2012.



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The key findings for 2012 include:

- In 2012 there were 19.7 million passengers on **international short sea** routes, a fall of 7 per cent from 2011.
- In 2012 the **Channel Tunnel** carried 20 million passengers. This was the first time since the Channel Tunnel opened in 1994 that **Channel Tunnel** passengers exceeded **international short sea** passengers.
- **Thames and Kent** ports handled 12.0 million passengers in 2012, continuing their position as the largest port group in terms of passengers handled. This was primarily due to **Dover**, the UK's busiest ferry port, which handled 11.9 million passengers.
- In 2012 **Dover to Calais** remained the most popular international passenger route carrying 9.4 million passengers and accounting for 48 per cent of all short sea international passengers.
- In 2012 there were 2.0 million passenger movements between **Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, the most popular destination for domestic sea crossings.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Media Enquiries:
020 7944 3066

Public Enquiries:
Ella Taylor
020 7944 3087
maritime.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk

1. Sea Passengers on International Routes

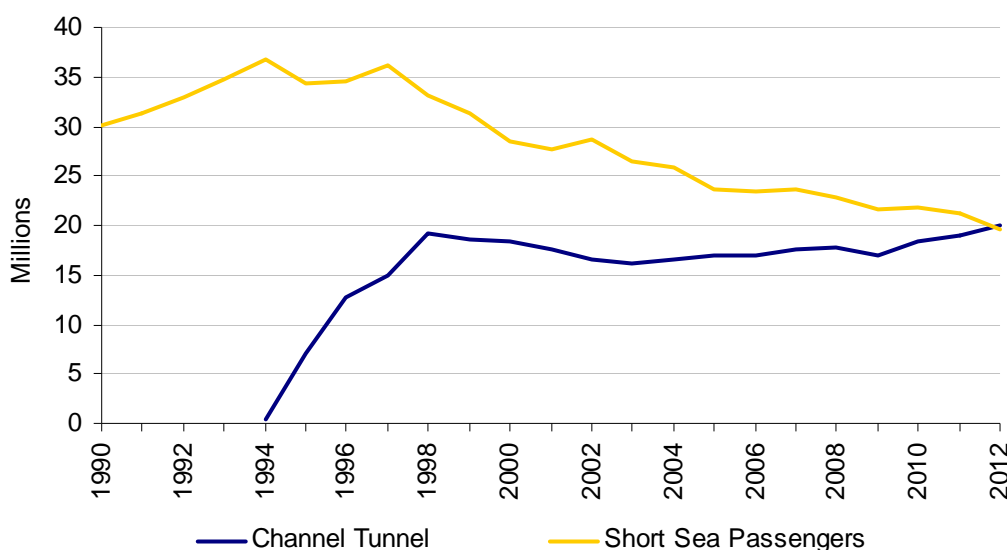
1.1 Summary

- The **total** number of sea passengers on international routes is based on statistics for **international short sea** (ferry) routes and those on **cruises** and **long sea** journeys. Statistics for cruises and long sea crossing will not be available until autumn 2013.
- This statistical release provides estimates for **international short sea** (ferry) routes.
- In 2011 (the latest year available) there were 22.8 million **sea passengers on international routes** starting journeys in the United Kingdom. This was a 3 per cent decrease from 2010. Data for 2012 will be published in autumn 2013.

1.2 International Short Sea Journeys

- In 2012 there were 19.7 million passengers on **international short sea** routes, a fall of 7 per cent from 2011.
- **International short sea** passenger numbers have grown steadily since 1950 (the start of the series) and are five times greater than the 3.9 million passengers in 1950. Passenger numbers peaked at 33.7 million in 1994 but have fallen steadily since 1997, down by 31 per cent in the last decade.
- The **Channel tunnel** opened in 1994. *Chart 1* shows passengers on international short sea routes compared to Channel tunnel passenger traffic (including both Eurostar and Eurotunnel Shuttle services).

Chart 1: Passengers on International short sea routes and Channel tunnel passenger traffic, 1990 - 2012

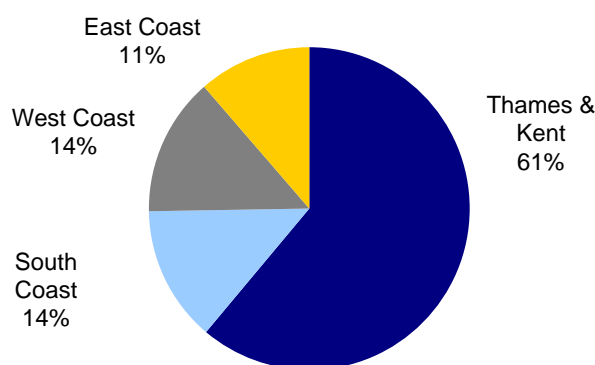


- In 2012 the **Channel Tunnel** carried 20 million passengers, 5 per cent higher than in 2011 and 0.8 million more passengers than the previous peak seen in 1998. This was the first time since the Channel Tunnel opened in 1994 that **Channel Tunnel** passengers exceeded **international short sea** passengers.

1.3 International Short Sea Journeys by Port Group

- In 2012 **Thames and Kent** ports handled 12.0 million passengers, continuing their position as the largest port group in terms of passengers handled (*chart 2*). This was primarily due to **Dover**, the UK's busiest ferry port, which handled 11.9 million passengers in 2012.

