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Shetland Fisheries Statistics

2019

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November 2020



Summary

In 2019:

- ◆ 50,000 tonnes of fish and shellfish, worth £81 million, were landed in Shetland, half of it by Shetland fishing boats.
- ◆ One-fifth of all the finfish landed in Scotland, and almost one-sixth of that landed in the UK, were landed in Shetland.
- ◆ More fish and shellfish were landed in Shetland than in any other port in the UK, except Peterhead.
- ◆ More finfish were landed in Shetland than in all of England and Wales.
- ◆ Shetland boats landed 88,000 tonnes of fish and shellfish worth £108 million.
- ◆ Shetland boats accounted for almost one-quarter of all the fish and shellfish landed by Scottish boats, and 14% of that landed by UK boats.
- ◆ 24,000 tonnes of whitefish worth £52 million were landed in Shetland, more than two-thirds of it by local boats.
- ◆ Lerwick, Scalloway and Cullivoe were all in the top-13 UK ports for whitefish landings.
- ◆ Shetland boats landed 18,000 tonnes of whitefish worth £37 million, almost all of it in Shetland.
- ◆ 24,000 tonnes of pelagic fish, worth £23 million, were landed in Shetland.
- ◆ 2,100 tonnes of shellfish, worth £6 million, were landed in Shetland.

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Introduction

This report summarises the results of analyses of official data on the weight¹ and value of fish landed in Shetland and by Shetland fishing boats in 2019.

Data Sources

The analyses are based primarily on data supplied by the Marine Analytical Unit of Marine Scotland Science, part of the Scottish Government's Marine Scotland department, whose cooperation and assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Additional data were obtained from:

- ◆ *Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics* published by the Scottish Government².
- ◆ *UK Sea Fisheries Annual Statistics* and associated data published by the UK Marine Management Organisation (MMO)³.

Further Information

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Copies of this and previous Shetland Fisheries Statistics are available on the NAFC Marine Centre website at:

www.nafc.uhi.ac.uk/fish-stats

¹ All weights are 'Live Weight Equivalent', i.e. the estimated weights of the fish in their live (ungutted) state.

² Available online at: www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Agriculture-Fisheries/PubFisheries

³ Available online at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-sea-fisheries-annual-statistics

All Species

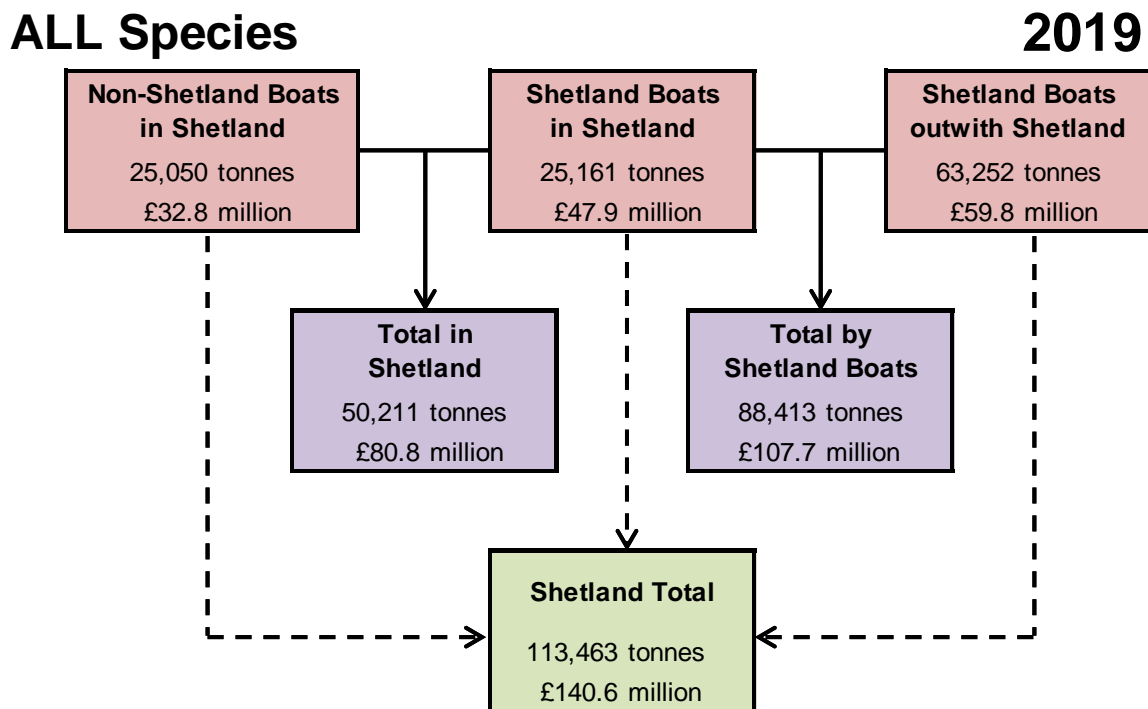


Figure 1 Summary breakdown of the weight and value of all fish landed in Shetland and by Shetland boats in 2019.

Just over 50,000 tonnes of fish and shellfish, worth some £81 million, were landed in Shetland in 2019 (Figure 1). That was one-quarter (27%) less in weight than in 2018, although only 8% less in value (Figure 2).

Half of the fish and shellfish landed in Shetland in 2018 by weight (50%) and well over half by value (59%) were landed by Shetland fishing boats (Figure 2).

Shetland fishing boats landed about 88,000 tonnes of fish and shellfish (everywhere) in 2018, worth about £108 million (Figure 1). That was one-fifth less than in 2018 by weight (20% less) and 8% less in value (Figure 3).

The total weight of fish and shellfish landed in Shetland, and by Shetland fishing boats elsewhere, ('Shetland' fish landings) was just over 113,000 tonnes in 2019, one-quarter (24%) less than in 2018 and 8% less in value was 10% greater at £141 million.

Most of the reduction in landings in Shetland and by Shetland boats was in landings of pelagic fish (see below for more details).

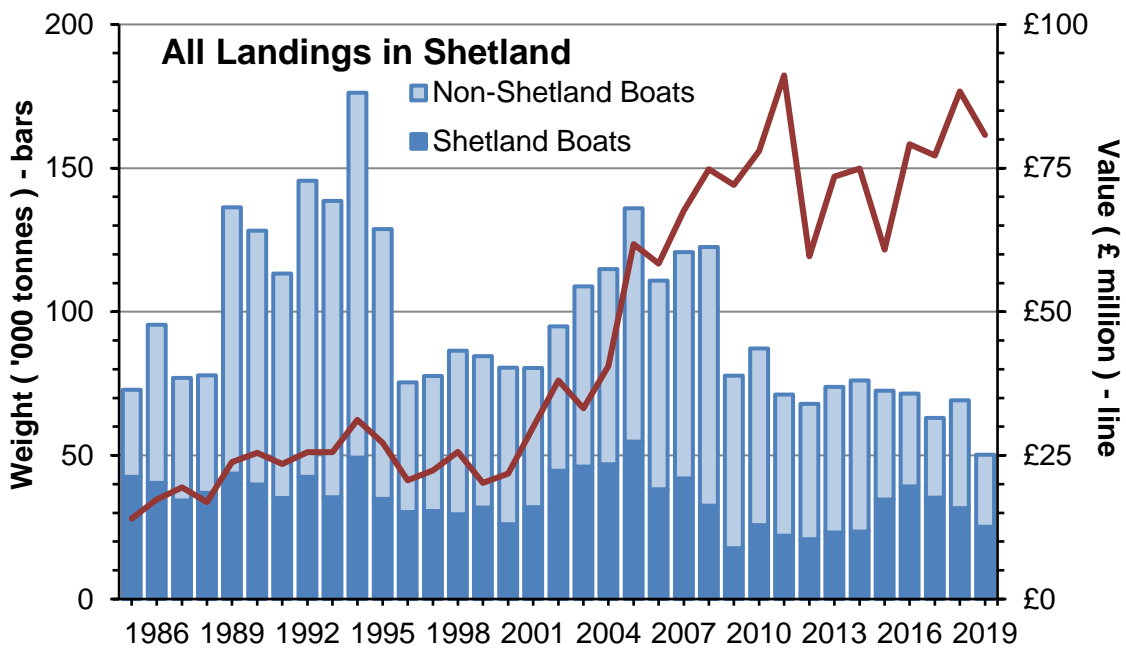


Figure 2 The weight (bars) and value (line) of all fish and shellfish landed in Shetland from 1985 to 2019.

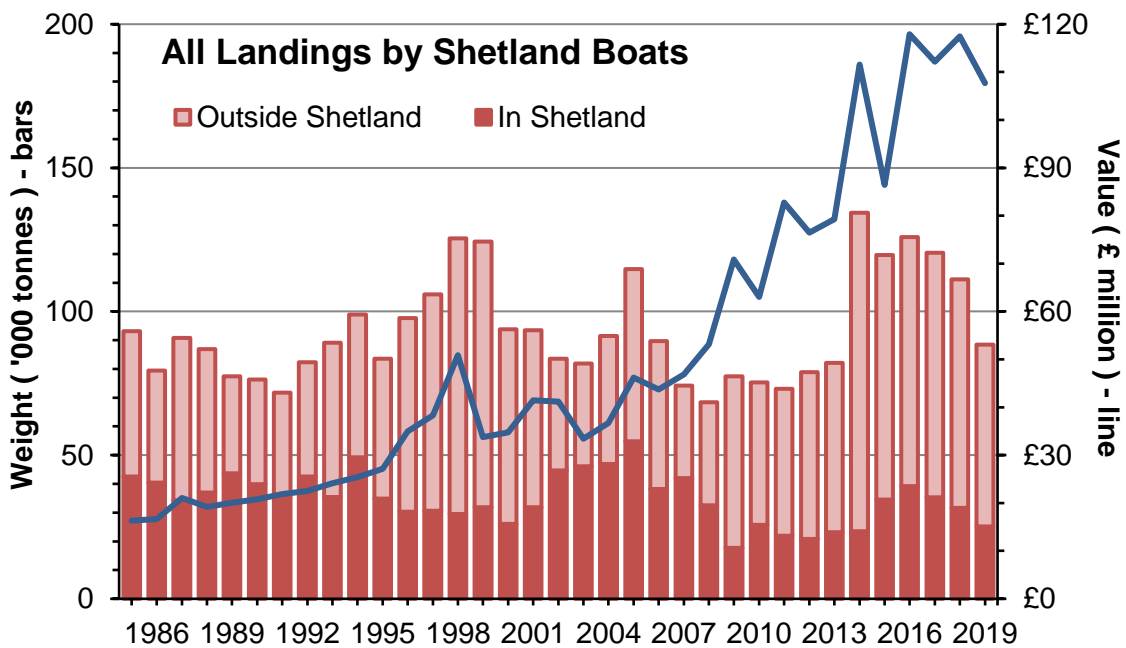


Figure 3 The weight (bars) and value (line) of all fish and shellfish landed by Shetland fishing boats from 1985 to 2019.

