



States of Guernsey Sea Fisheries



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Sea Fisheries Section Statistical Report 2020



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Executive Summary

Background

All landings data presented in the following report have been collated from logsheets and electronic logbooks submitted by all licensed Bailiwick fishers. The Covid pandemic had a major influence on the activity of fishing vessels and markets during 2020, with hospitality and travel severely restricted which reduced demand for seafood, vessels were tied up for significant periods throughout the year. Against this background, reductions in landings are evident in the landings data making it difficult to draw conclusions about the abundance of resources in Bailiwick waters.

2020 cover photo is a snapshot of the commercial fish quay in St. Peter Port Harbour, Guernsey.

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1. The Year In Brief

1.1 Onshore and Inshore

The year 2020 saw the rise of the global pandemic, “COVID-19,” which seriously affected the way in which Sea Fisheries operated, along with all other government departments. The pandemic brought about the need to stay at home, work from home, and avoid social contact with others. The lockdown measures introduced by the CCA (Civil Contingencies Authority) in March meant that any inspections had to be carried only when necessary, and under strict social-distancing measures.

The local fishing fleet were forced to tie up for the first weeks of lockdown, and only allowed back to sea under set conditions. Local Fishermen reported a reduction in catches of up to 80%, with travel restrictions meaning that landings to the UK or EU markets were becoming increasingly difficult.

1.2 Offshore

Offshore Fishery patrols had to cease for the foreseeable future as boarding officers were no longer permitted to board foreign fishing vessels and risk the spread of the virus into the island, or without the risk of self-isolation.

Despite restrictions, the local fishing fleet was able to continue activity after the initial easing out of lockdown began with Stage 1 in mid-April 2020.

Charter boats from the South coast of the UK continued to fish around the islands’ waters, however this consisted mainly of day trips for shorter periods, due to the inability to land or disembark in both St. Peter Port and Braye Harbours.

1.3 Working Relationships



The above shows a small selection of other government departments, trading bodies and non-governmental organisations that Sea Fisheries works closely with. Relationships range from the exchange of data and statistics to using the Leopardess for marine operations and personnel transfer. Sea Fisheries Officers are tasked to skipper and crew the Leopardess for other States of Guernsey departments as part of the Sea Fisheries mandate. The vessel is available 24/7 for emergency callouts.

In addition to the above, the Leopardess was tasked by the Guernsey Border Agency to intercept foreign vessels that could cause potential isolation breaches as part of the CCA’s emergency measures to restrict travel.

1.4 Ormering

The Fishing Ordinance 1997 which regulates Ormering states that ormers can only be taken between 1 January and 30 April on “permitted days”, which are the day of each new moon and of each full moon and the following two days. Permitted days in 2020 can be seen in Table 1.

January	Predicted Height (m)	February	Predicted Height (m)	March	Predicted Height (m)	April	Predicted Height (m)
10 th	1.86	9 th	1.17	9 th	0.84	8 th	0.29
11 th	1.51	10 th	0.76	10 th	0.36	9 th	0.15
12 th	1.28	11 th	0.56	11 th	0.15	10 th	0.33
24 th	1.89	23 rd	1.65	24 th	1.42	23 rd	1.49
25 th	1.69	24 th	1.46	25 th	1.34	24 th	1.52
26 th	1.61	25 th	1.43	26 th	1.42	25 th	1.68

Table 1: Permitted Ormering dates 2020

Sea Fisheries officers were on patrol for each of the permitted Ormering tides. The Ormering tides in January 2020 only had a minimum tide height of 1.28m above chart datum, which proved to be difficult for shore-gatherers. Tidal heights dropped much lower for the first tides in February, March and April. Although ormer patrols are undertaken primarily to deter people from taking undersized ormers, public interaction is vital in order to gain feedback on stock levels. Ormer gatherers spoken to by Officers were reporting average catches broadly in line with previous years.

Due to COVID-19 Lockdown measures coming into place on 23rd March, this meant that shore-gatherers were only able to attempt to find Ormers during the 2-hour outdoor exercise period permitted under the restrictions, which extended passed the last permitted day for collecting the species in 2020.

