Scottish Transport Statistics 2021

Water Transport

Contents

1.   Introduction

1.1   This chapter provides information about foreign and domestic freight traffic at Scottish ports and inland waterways by type of freight and country of origin and destination. It also includes statistics on passengers and vehicles carried on ferry routes operating in Scotland and routes between Scotland and Northern Ireland and Europe as well as some statistics on HM Coastguard search and rescue operations.

1.2   Port traffic statistics methodology changed in 2000, to comply with the requirements of a new EC Maritime Statistics Directive. This produced large changes in the figures for one-port and coastwise traffic, and in the split between domestic and foreign traffic, between 1999 and 2000. Details of the method and notes on the effect of the change are given in the water transport section of the user guide.

1.3   From 2015 DfT no longer publish a Scottish data for coastwise, one port and inland waterway traffic and we are unable to update tables 9.1, 9.9 and 9.11 as fully as we previously did.

> **Transport and travel habits in Scotland were profoundly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with restrictions on travel and daily activity in place for large parts of 2020.**

Key Points

- **There were 59 million tonnes of freight handled by ports in Scotland in 2020.**
- **There was a total of 4.1 million passengers and 1.7 million vehicles carried on ferry routes within Scotland in 2020.**
- **There were 0.85 million passengers and 0.25 million vehicles carried between Scotland and Northern Ireland in 2020.**

2.   Main Points

Freight Tonnage

2.1   Exports through major (see section 9.16.3 page 278) Scottish ports rose from 61 million tonnes in 1997 to 68 million tonnes in 2002 before steadily falling to 30 million tonnes in 2020 (there has been a 25% fall in the last ten years) - eight ports were counted as major ports in 1997 and 1998, there were nine in 1999 and 11 from

2000 onwards. Imports totalled 9 million tonnes, considerably less than the volume of exports. *(Table 9.2)*

2.2   Waterborne freight (both incoming and outgoing) passing through all ports decreased by 11.7% in 2020 to 59 million tonnes. This was 30% less than in 2010, continuing a steady fall. In 2020, the eleven major ports accounted for 94% of the total traffic through Scottish ports. Exports accounted for 54% of the total freight through major Scottish ports and domestic traffic accounted for 30%. Imports, and incoming domestic freight were much lower, together accounting for 27% of the total freight through major Scottish ports. *(Table 9.2)*

Ports and Destinations

2.3   Forth (23 million tonnes), Clyde and Sulom Voe (both 7 million tonnes) accounted for the highest freight traffic in 2020. Forth traffic is 8.7% lower than 2019, and is 33% below 2010. Clyde's freight traffic has fluctuated between 2010 and 2020, falling overall from 12 million tonnes to 7 million tonnes in 2020. Again, as these figures are for the total volume of traffic, they are unaffected by the change in the method of compiling the statistics. *(Table 9.3)*

2.4   Bulk fuel accounted for 35 million tonnes (63%) of the total traffic through major Scottish ports in 2020. *(Table 9.4)*

2.5   Top ports for foreign traffic were: Forth (21 million tonnes); Sullom Voe (5.5 million tonnes) and Clyde (5.4 million tonnes). Clyde (4.4 million tonnes) and Forth (3.7 million tonnes) together accounted for almost all the imports from foreign traffic. Glensanda (2.0 million tonnes), Forth (1.6 million tonnes), Cairnryan (1.5 million tonnes) and Aberdeen (1.4 million tonnes), had most outward domestic traffic; Aberdeen and Loch Ryan (both 1.4 million tonnes) were the main ports for inwards domestic traffic. *(Table 9.6b)*

2.6   The main types of traffic through the major ports in 2020 were crude oil (26 million tonnes), other dry bulk (7 million tonnes) and oil products (6 million tonnes). *(Table 9.7)*

2.7   In 2020 most exports were destined for Netherlands (9.2 million tonnes), Asia (6.1 million tonnes), Germany (4.2 million tonnes) and Belgium (2.2 million tonnes) while most imports arrived from Nigeria (1.4 million tonnes) and the Netherlands (1.3 million tonnes). *(Table 9.8)*

Passenger Services

Routes to Northern Ireland and Europe

2.8   In 2020, 0.85 million passengers were carried on ferry services between Scotland and Northern Ireland. There were 0.25 million vehicles carried between Scotland and Northern Ireland in 2020, a 39 per cent decrease on 2019. Until its closure in 2018 the Rosyth to Zeebrugge freight route was the only ferry route between Scotland and Europe. *(Tables 9.13 (a) & (b))*

Routes within Scotland

2.9   This section covers all routes within Scotland for which data is available, for example data is not available for Pentland Ferries. These statistics include routes within Scotland that are subsidised by Scottish Government, local authority ferry services and privately run services. More detail is available in the water transport section of the user guide.