Composition of Landings

Pelagic species (such as mackerel and herring) and whitefish (such as cod, haddock, monks and flatfish) each accounted for just under half of the fish and shellfish landed in Shetland in 2019 by weight (Table 1). However, pelagic species accounted for only just over one-quarter of the value of landings, compared to two-thirds by whitefish, reflecting the latter's greater unit value. Shellfish such as crabs, lobsters and scallops accounted for only a small proportion of the total landings but had the highest unit-value.

More whitefish than pelagic fish was landed in Shetland in 2019 (Table 1) for the first time in at least 30 years. For most of that period pelagic fish accounted for at least two-thirds of the fish and shellfish landed in Shetland (by weight) (Figure 4). Whitefish's share of the value of fish and shellfish landed in Shetland in 2019 (64%) was the highest for more than 30 years (since 1988; 65%).

Table 1 The total weights and values of fish and shellfish landed in Shetland in 2019 by species group and their average unit-values.

	Weight		Value		Unit Value
	tonnes	%	£ m	%	£ / kg
Pelagic Fish	24,045	48%	£22.65	28%	£0.94
Whitefish	24,090	48%	£52.15	65%	£2.16
Shellfish	2,076	4%	£5.98	7%	£2.88
TOTAL	50,211		£80.78		£1.61

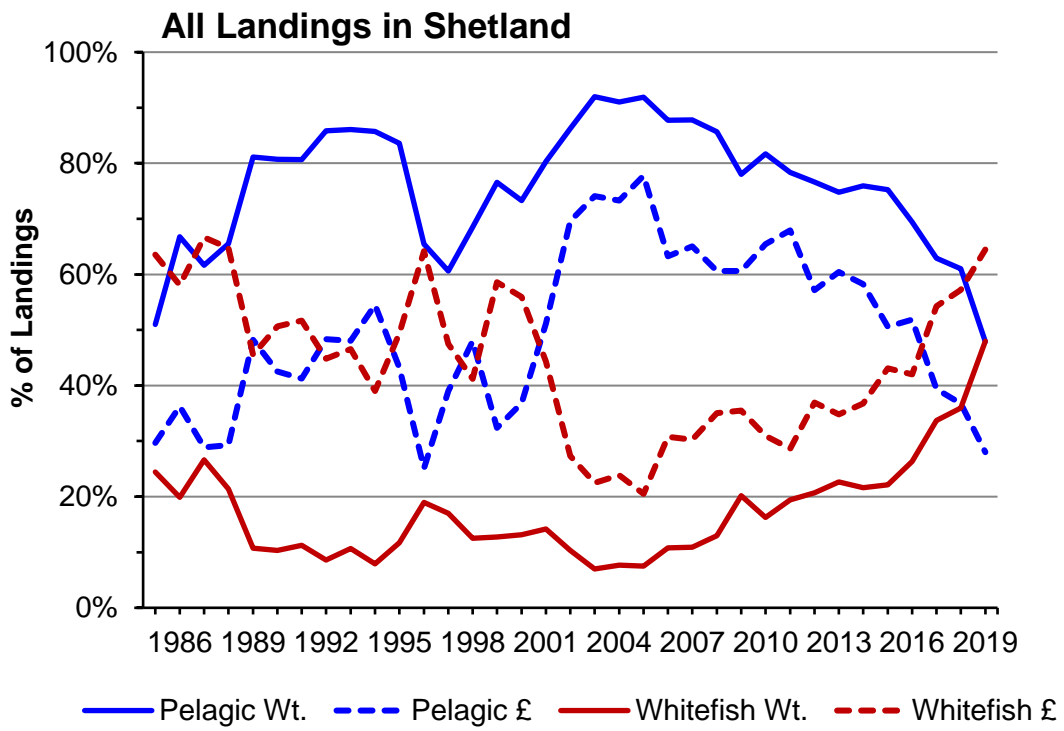


Figure 4 The weights and values of pelagic fish and whitefish as proportions of the total weight and value of all fish and shellfish landed in Shetland from 1985 to 2019.

Place of Landing

Table 2 shows the landings in Shetland in 2019 broken down by place of landing. The vast majority of the fish and shellfish landed in Shetland, and almost all of the fish, were landed in Lerwick, Scalloway or Cullivoe (96% by weight, 93% by value). Landings at other ports were predominantly of shellfish.

Table 2 The total weights and values of fish and shellfish landed in Shetland (by all boats) in 2019 by place of landing.

	Weight (tonnes)	% Wt.	Value (£ 000s)	% £
Baltasound	3		£7	
Uyeasound	23		£45	
Burravoe	14		£35	
Cullivoe	2,987	6%	£6,432	8%
Mid Yell	42		£91	
North Isles Total	3,068	6%	£6,609	8%
Collafirth	280		£682	
Eshaness	73		£195	
North Roe to Hillswick	42		£109	
Northmavine	0		£3	
Northmavine Total	395	1%	£990	1%
Sullom	169		£1,059	
Sullom / Toft	75		£178	
Vidlin	59		£126	
Voe	1		£1	
Central Mainland Total	303	1%	£1,364	2%
Symbister	305		£823	
Skerries	68		£146	
Whalsay / Skerries Total	373	1%	£969	1%
Aith	34		£71	
Skeld	179		£514	
West Burrafirth	418		£982	
Walls	2		£12	
West Mainland	1		£7	
West Mainland Total	634	1%	£1,585	2%
Burra (Hamnavoe)	56		£116	
Sandwick	113		£193	
Dunrossness and Fair Isle	44		£88	
South Mainland Total	213	0%	£397	0%
Lerwick	38,357	76%	£52,884	65%
Scalloway	6,869	14%	£15,987	20%
OVERALL TOTAL	50,211		£80,785	

National Context

In a national context, about one-fifth of all the finfish⁴ landed in Scotland in 2018 (19% by weight, 21% by value), and just under one-sixth of all landings in the UK (16% by weight, 17% by value), were made in Shetland (Figure 5).

More fish and shellfish were landed in Shetland – and in Lerwick - in 2019 than in any other port in the UK, except Peterhead (Figure 6).

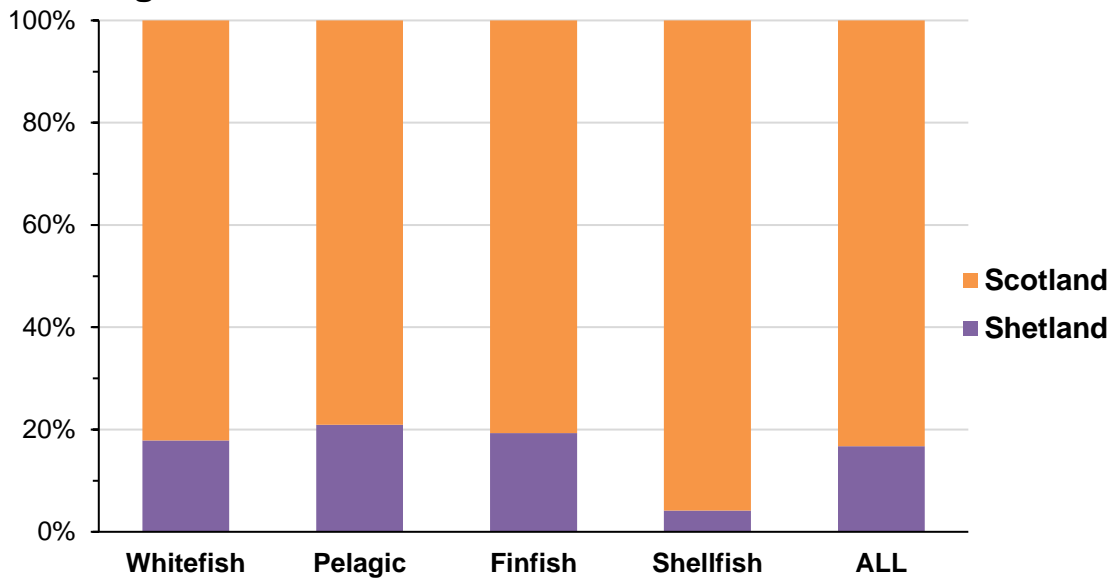
Overall, Scalloway ranked 13th in the UK for the weight of fish and shellfish landed, and Cullivoe 22nd.

The weight of finfish landed in Shetland in 2019 (45,100 tonnes) was greater than that landed in all of England and Wales (42,400 tonnes).

Shetland fishing boats accounted for almost one-quarter (23% by weight) of all the fish and shellfish landed by Scottish fishing boats in 2019, and 14% (by weight) of all the landings by UK boats (Figure 7).

⁴ Whitefish and pelagic fish.

Landings in Scotland



Landings in the UK

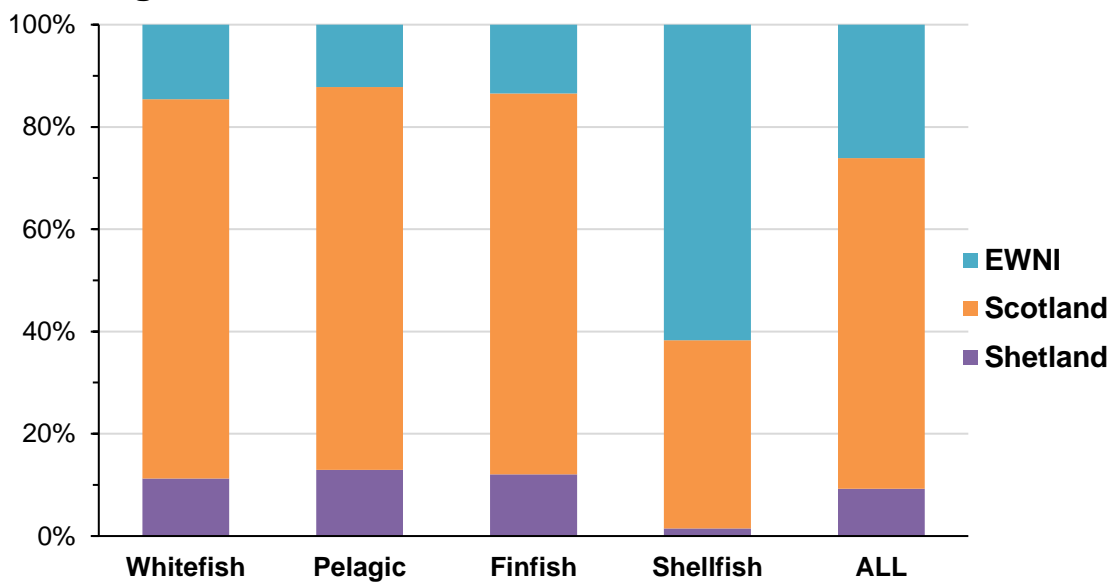
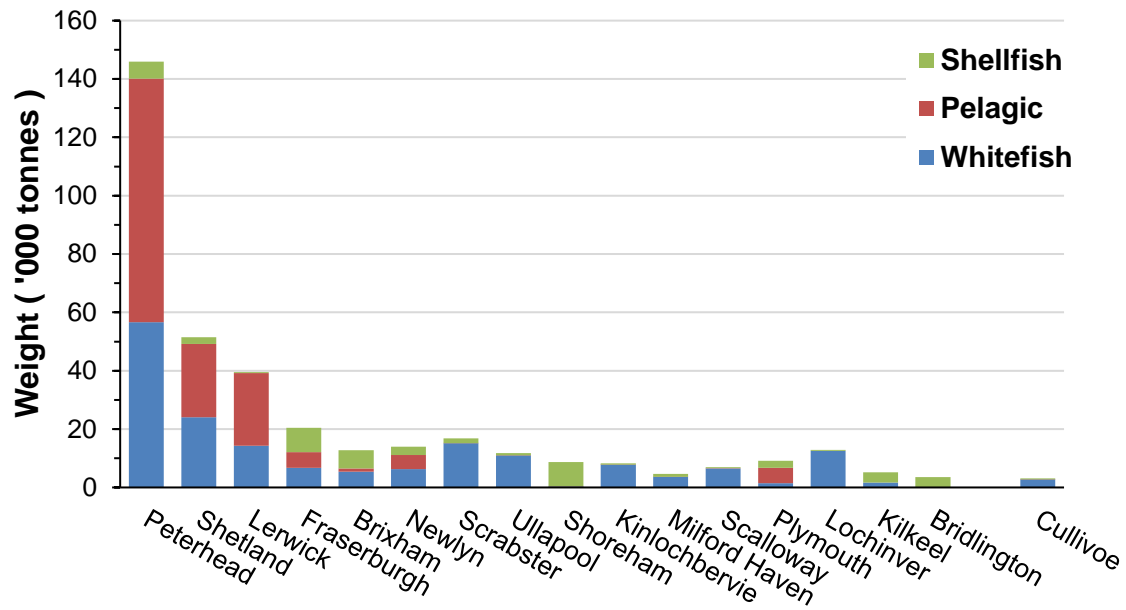