1.5 Sea Temperatures

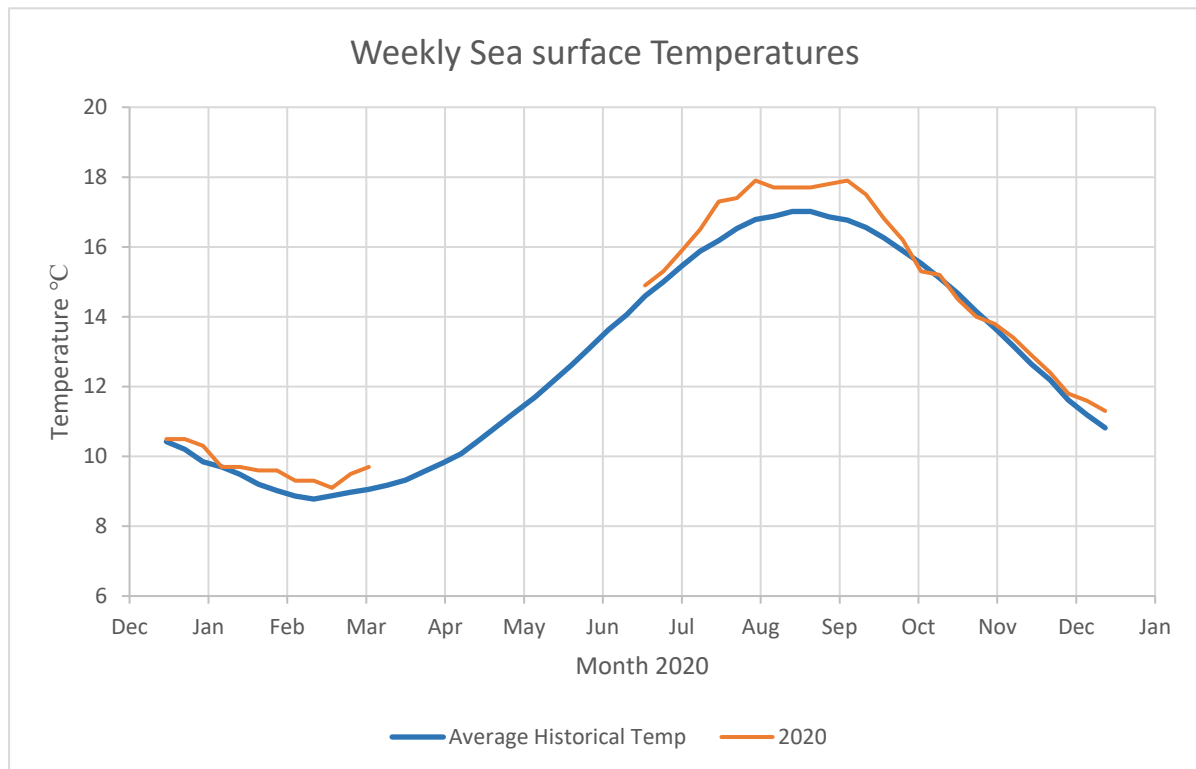


Figure 1: comparison of weekly sea temperature for 2020 against the 35-year average. Surface Sea Temperatures were not recorded from 22nd March 2020 until 5th July 2020 due to the Lockdown measures in force at that time. The trend, however, still appears to sit just above the average for the majority of 2020's data.

The weather for 2020 showed a similar pattern to the sea temperature with the average temperature slightly above the long-term. 2020 saw more than 2000 hours of sunshine and more than 1000 millimetres of rainfall. This was the second year in a row that a negative air temperature was not recorded, with the lowest recorded being 1.8°C. The first half of the year was mild but wet with February being particularly wet with 23 recorded days of rainfall. April saw increasing temperatures into the summer months, with Guernsey experiencing the warmest August since 2003. Autumn showed itself to be milder than the average, bringing with it a record-breaking level of rainfall for October. Overall, 2020 was the 2nd warmest since records began in 1843, only fractionally cooler than 2014, but also proving to be the wettest since 1960.

1.6 Disease Testing

Every year a sample of oysters and larvae is sent to the laboratories at Cefas (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science) for the purpose of disease screening. This screening is designed to limit the spread of disease between aquaculture sites and a clean bill of health is necessary to enable local aquaculture farmers to export their produce to sites in the UK, Europe and further afield. The oysters and larvae are tested for ostreid herpesvirus-1 (OsHV-1) and other diseases listed by the OIE (Office International des Epizooties). All of the tests performed on the local oysters and larvae came back negative, showing that the local aquaculture sites continue to be in good health.

1.7 Bass Regulations

Since the introduction of stricter measures to control the fishing of European Seabass at the end of 2017, the regulations continued to evolve into 2019 and now again in 2020. In 2018, recreational fishing for the species was limited to a “Catch and Release” basis only. The 2019 regulations allowed for recreational fishermen to retain not more than one specimen per fisherman per day, however 2020 regulations increased this number, stating that “not more than two seabass may be retained per fishman per day.”

For commercial fishers, the quotas were meant that those vessels fishing using a Trawl method, or vessels using set nets, an “unavoidable bycatch” weight was able to be retained, which indicates that the species cannot be directly targeted.

The catch limits again increased in 2020 from 2019, meaning that Demersal Trawlers could retain an “unavoidable by-catch” of 520kg per two consecutive calendar months (up from 400kg every two months).

Fixed Gillnets “unavoidable by-catch” remained unchanged at 1.4 tonnes per year, and Hooks and Lines (also known as angling, hand-lining, long-lining etc) increased from 5.5 tonnes per year in 2019 to 5.7 tonnes per year in 2020.

“Hooks and Lines” is the only method that does not have the term “unavoidable by-catch” attached to it, meaning that the species can be directly targeted using this method.

The Seabass fishery is closed to Commercial fishers during February and March.