Chart 2: Short sea international sea passengers by port group, 2012

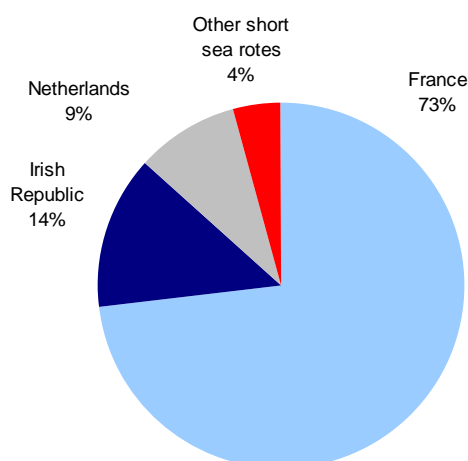


- Passenger numbers fell for all port groups in 2012. **South Coast** ports experienced the greatest decline, falling by 11 per cent from 3.0 to 2.7 million passengers. **Thames and Kent** ports and **West Coast** ports both fell by 7 per cent between 2011 and 2012 (from 12.8 to 12.0 million and from 2.9 to 2.7 million passengers respectively). The number of passengers handled by **East Coast** ports remained stable, a 1 per cent decline.

1.4 International Short Sea Journeys by Route

- In 2012, **international short sea** journeys to or from **France** accounted for 14.4 million sea passengers, 73 per cent of all international short sea passengers (*chart 3*), a trend that has been seen since the series began. This partly reflects the number of routes that run between the UK and France (13 routes). However the country with the second highest number of routes (11 routes) was the **Netherlands**, which accounted for a substantially lower share of all international short sea passengers (9 per cent).

Chart 3: Short sea international sea passengers by country destination, 2012



- Over the last decade the number of international short sea passengers travelling to and from **France** fell by 30 per cent, similar to the decline of 31 per cent seen for all international short sea passengers.
- Travel to and from ports in the **Irish Republic** accounted for 14 per cent of all international short sea passengers (2.7 million). Passengers travelling these routes have also fallen by 30 per cent over the last decade.
- In 2012 **Dover to Calais** remained the most popular international passenger route carrying 9.4 million passengers and accounting for 48 per cent of all short sea international passengers. However passenger numbers on this route fell by 7 per cent between 2011 and 2012 and have fallen by 64 per cent over the last decade.

1.5 Seasonal trends in International Short Sea Journeys

- **Quarter three** (July-September) is the most popular season for international sea travel. It accounted for over a third of all short sea travel in 2012 (7.0 million) and over twice the amount of passengers than in quarter one at 3.2 million passengers (January-March). This seasonal trend has been seen over a number of years.
- In 2012, quarter one accounted for 16 per cent of all international short sea passenger travel, quarter two (April-June) accounted for 29 per cent, quarter three accounted for 36 per cent and quarter four (October-December) accounted for 19 per cent.

1.6 Long Sea Journeys and Cruise Passengers

- Statistics for passengers on cruises and long sea journeys will be published in autumn 2013.

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on passengers on international sea routes can be found in the web tables, [SPAS0101 - SPAS0108](#) and charts can be found in [SPAS301 & SPAS302](#)

2. Sea Passengers on Domestic Routes

2.1 Summary

- The **total** number of sea passengers on **domestic** routes is based on statistics for **domestic sea crossings, inter-island** domestic routes and **river ferries**. Statistics for inter-island domestic routes, river ferries and Scottish domestic sea crossings will not be available until autumn 2013.
- This statistical release provides estimates for passengers on **domestic sea crossings** to Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.
- In 2011 (the latest year available) there were 41.8 million sea passengers on domestic routes, a 1 per cent decreased compared to 2010. Data for 2012 will be published in autumn 2013.

2.1 Domestic Sea Crossing by Route.

- The **total** number of sea passengers on **domestic sea crossings** will not be available until autumn 2013. Data for Scottish domestic routes, Great Britain to Orkney and Shetland are not currently available.
- In 2012 there were 2.0 million passenger movements between **Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, the most popular destination for domestic sea crossings. The route between **Cairnryan and Belfast** accounted for 55 per cent of all domestic passenger movements between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This route opened in 2011 and has taken the passenger traffic previously seen on the closed route between Stranraer and Belfast.
- In 2012 there were only 6 thousand passengers between **Weymouth and Jersey/Guernsey**, compared to 228 thousand in 2011. This was a result of the port closing due to safety concerns over the structure of the port. The passengers who would have been sailing from Weymouth were temporarily sailing from Poole. Passenger movements between **Poole and Jersey/Guernsey** increased from 91 thousand in 2011 to 283 thousand in 2012.

2.2 Seasonal trends in Domestic Sea Crossing Journeys

- **Quarter three** (July-September) was the most popular season domestic sea crossings for all reporting domestic routes (Great Britain to Northern Ireland, GB to Isle of Man, GB to Channel Islands).

2.4 Passengers on Inter-island Domestic Routes.

- Statistics for passengers on Inter-island domestic routes, such as Hampshire to the Isle of Wight, will be published in autumn 2013.

2.5 Passengers on River Ferries

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- Statistics for passengers on river ferries, such as routes along the River Thames, will be published in autumn 2013.

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on passengers on domestic routes can be found in the web tables, [SPAS0201 & SPAS0202](#)

3. 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.
- 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.

4. Background Notes

- The web tables for sea passenger statistics can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departments-for-transport/series/sea-passengers-statistics>

- 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/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-sea-passengers>

- 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/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/68892/pre-release-access-for-sea-passengers-statistics.pdf

- Provisional summary totals for international sea passenger traffic are released monthly via the DfT website at, refer to link in note (1) above

- The 2011 figures for passengers on other domestic sea crossings, inter-island routes, river ferries and international long sea crossings and cruises will be updated in autumn 2012.