Figure 5 Breakdowns of all fish and shellfish landed in Scotland (top) and in the UK (bottom) in 2019 showing the proportions (by weight) landed in Shetland, in the rest of Scotland and in England, Wales and Northern Ireland ('EWNI').

Weight of Landings



Value of Landings

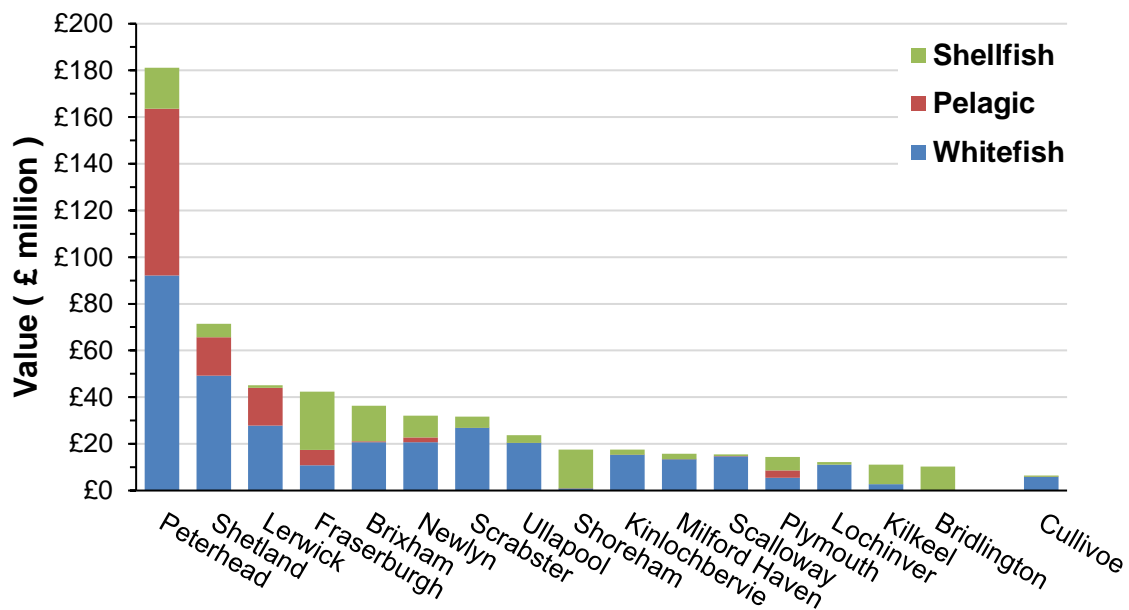
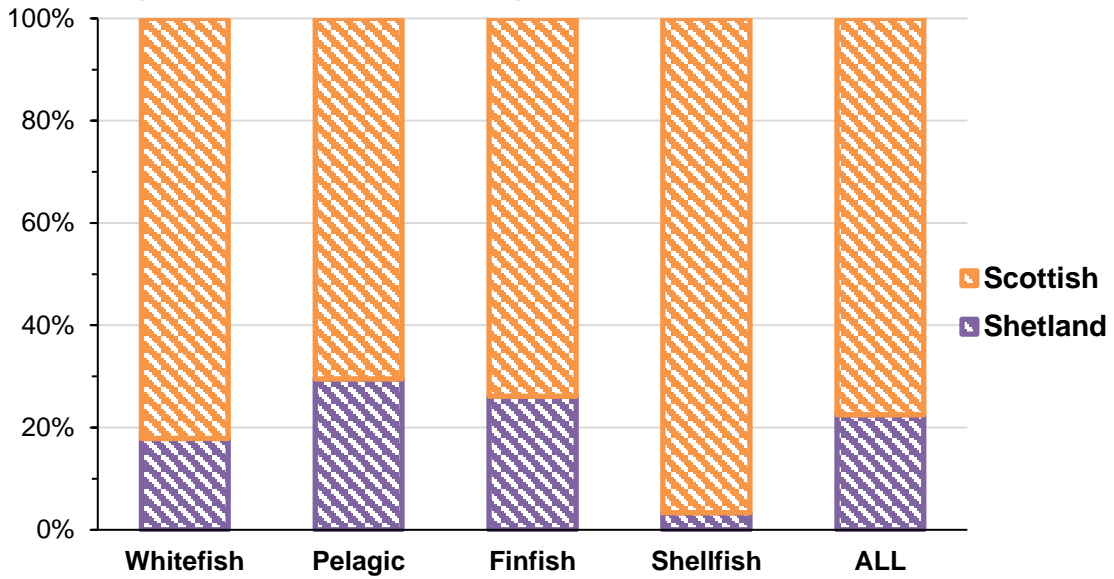


Figure 6 The weights (top) and values (bottom) of fish and shellfish landed in the top-15 UK ports in 2019, plus Cullivoe. Totals for Shetland are also shown. (Ports are ranked by value of landings.)

Landings by Scottish Fishing Boats



Landings by UK Fishing Boats

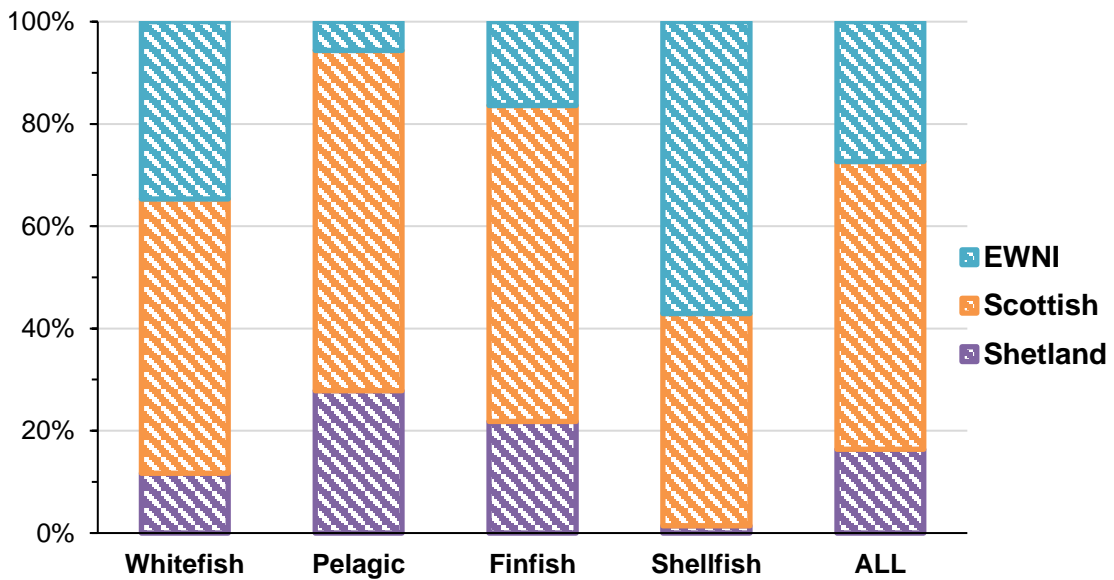


Figure 7 Breakdowns of all landings of fish and shellfish in 2019 by Scottish Boats (top) and UK boats (bottom) showing the proportions (by weight) landed by Shetland boats, other Scottish boats and other UK boats ('EWNI' = England, Wales and Northern Ireland.)

Whitefish

'Whitefish' (also referred to as 'demersal' fish) includes cod, haddock, whiting, monkfish, flatfish and similar species. Some shellfish (cuttlefish, nephrops and squid) are included in these figures as around Shetland they are predominantly caught in the whitefish fishery.

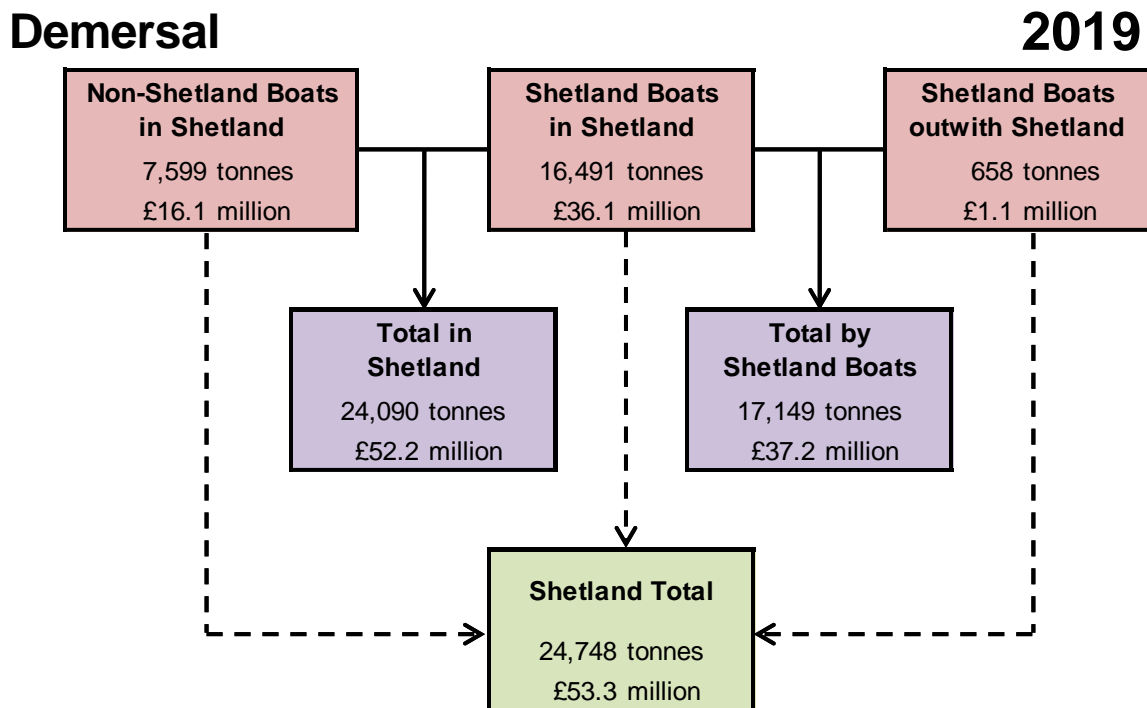


Figure 8 Summary breakdown of the weight and value of whitefish landed in Shetland and by Shetland fishing boats in 2019.