The regulations are under constant review in order to maintain a sustainable fishery. Both commercial and recreational fisherman are reminded to look out for any updates published on the www.gov.uk website searching for Bass fishing guidance.

2. The Fleet

The fishing fleet numbers for 2020 are displayed in table 1 below and the graph Figure 2.

Vessel Category	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
GU Registered <10	171	160	158	159	159	153	147	142	136	129	127	123
GU Registered >10	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
External Vessels							34	31	30	24	21	19

Table 2: Total registered GU fleet numbers 2019

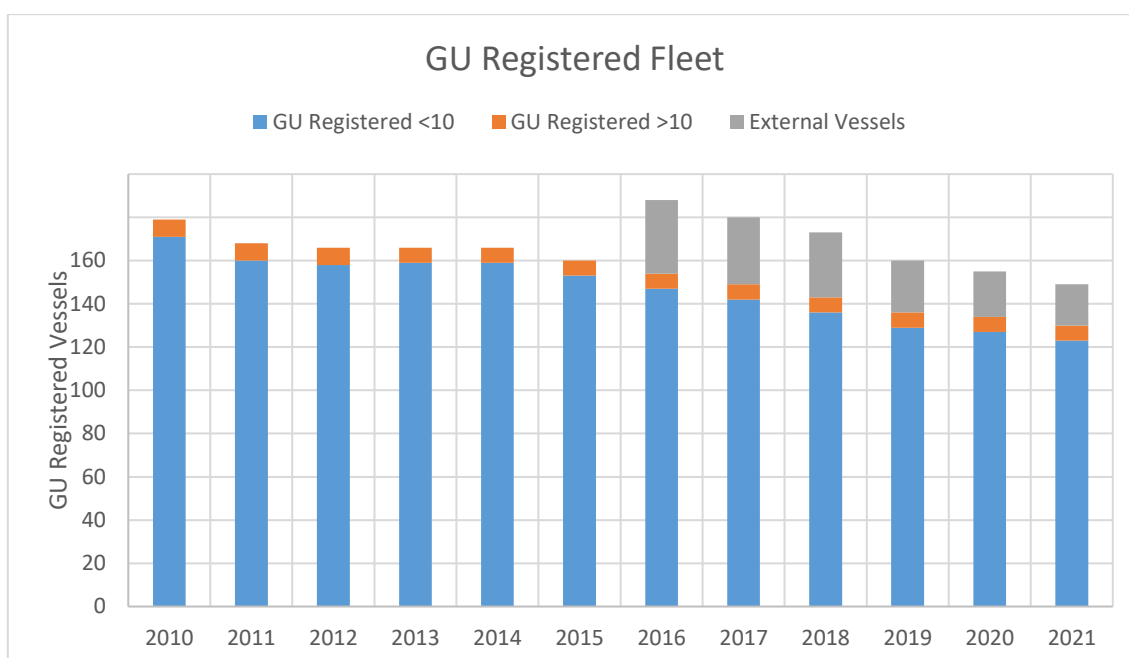


Figure 2: Graph visualising change in registered GU fleet numbers over time

2.1 Local Under 10m

The net change in 2020 was a reduction of only two Under 10 vessels. The total number of vessel movements was higher than this, with as many as nine vessels changing ownership; some vessels leaving the island, and some new vessels being introduced. Changes of ownership occur both between owners locally and selling and buying vessels and licences from the UK.

2.2 Local Over 10m

The same seven vessels made up the Over 10m fleet in 2020, a fleet unchanged for the last 4 years. Of these seven, all but one is engaged in potting (five based in Guernsey and one in Alderney) and one vessel is a trawler (both demersal, beam trawling and scallop dredging).



2.3 Non GU Vessels

Non-GU vessels are granted a licence to fish based on their track record of fishing in Bailiwick waters. The permitted methods are granted based on the track record. This applies to both Under 10 and Over 10 vessels. There was a reduction of three Under 10 and Over 10 licensed vessels in 2020, meaning a total of 21 non-GU vessels now hold a licence to fish in Bailiwick waters. Although 21 vessels hold a licence, only approximately 1/3 fish in Bailiwick waters on a regular basis.