2.10   There were 4.1 million passengers carried on routes within Scotland in 2020, a fall of 53 per cent compared to 2019 and 52 per cent below the recent peak in numbers in 2007. Caledonian MacBrayne carried 2.4 million of these passengers (58%) and Western Ferries carried a further 21 per cent on the Gourock-Dunoon route. *(Table 9.12a)*

2.11 There were 1.7 million vehicles carried on routes within Scotland in 2020, a 44 per cent decrease on 2019. Of these vehicles, 50 per cent were carried by Caledonian MacBrayne and a further 27 per cent by Western Ferries on the Gourock-Dunoon route. *(Table 9.12b)*

Operators on subsidised routes within Scotland

2.12   Caledonian MacBrayne ferries carried 2.4 million passengers in 2020, 3.3 million (58%) less than in 2019. There were 874 thousand cars carried, (45%) less than 2019, and 70,000 commercial vehicles and buses, 23% less than 2019. *(Table 9.14a)*

2.13   Serco Northlink Ferries carried 122,000 passengers in 2020, a 65 per cent decrease compared to 2019. There were 35,000 cars carried on these routes in 2020, 55% less than 2019. *(Table 9.14a)*

Local authority ferry services

2.14   Shetland Islands Council services carried 467,000 passengers in 2020, 40% less than 2019. There were 264,000 vehicles carried, a fall of 31% on 2019.

2.15   Orkney Ferries services carried 170,000 passengers in 2020, 49% less than in 2019. There were 66,000 vehicles carried on these routes, 31% less than the previous year. *(Table 9.14b)*

2.16   Ferries operated by Argyll and Bute Council carried 90,300 passengers in 2020. *(Table 9.14b and 9.16a)*

Ferry routes within and to/from Scotland

2.17   The busiest ferry route within Scotland in terms of passengers and vehicles carried is the service between Gourock and Dunoon, operated by Western Ferries, which carried 849,700 passengers in 2020. There were 438,500 cars carried on this route and 26,000 commercial vehicles and buses in 2020. *(Table 9.16 and Figure 9.4 and 9.5)*

2.18   The second busiest Scottish ferry route over recent years in terms of passenger numbers has been the Cairnryan / Belfast route. This route carried 0.6 million passengers in 2020. *(Table 9.13a and Figure 9.4)*

2.19   Previously the second busiest route in terms of cars carried was the Corran Ferry from Ardgour to Nether Lochaber operated by Highland Council. However, this route did not operate during 2020. *(Table 9.16 and Figure 9.5)*

2.20   The busiest subsidised ferry routes are operated by Caledonian MacBrayne. The busiest route in terms of passengers in 2020 was Largs - Cumbrae, with 421,800 passengers. Largs - Cumbrae was also the busiest subsidised route for car traffic in 2020 with 125,700 car crossings, a decrease of 30 per cent over the previous year. (*Table 9.15*)

2.21   The Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) scheme involves setting ferry fares on the basis of the cost of travelling an equivalent distance by road, more detail on RET can be found in the water transport section of the user guide. The West Coast routes where Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) has been rolled out carried 952,800 passengers in 2020 and 374,300 cars. The Clyde routes where Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) has been rolled out carried 1,268,800 passengers in 2020 and 429,300 cars. *(Table 9.15)*

Ferry Punctuality

2.22   The level of reliability (the number of timetabled sailings actually operated, see table footnote in table for more detail) for Caledonian MacBrayne lifeline ferry services was 99.7% in 2020-21 and the level of punctuality (against the published timetable) was 99.9%. For Northlink the level of lifeline ferry services that were both punctual and reliable was 99.7% for Aberdeen routes and 100% for the Pentland Firth in 2020-21. *(Table 9.17)*

Coastguard callouts

2.23   Overall there were 4,241 incidents in 2019, 63 less than the previous year. *(Table 9.18)*

Published by Transport Scotland, March 2022

Follow us:

f transcotland

🐦 @transcotland

transport.gov.scot