About 24,000 tonnes of whitefish, worth some £52 million were landed in Shetland in 2019 (Figure 8). Although the weight landed was slightly less than in 2018 (3% less) the value was slightly greater (3% more) (Figure 9).

More than two-thirds of the whitefish landed in Shetland in 2019 (68% by weight, 69% by value) was landed by local fishing boats. (Figure 9).

Despite the reduction, the weight of whitefish landed in Shetland in 2019 was the second highest ever, only slightly below the 2018 record, while their value was the highest ever (Figure 11).

Shetland fishing boats landed just over 17,000 tonnes of whitefish (everywhere) in 2019, worth some £37 million (Figure 8), almost all of it in Shetland (96% by weight, 97% by value). The weight of those landings was slightly less than in 2018 (7% less by weight, 3% less by value) (Figure 10).

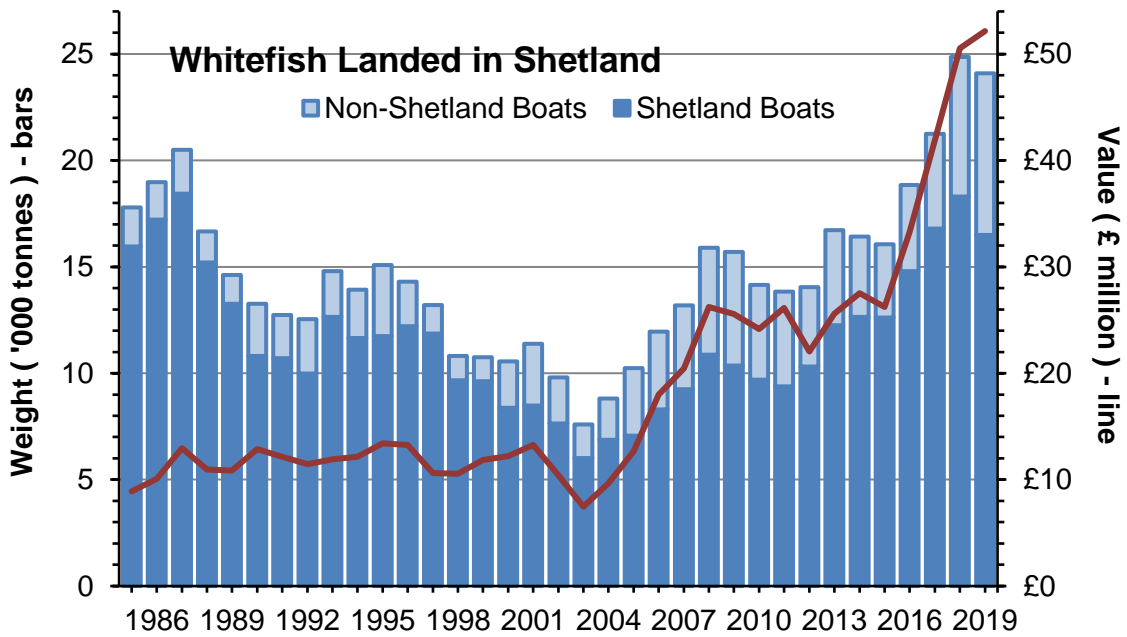


Figure 9 The weight (bars) and value (line) of whitefish landed in Shetland from 1985 to 2019.

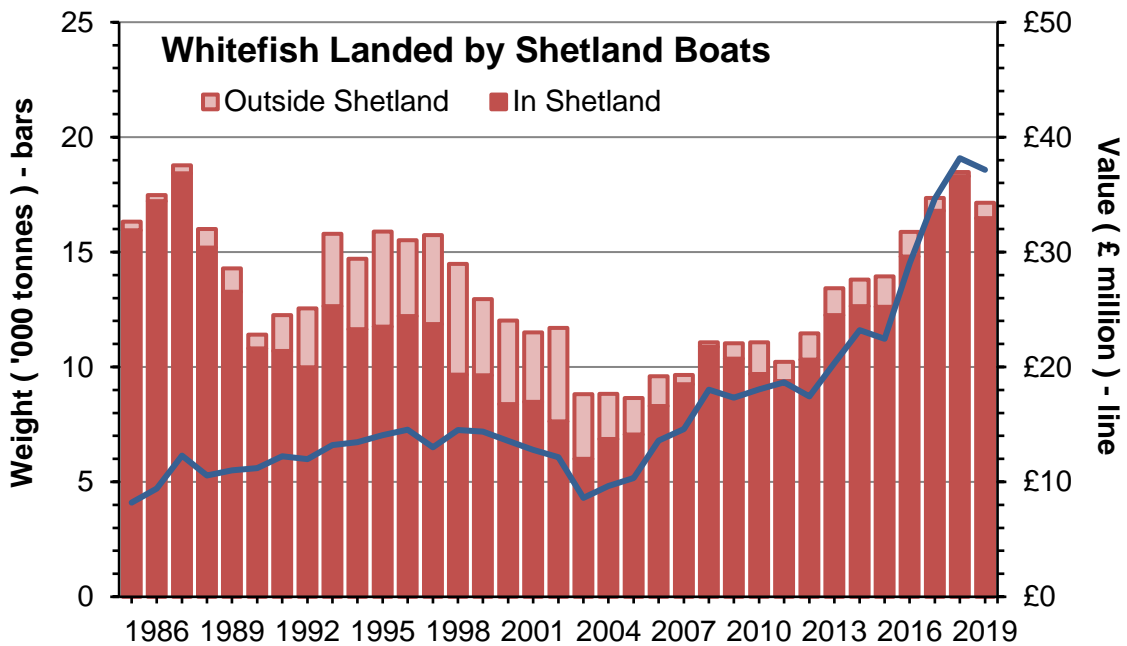


Figure 10 The weight (bars) and value (line) of whitefish landed by Shetland fishing boats from 1985 to 2019.

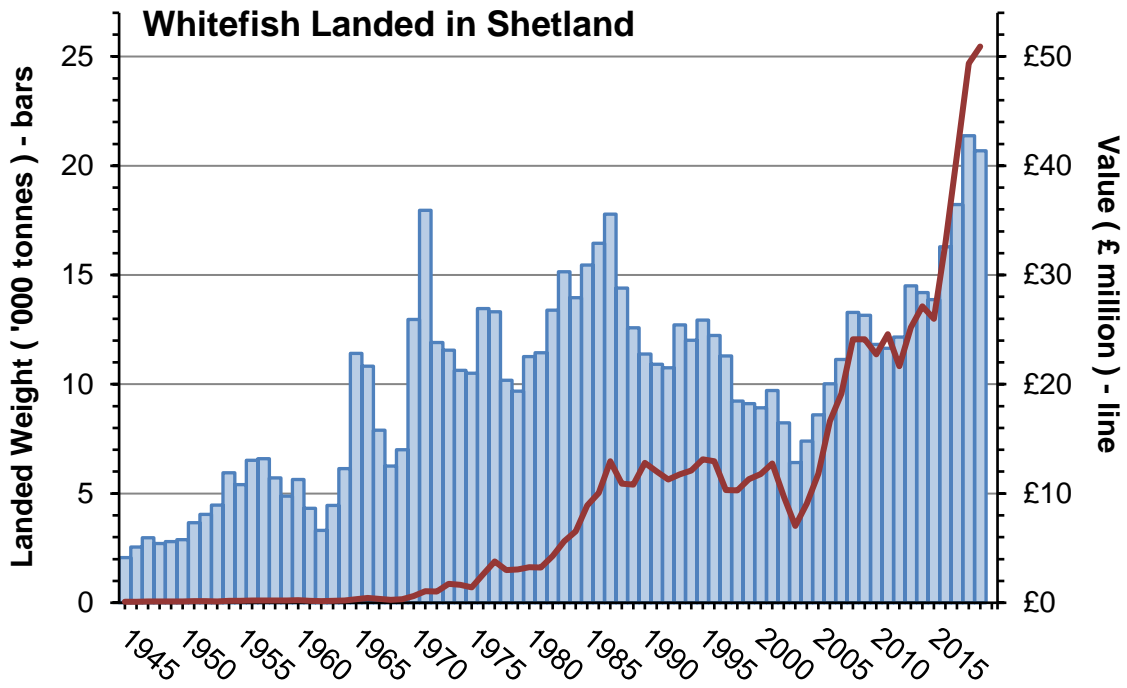


Figure 11 The estimated weight (bars) and value (line) of whitefish landed in Shetland from 1945 to 2019. Based on a preliminary analysis of pre-1990 Shetland fisheries statistics. NOTE: This chart shows the landed (gutted) weight so is not directly comparable with other figures in this report.

Composition of Whitefish Landings

Cod was by far the principal whitefish species landed in Shetland in 2019 (Table 3), accounting for one-quarter of all the whitefish landed (24% by weight) and almost one-third by value (31%) (Table 3).

By weight, cod was followed in importance by whiting, saithe and haddock, and by value by monks, hake and haddock (Table 3).

The weights and values of hake, whiting, saithe, ling and lemon sole landed in Shetland increased substantially from 2018 to 2019 while there were large falls in the weights and values of haddock and plaice landed (Figure 12).

Table 3 The top-10 whitefish species (ranked by value) landed in Shetland in 2018.