3. Landings

3.1 Landings Table

Annual Landings (Tonnes)									
	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	**Price Per kg (Average Estimated 2019)
Anglerfish	0.52	0.57	0.46	0.56	0.5	0.4	0.9	1.9	£4.46
Atlantic Cod	0.23	0.15	0.14	0.434	4.6	3.9	3	1.7	£5.01
Atlantic Mackerel	4.23	9.30	11.53	6.144	2.9	4.4	6.5	9.3	£1.79
Black Bream	7.03	10.89	12.02	18.7	12.2	10.4	21.3	13.7	£3.31
Blonde Ray	66.06	98.51	68.37	53.12	98	144.7	153.3	110.2	£2.52
Brill	1.92	2.16	1.84	1.6	4	5.4	8.7	6.8	£7.58
Common Cuttlefish	0.13	1.18	0.69	2.89	1.7	3.4	2.6	1.6	£2.99
Common Sole	1.41	1.21	2.16	3.04	2	2.4	5.1	4	£10.42
Common Squids Nei	0.05	0.44	0.29	0.33	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.3	£5.06
Crawfish	0.19	0.13	0.19	0.14	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.6	£35.21
Edible Crab	663.53	655.38	650.59	674.42	809.9	708.9	878.2	784.2	£1.88
European Conger	4.34	5.68	3.93	4.1	7.6	6.4	7.7	8.8	£1.21
European Lobster	77.35	88.33	105.09	95.02	101.6	117.2	128.2	98.6	£18.18
Number of Lobsters	126908	142557	156165	145405	143571	164143	168645	139654	
European Plaice	0.38	0.51	1.06	0.43	1.2	1.2	1.7	1.4	£2.29
European Seabass	7.53	10.60	11.11	11.46	15.8	18.5	30.5	27.6	£13.81
Great Atlantic Scallop	143.00	100.38	125.16	103.65	79.8	105.2	101.2	102.6	£3.44
Grey Mullet	3.56	0.40	1.18	0.76	2.7	1.3	1.6	1.7	£0.90
John Dory	0.18	0.13	0.17	0.08	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	£8.87
Ling	0.01	0.03	0.12	0.13	0.3	0.7	0.9	2	£3.32
Pollack	23.31	46.65	39.02	56.36	53.6	53.5	68.1	64.5	£4.45
Sand Sole	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.2	0.8	0.7	0.7	£3.95
Red Mullet	4.84	2.86	3.48	8.45	14.9	4.8	5	4.7	£6.18
Sandeels	15.72	12.83	14.51	11.41	19	21.2	28.1	26.4	£2.63
Smoothound	0.00	1.87	0.06	1.46	3.5	4.6	5.6	6.6	£1.47
Spider Crab	32.87	76.64	105.96	61.19	55	57.6	34.2	34.9	£1.67
Spotted Dog	1.14	4.35	4.71	7.36	12.8	9.2	12.5	16.2	£0.66
Tope	0.19	0.60	0.55	0.32	0.7	0.1	3.3	5.7	£2.40
Turbot	2.85	3.32	2.66	3.42	5.6	9.2	6	7.8	£12.23
Wrasse*	2.40	2.35	4.5	2.98	3.4	4.7	5.6	4	£1.02
Total (wetfish)	147.84	214.95	183.63	195.558	265.9	308	376.4	325.9	
Total (shellfish)	917.12	922.47	987.98	934.42	1,048.40	993.1	1145.3	1022.8	



Total (all)	1064.96	1137.42	1171.61	1129.98	1,314.30	1301.1	1521.7	1348.7
Value (£000's)	£4,123	£4,123	£4,250	£4,237	£4,767	£5,089	£5,832	£4,960

Table 3: Recorded annual landings for GU registered vessels and estimated average market value

* Wrasse landings do not include those caught and used as pot bait.

** To reflect the fact that approximately 80% of landings are made into France the indicative 2019 price has been weighted more heavily towards the French market prices than prices paid locally.

3.2 Analysis of Landings

3.2.1 Overview

There were some notable changes in landed weights of reported species in 2020. Some saw large increases, such as Great Atlantic Scallops, while many other staple species saw substantial decreases, such as European Lobster, Spider Crab, European Seabass and Pollack. The impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic was a major influence on the reported figures below, with vessels being tied up for extended periods of time.

The total wetfish landed weight decreased by 67 tonnes compared to the 2019 landings, however shellfish landings only differed by 5 tonnes.

3.2.2 Shellfish

Scallop landings saw a sharp increase in 2020, due largely to an increase in effort in the over 10m sector.

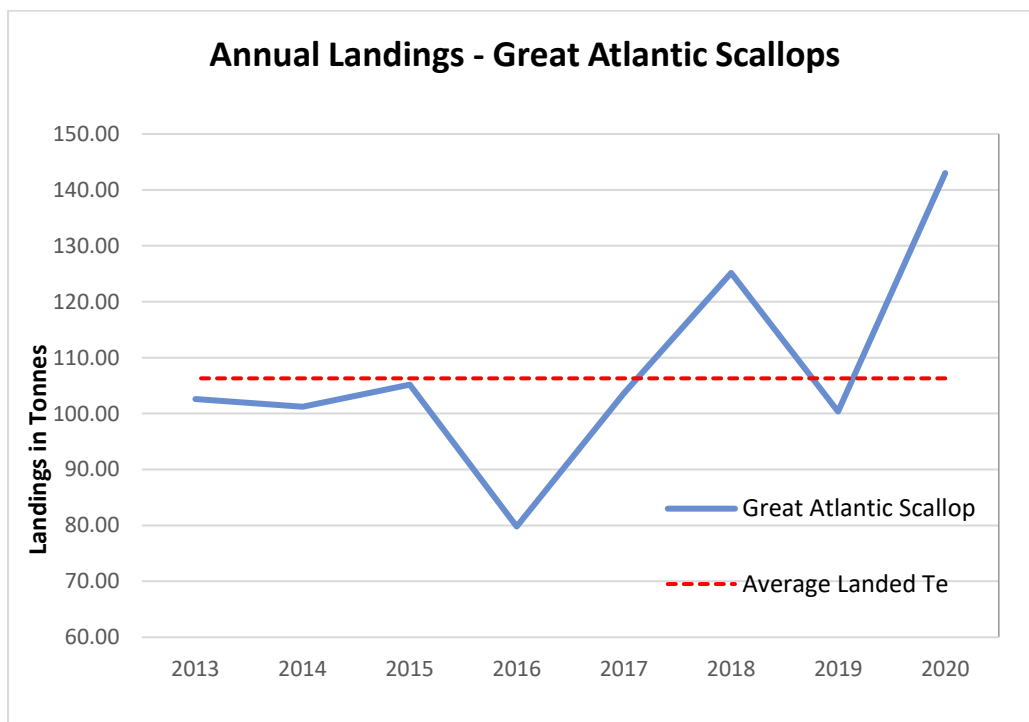


Figure 3 Plot showing annual landings of Great Atlantic Scallops 2013 – 2020, against 9 year average



2020 saw a continuing downward trend from 2019 in Spider Crab landings when compared to the high numbers in 2018. The lowest recorded landings since 2014. This trend can be attributed to the slow reduction in fleet size, and the influence of EU markets for Spider Crab demand (see Figure 3). The landings of Edible Crab increased by 8 tonnes when compared with 2019 landings data. (see Figure 4).

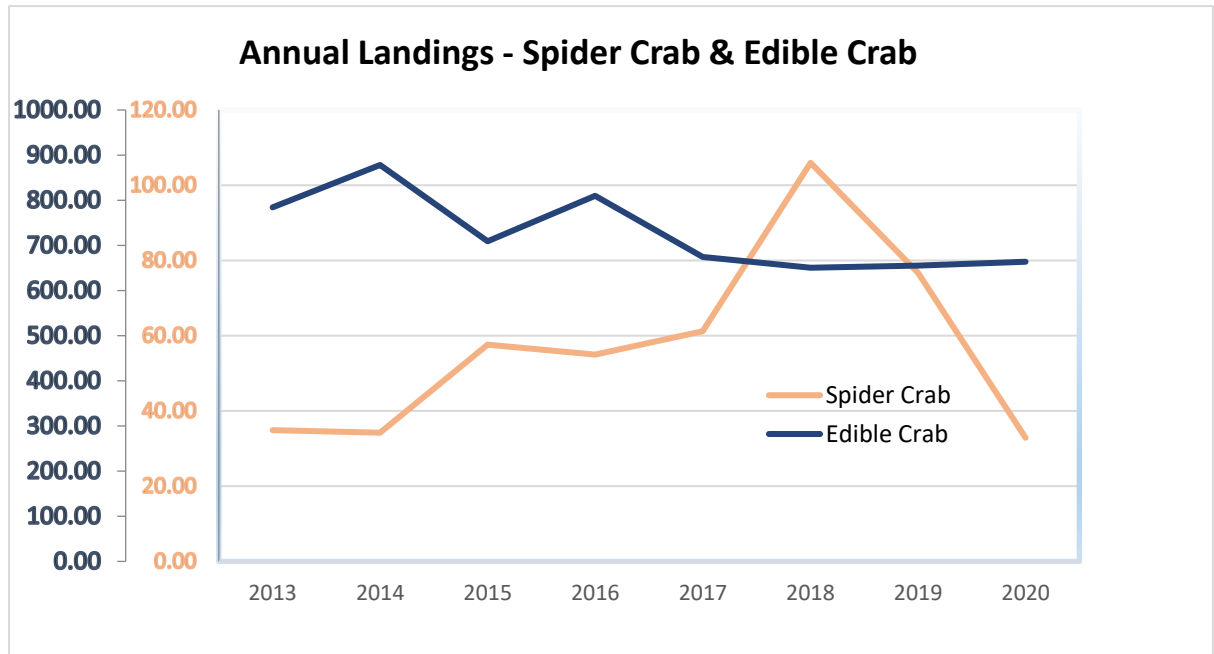


Figure 3 Plot showing annual landings of Spider Crab and Edible Crab 2013 – 2020

European lobster landings continued to decline in 2020, with the lowest reported figures since 2009, and 23 tonnes below the 9 year average. (see Figure 4).