Species	Weight		Value	
	tonnes	%	£ m	%
Cod	5,630	24%	£15.61	31%
Monks	2,256	9%	£7.28	14%
Hake	2,505	11%	£5.78	11%
Haddock	2,973	12%	£5.69	11%
Whiting	3,226	14%	£4.33	8%
Saithe	3,108	13%	£2.91	6%
Megrim	784	3%	£2.65	5%
Ling	1,644	7%	£2.37	5%
Lemon Sole	341	1%	£1.58	3%
Plaice	562	2%	£1.06	2%
Others	762	3%	£1.65	3%
Total	23,791	100%	£50.91	100%

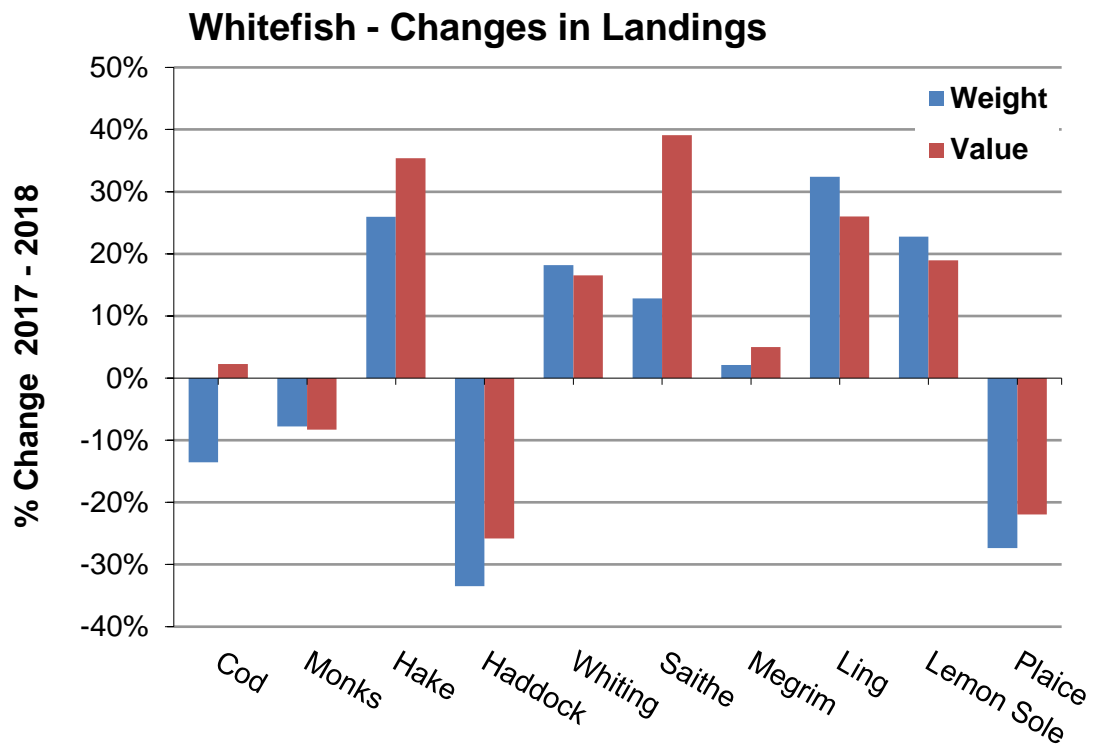


Figure 12 Percentage changes in the weight and value of landings of the top-10 whitefish species (by value) in Shetland from 2018 to 2019.

Place of Whitefish Landing

Well over half of the whitefish landed in Shetland in 2019 was landed in Lerwick, just over one-quarter in Scalloway and 11% in Cullivoe (Yell) (Figure 13).

The weight of whitefish landed in Lerwick increased slightly (by 4%) from 2018 to 2019, while the weights landed in Scalloway and Cullivoe both fell by about 14% (Figure 14).

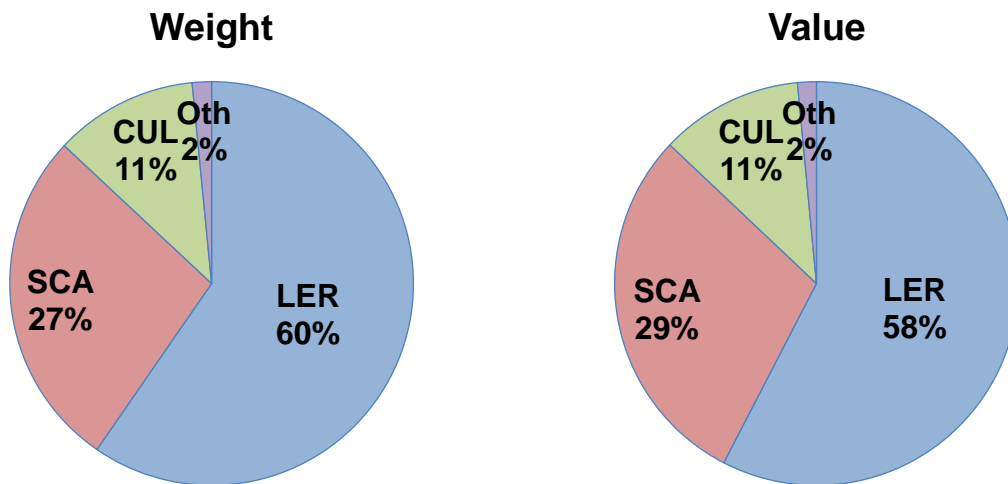


Figure 13 The proportions of the weight and value of whitefish landed in Shetland in 2019 landed in Lerwick ('LER'), Scalloway ('SCA'), Cullivoe ('CUL') and other Shetland ports ('Oth').

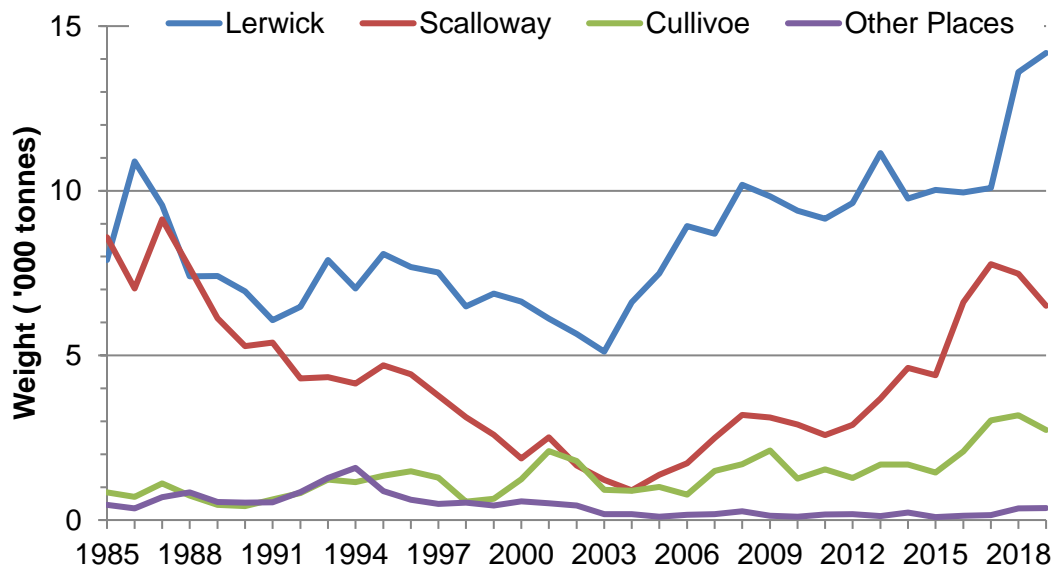


Figure 14 The weights of whitefish landed in Lerwick, Scalloway, Cullivoe and other places in Shetland from 1990 to 2019

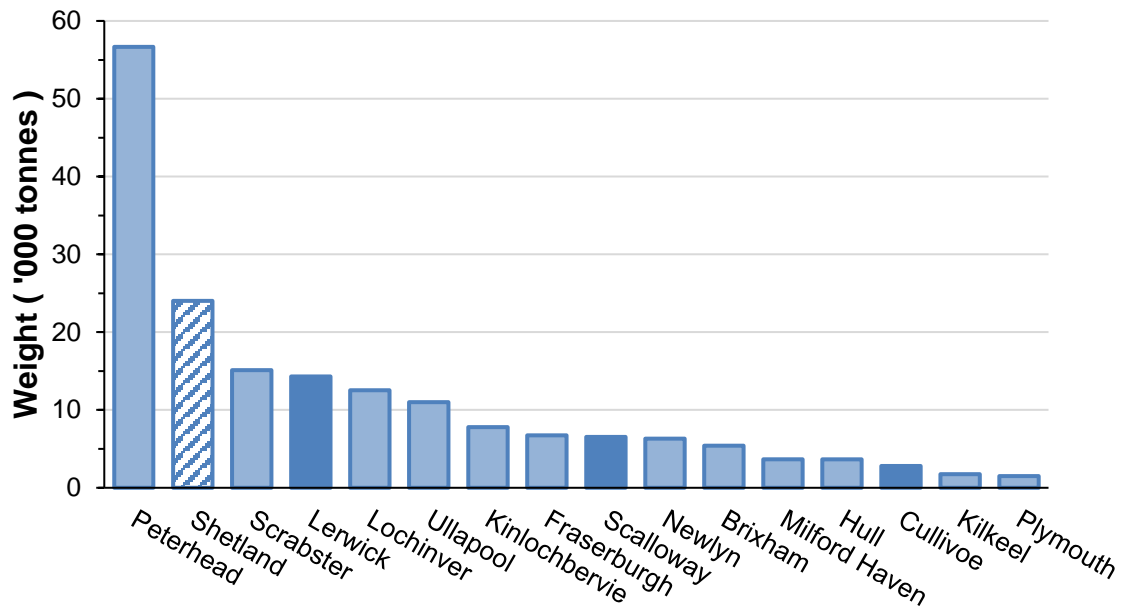
National Context

In a national context, Shetland accounted for about one-fifth of all the whitefish landed in Scotland in 2019 (18% by weight, 21% by value), and 14% of all the whitefish landed in the UK (by weight; 16% by value). More whitefish was landed in Shetland than in any other port in the UK except Peterhead (Figure 15),

Lerwick, Scalloway and Cullivoe were all in the top 15 UK ports for whitefish landings (Figure 15), and in the top-10 Scottish ports.

Shetland fishing boats accounted for 18% of the whitefish landed by Scottish fishing boats in 2019 and 10% of the landings by UK boats.

Weight of Landings - Whitefish



Value of Landings - Whitefish

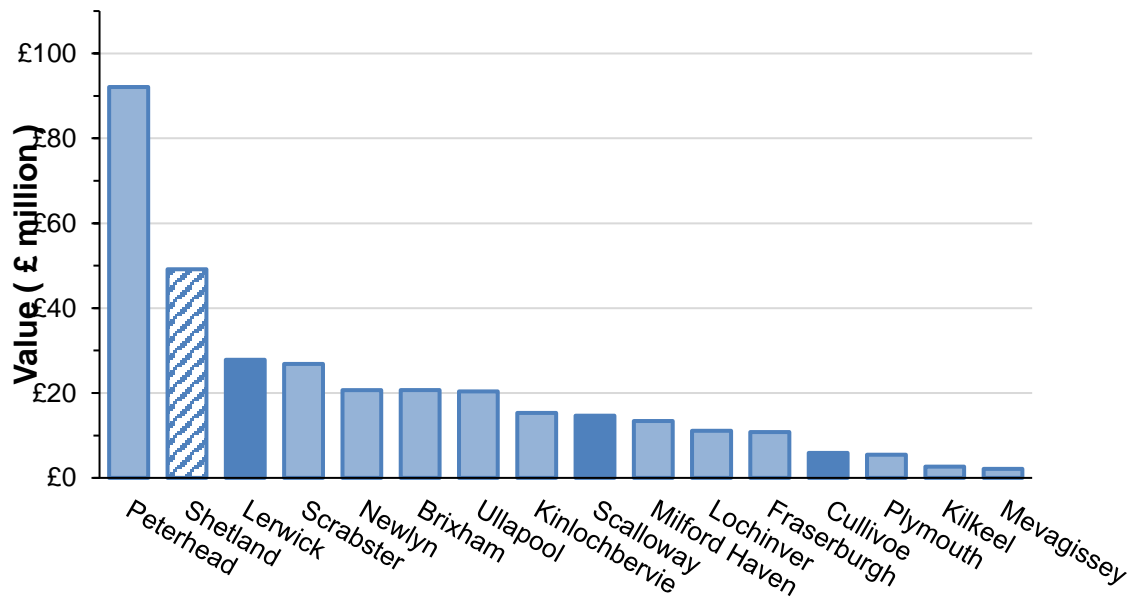


Figure 15 The weights (top) and values (bottom) of whitefish landed in the top-15 UK ports in 2019, and the totals for Shetland as a whole.