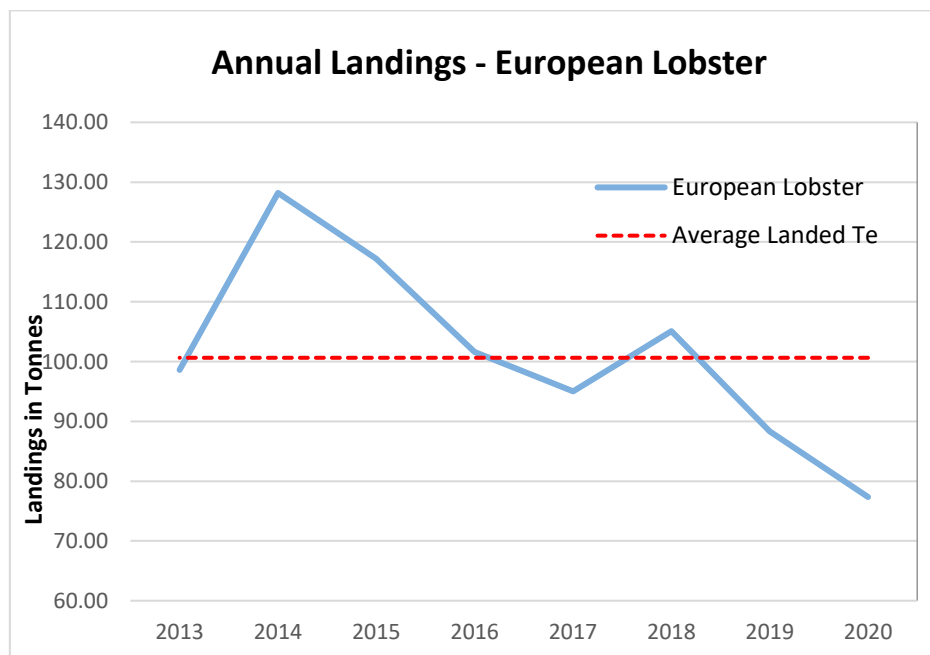


Figure 4 Plot showing annual landings of European Lobster from 2013 – 2020, against the 9 year average.

3.2.3 Wetfish

Total wetfish landed in 2020 saw a decrease from the previous year of just over 68 tonnes. The largest reductions being in Atlantic Mackerel at 5 tonnes, Blonde Ray at 33.5 tonnes and Pollack at 23 tonnes when compared with 2019. (see Figure 118, Figure 12 & Figure 6 respectively).

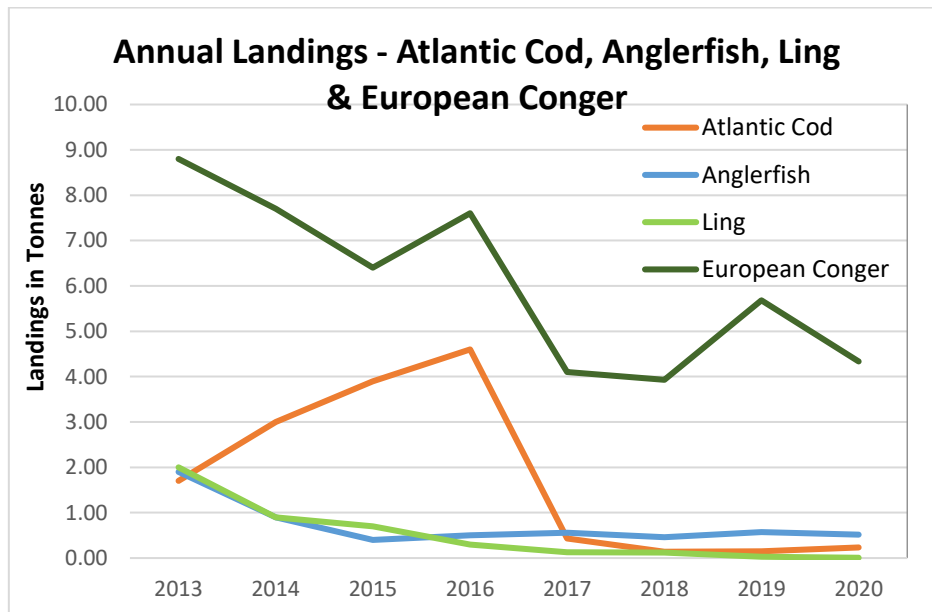


Figure 5 Plot showing annual landings for Atlantic Cod, Anglerfish, Ling and European Conger

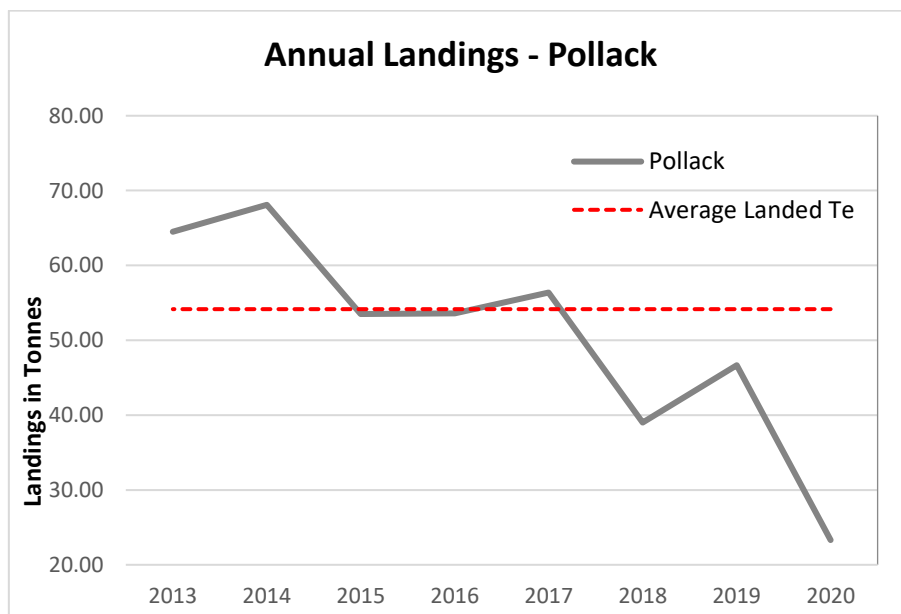


Figure 6 Plot showing annual landings for Pollack 2012 to 2019, against the 9 year average.

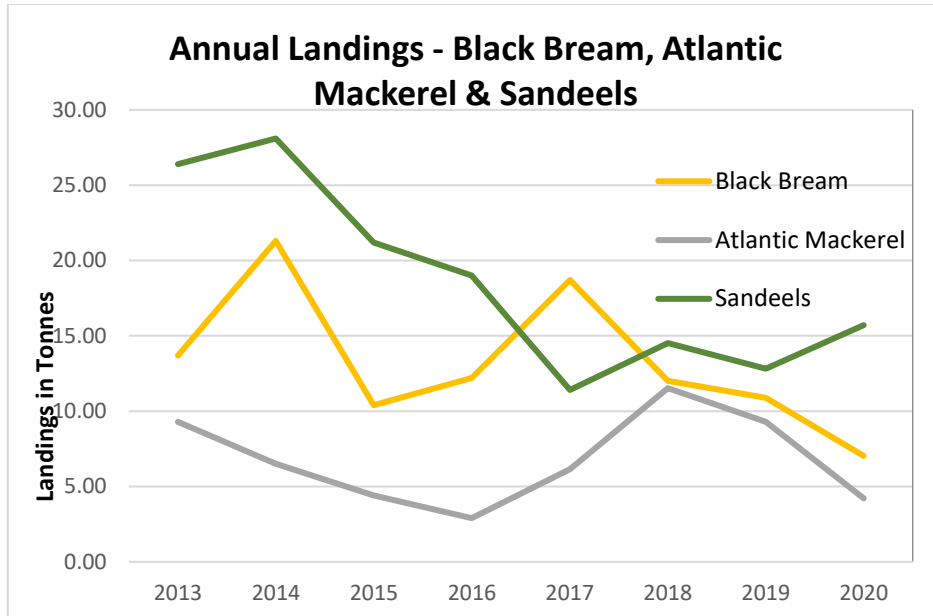


Figure 7 Plot showing annual landings of Black Bream, Atlantic Mackerel and Sandeels 2013 - 2020

Flatfish landings have continued to remain fairly stable over the past 4 years with Turbot and Brill remaining the most prevalent species by weight.