Pelagic Fish

Pelagic fish include mackerel, herring, blue whiting and similar species. Past pelagic landings have included both landings for human consumption and for reduction to fish meal, although they are now almost entirely for human consumption.

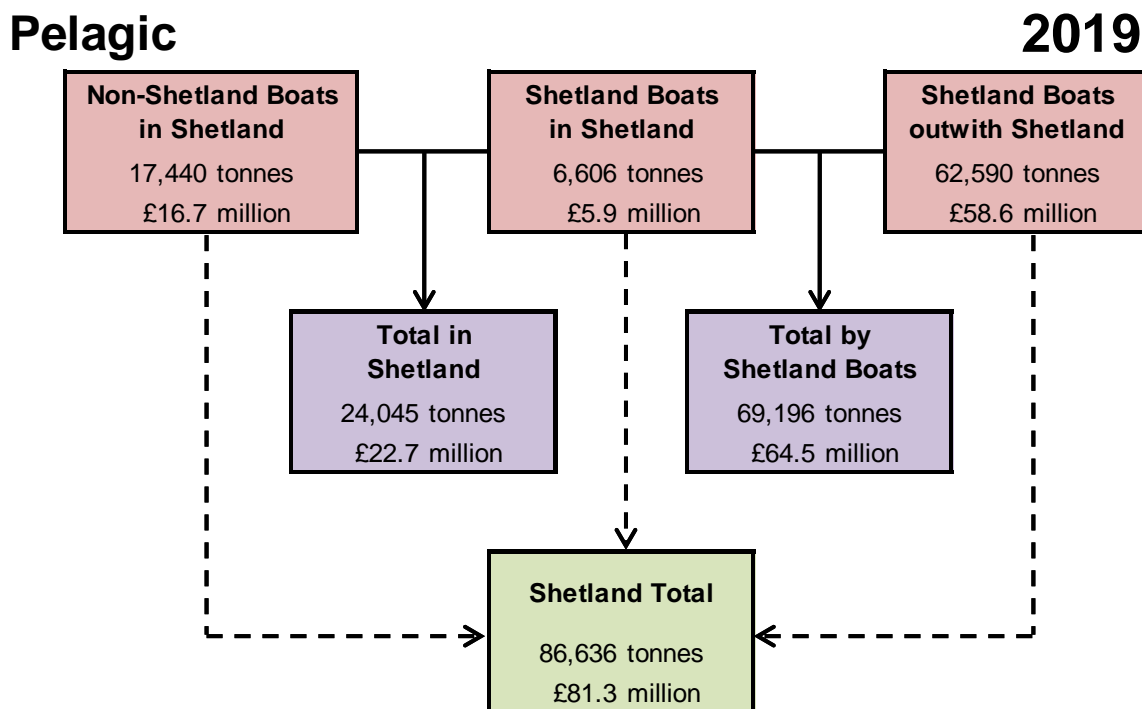


Figure 16 Summary breakdown of the weight and value of pelagic fish landed in Shetland and by Shetland boats in 2019.

About 24,000 tonnes of pelagic fish, worth about £23 million were landed in Shetland in 2019 (Figure 16). That was substantially less than in 2018 (43% less by weight, 30% less by value) and the lowest quantity of pelagic fish landed in Shetland since at least the mid-1980s (Figure 17).

This fall in pelagic fish landings in Shetland follows the takeover of the Shetland Catch factory in Lerwick (where most of the pelagic fish landed in Shetland is landed) by the Norwegian company Pelagia AS and may reflect company management decisions.

About one quarter of the pelagic fish landed in Shetland in 2019 (27% by weight, 26% by value) was landed by local fishing boats (Figure 17).

Shetland fishing boats landed about 69,000 tonnes of pelagic fish (everywhere) in 2019, worth about £64 million (Figure 16). The weight of those landings was about

one-quarter (24%) less than in 2018 and their value about 13% less (Figure 18) reflecting reductions in the quotas for mackerel and herring in 2019.

Mackerel accounted for well over half (58%) of the pelagic fish landed in Shetland in 2019 and three-quarters (74%) of their value. Herring made up virtually all of the balance.

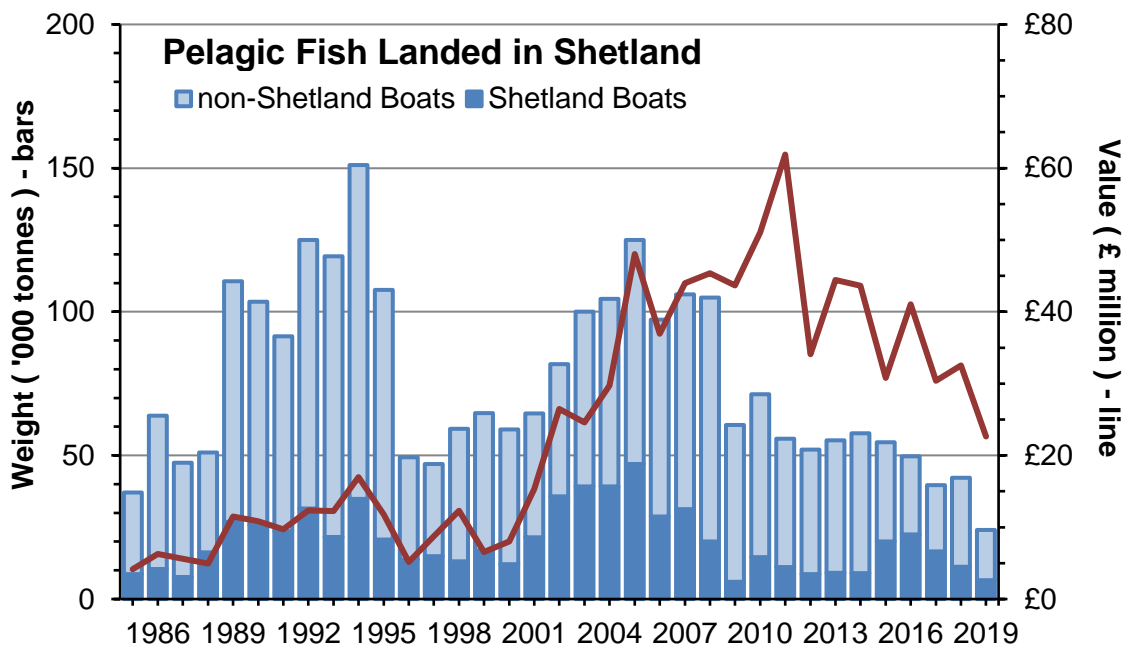


Figure 17 The weight (bars) and value (line) of pelagic fish landed in Shetland from 1985 to 2019.

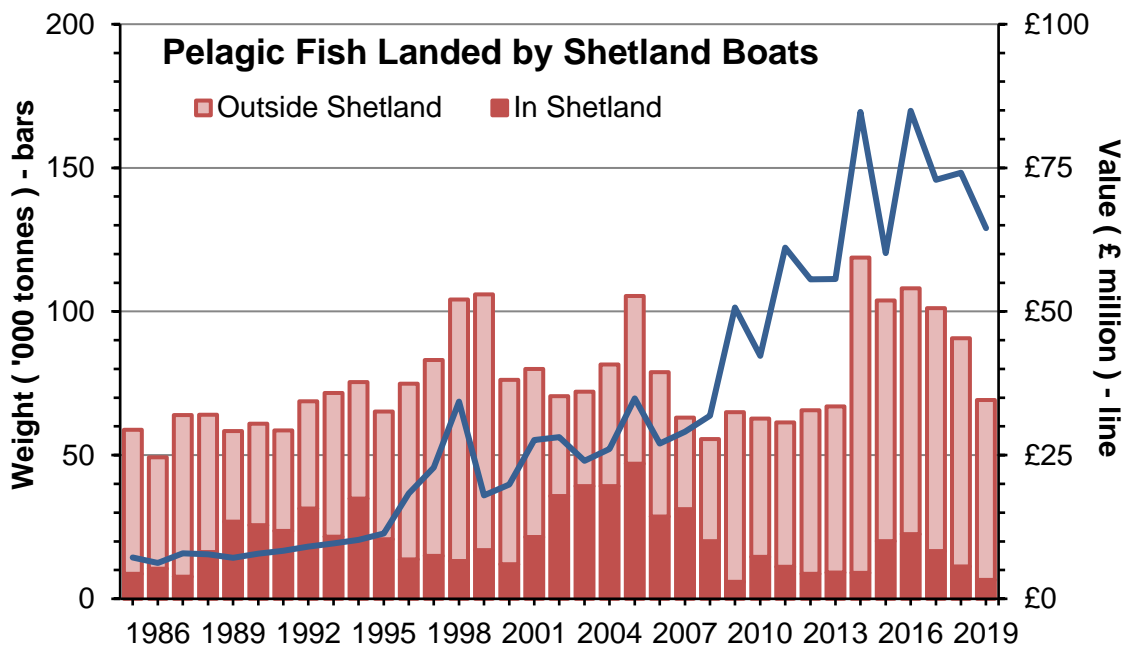


Figure 18 The weight (bars) and value (line) of pelagic fish landed by Shetland boats from 1985 to 2019.

Hand-Line Caught Mackerel

Although the vast majority of pelagic fish landed in Shetland are caught by large pelagic fishing boats and landed to the Shetland Catch factory in Lerwick, landings of mackerel caught by hand-line from small-boats have expanded substantially in recent years. The quantity of hand-line caught mackerel sold through the Shetland Seafood Auction increased by two-thirds from 2018 to 2019 (Figure 19) and will be substantially higher again in 2020.

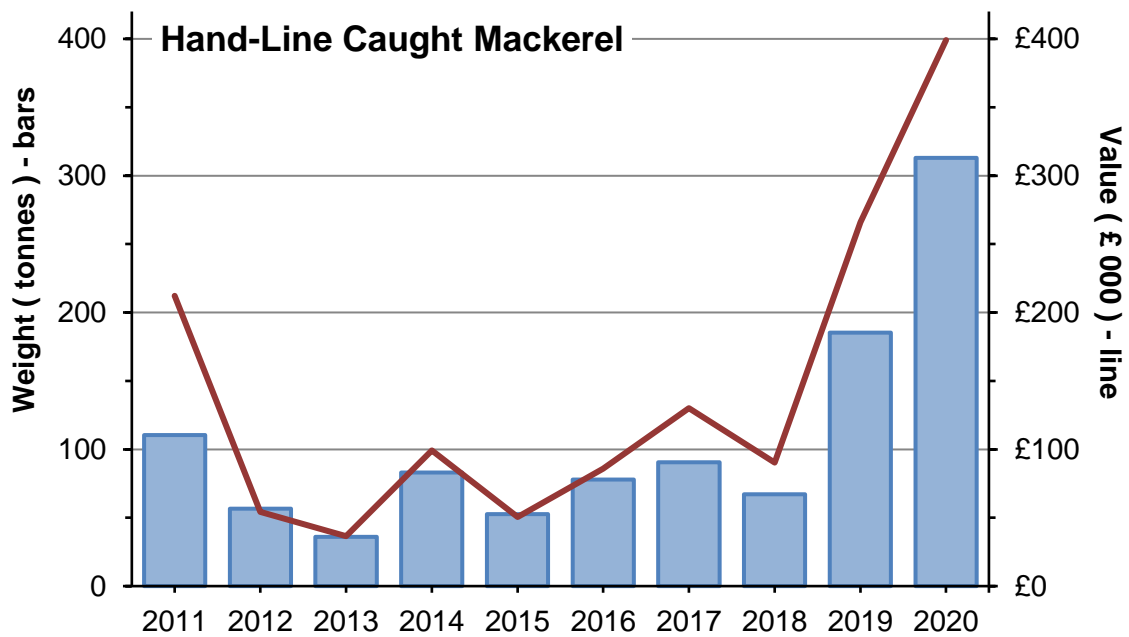


Figure 19 The weight (bars) and value (line) of hand-line caught mackerel sold through the Shetland Seafood Auction from 2011 to 2020. (Values for 2020 are to the end of October.)

Shellfish

Shellfish includes lobsters, crabs, scallops and buckies (whelks). Some shellfish species (cuttlefish, nephrops and squid) are not included in these figures but instead included in the whitefish figures as they are predominantly caught by whitefish boats around Shetland.

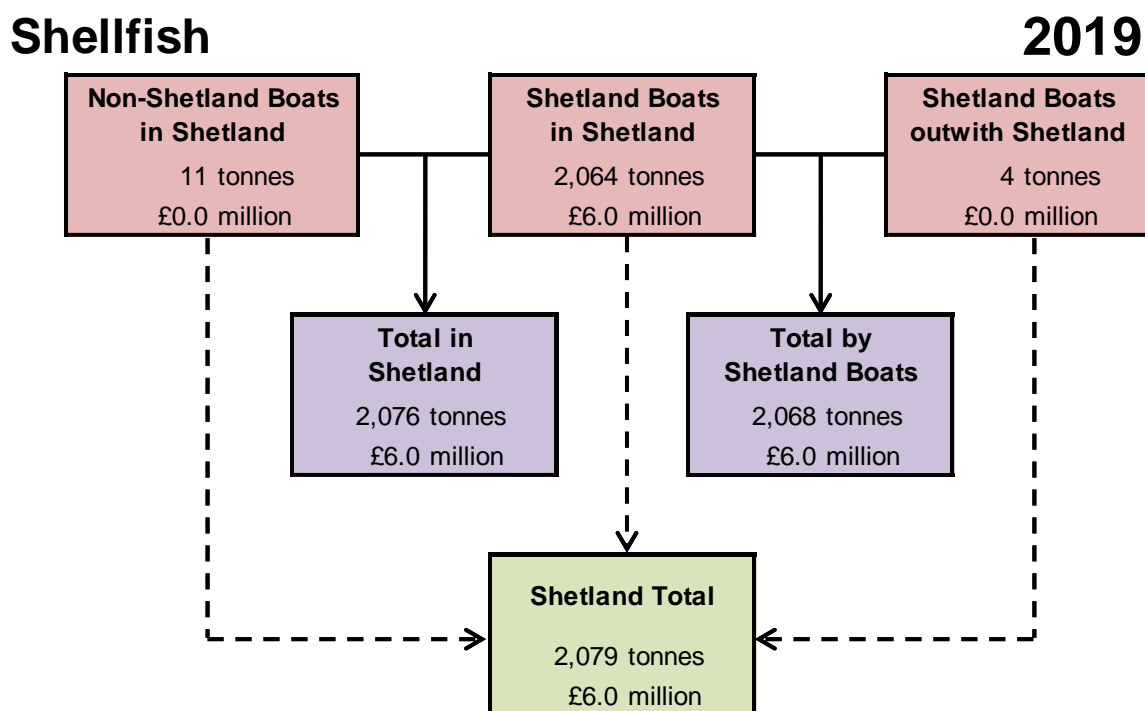


Figure 20 Summary breakdown of the weight and value of shellfish landed in Shetland and by Shetland boats in 2019.

Just over 2,000 tonnes of shellfish worth £6 million were landed in Shetland in 2019 (Figure 20). That was slightly less than in 2018 by weight (by 1%) but slightly (1%) greater in value (Figure 21).

Virtually all of the shellfish landed in Shetland (99%) was landed by Shetland fishing boats (Figure 21) and virtually all of the shellfish landed by Shetland boats was landed in Shetland (Figure 22).

The weight landed by Shetland fishing boats increased slightly (by 3%) from 2018 to 2019 while their value increased by 16% (Figure 22). The value of shellfish landings by local boats has more than doubled over the last decade.

The quantity of shellfish landed outside Shetland by local boats in 2019 was negligible.

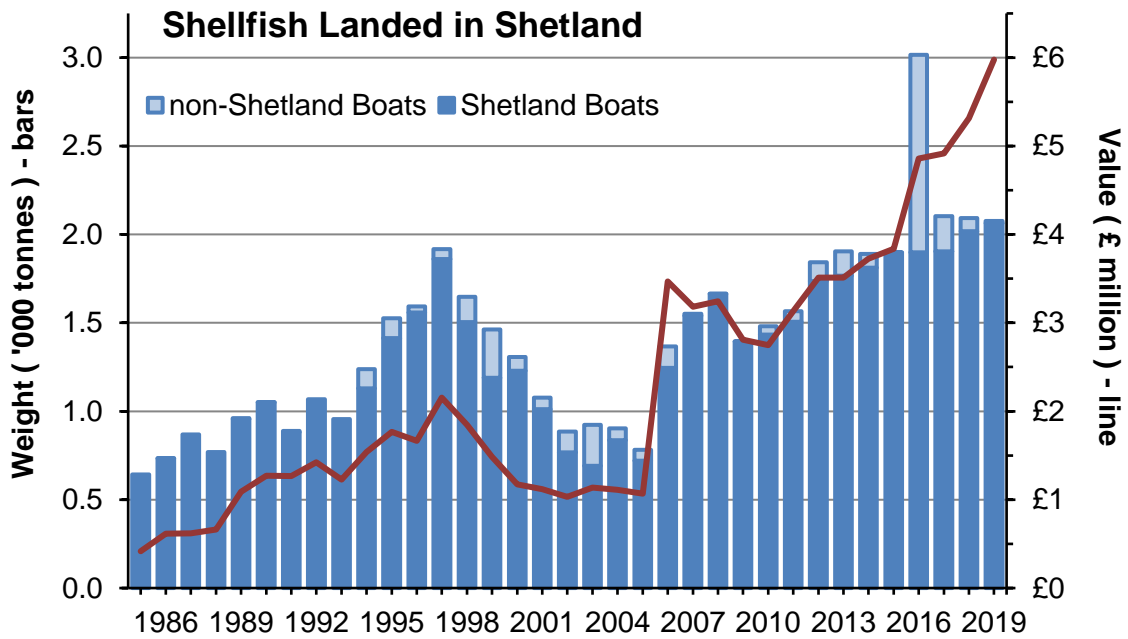


Figure 21 The weight (bars) and value (line) of shellfish landed in Shetland from 1985 to 2019. (The jump in landings from 2005 to 2006 reflects an improvement in data collection arising from the registration of buyers and sellers.)

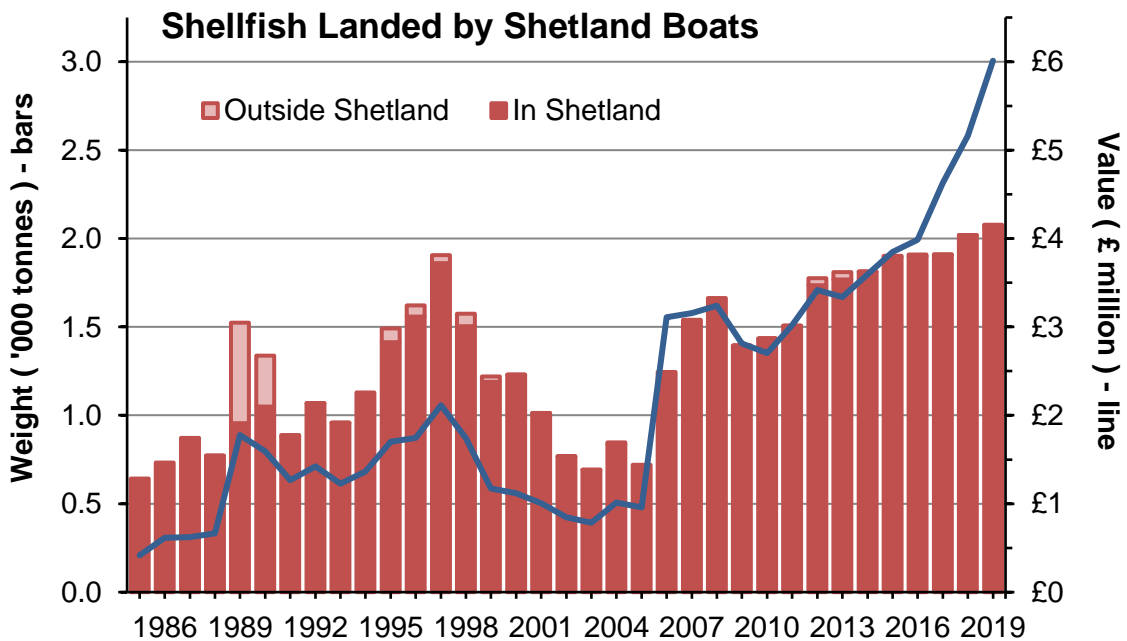


Figure 22 The weight (bars) and value (line) of shellfish landed by Shetland fishing boats from 1985 to 2018. (The jump in landings from 2005 to 2006 reflects an improvement in data collection arising from the registration of buyers and sellers.)

The Queen Scallop Fishery

The large increase in the quantity of shellfish landed in Shetland in 2016 was largely the result of the development of a substantial offshore queen scallop fishery south-west of Shetland by a small fleet of visiting fishing boats. More than 1,100 tonnes of queen scallops, worth almost £1 million, were landed in Shetland in 2016, compared to only seven tonnes in 2015 (Figure 23).

Although some landings of queen scallops by these nomadic fishing boats continued in 2017, the quantity landed was substantially less than in 2016 at only 129 tonnes and £140,000, as they largely transferred their effort elsewhere, and this downwards trend continued with 50 tonnes of queens landed in Shetland in 2018 and only 4 tonnes in 2019 (all by local fishing boats) (Figure 23).

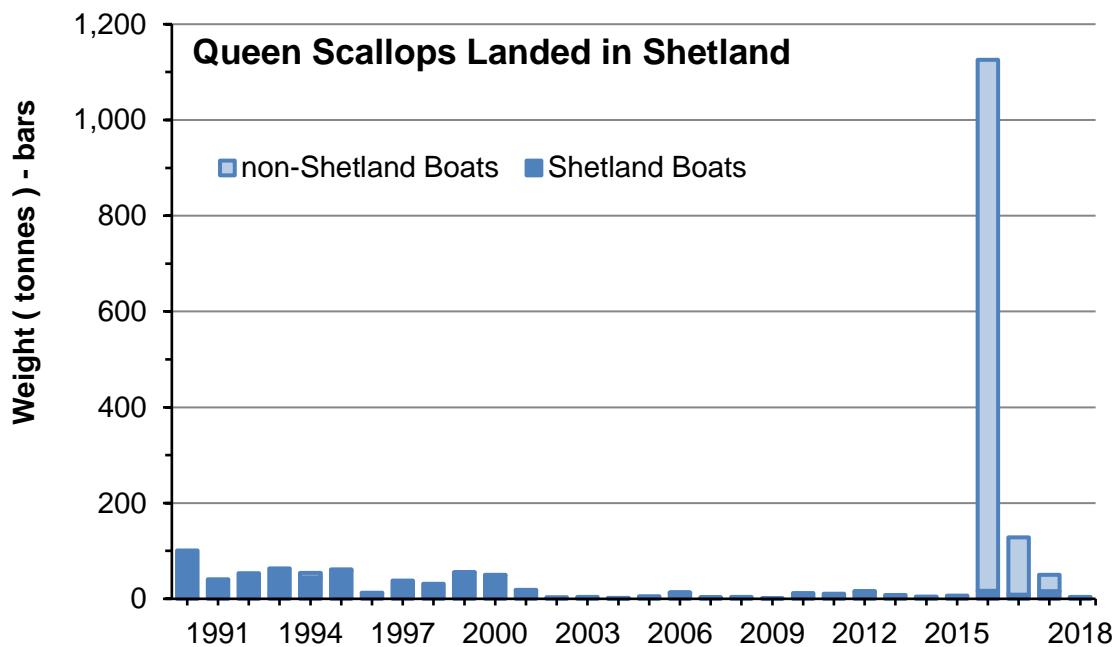


Figure 23 The weight of queen scallops landed in Shetland from 1990 to 2019.

Composition of Shellfish Landings

Scallops accounted for more than half of the shellfish landed in Shetland in 2019 (Table 4). Edible (brown) crabs and lobsters together made up another third of the total value, although lobsters accounted for only a small proportion of the weight.

Table 4 The top-6 shellfish species (ranked by value) landed in Shetland in 2019.

Species	Weight		Value	
	tonnes	%	£ 000	%
Scallops	1,099	53%	£3,255	54%
Crabs - Edible	493	24%	£1,163	19%
Lobsters	46	2%	£733	12%
Crabs – Velvet	158	8%	£511	9%
Whelks	270	13%	£306	5%
Others	9	0%	£10	0%
Total	2,076	100%	£5,978	100%

Place of Shellfish Landings

Landings of shellfish were much more widely distributed around Shetland in 2019 than those of whitefish or pelagic fish, with no landing place especially dominant (Figure 24). Lerwick and Collafirth accounted for about one-quarter of the shellfish landed in Shetland (by value) and Skeld, Cullivoe and West Burrafirth another quarter. Other than Scalloway no other landing place accounted for more than 3% of the total.

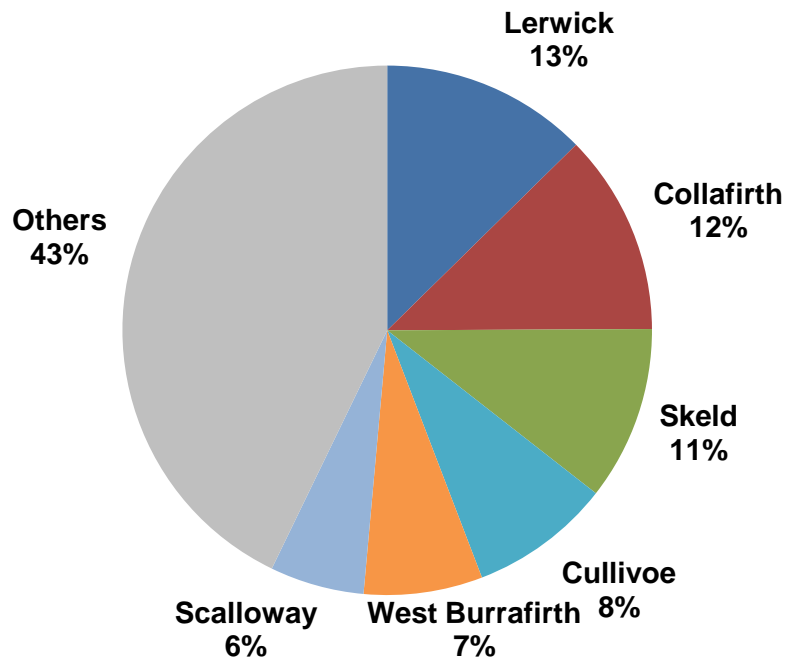


Figure 24 Breakdown of landings of shellfish in Shetland in 2019 by place of landing (by value).

Landings from the ‘Shetland EEZ’

It is estimated that an average of almost 450,000 tonnes of fish and shellfish, worth some £370 million, were landed annually from the Shetland part of the UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (Figure 25) by UK and EU boats between 2016 and 2018⁵. These figures certainly underestimate the true weight and value of landings from this area as they do not include landings by Norwegian and Faroese fishing boats.

The fish and shellfish landed from the ‘Shetland EEZ’ represents a relatively large proportion of the landings from the UK EEZ: While the ‘Shetland EEZ’ accounts for 17% of the area of the UK EEZ it accounts for one-third of all the landings. For demersal and pelagic fish, the proportions are even higher (37% and 40% respectively).

These figures suggest that the ‘yield’ from the ‘Shetland EEZ’ – the landings per unit area – is substantially higher than from the rest of the UK EEZ: Overall the yield from the ‘Shetland EEZ’ is double that from the rest of the UK EEZ and for demersal and pelagic fish it is greater still.

Despite the high yield from the ‘Shetland EEZ’ Shetland fishing boats catch only a small proportion (14%) of the fish and shellfish landed from this area. And only a small proportion (15%) of the fish and shellfish caught in the ‘Shetland EEZ’ is landed in Shetland. If Norwegian and Faroese landings were included these proportions would be even smaller.

⁵ For further details see: Napier, Ian R. (2020). Fish Landings from the ‘Shetland EEZ’. NAFC Report. Available at: www.nafc.uhi.ac.uk/eez-reports.

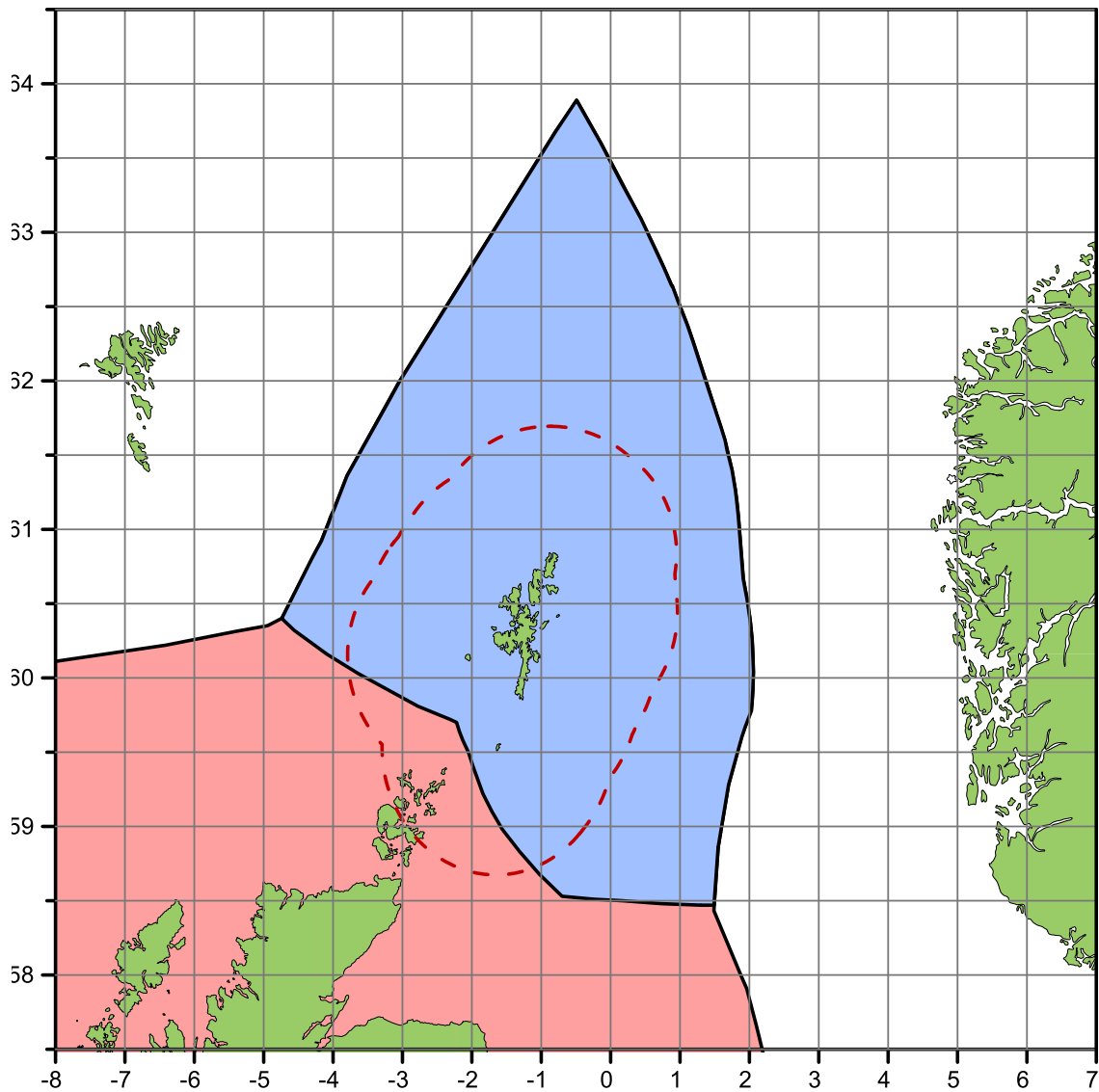


Figure 25 The 'Shetland EEZ'; that part of the United Kingdom's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) adjacent to Shetland (north of a median line between Shetland and the rest of the UK). The dashed line indicates the area within 50 nautical miles of Shetland's coastline.