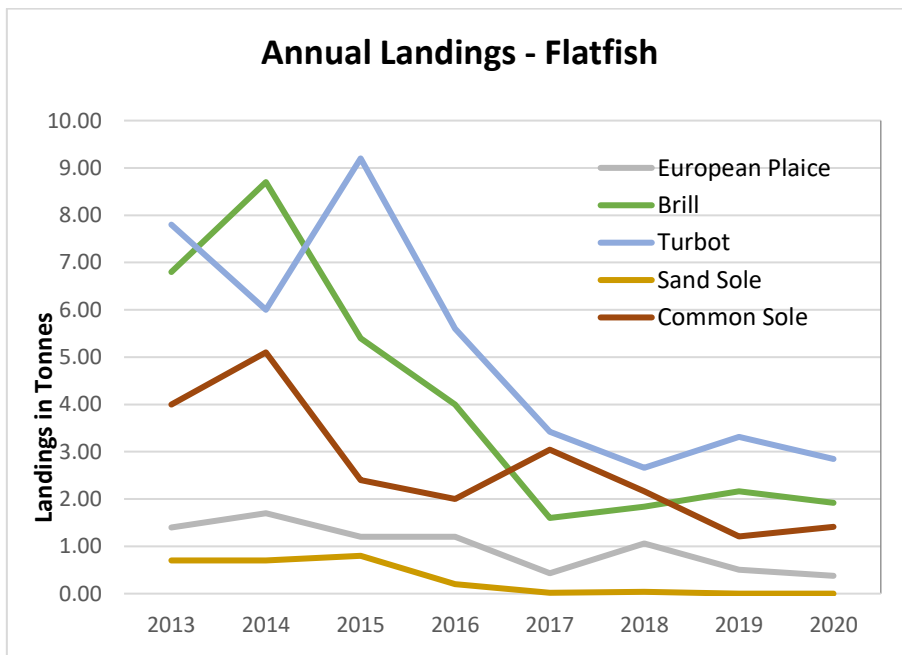


Figure 8 Plot showing annual landings of Flatfish from 2013 - 2020

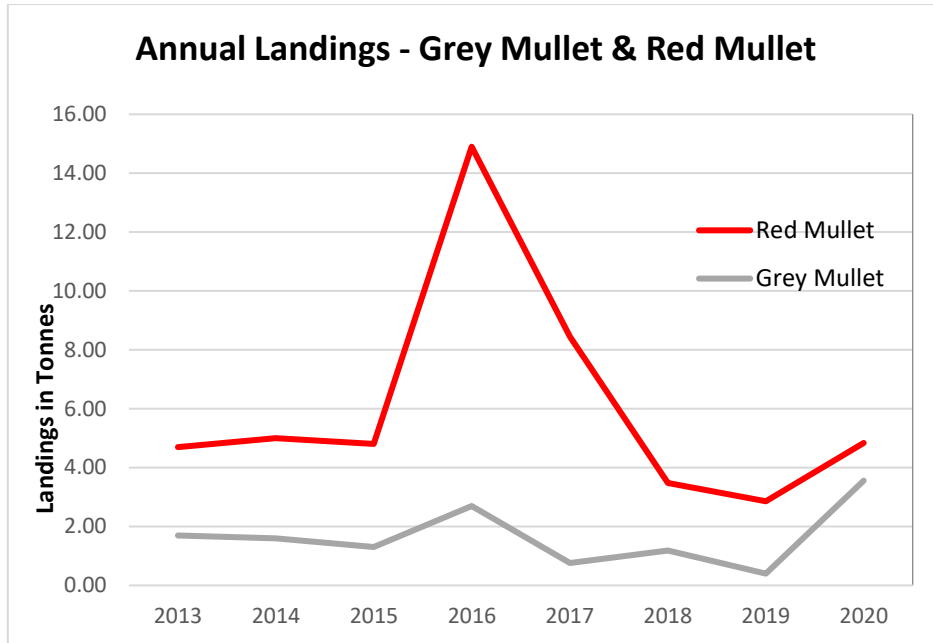


Figure 9 Plot showing annual landings of Red Mullet and Grey Mullet from 2013 – 2020.

Due to the reduction in trawling over recent years smoothhound and dogfish landings have declined. Smooth-hound equated to 0.00 tonnes landed in 2020, with the next lowest being 2018 with 0.06 tonnes landed. Spotted Dogfish also saw a decrease in landed weights, with only 1.14 tonnes.

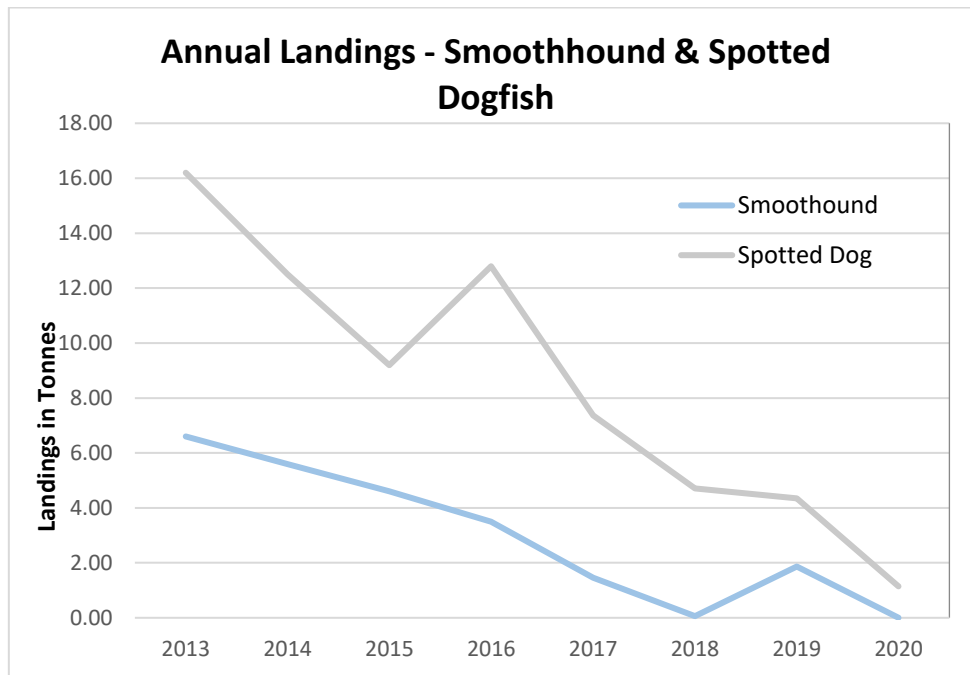


Figure 10 Plot showing annual landings of Smoothhound and Spotted Dogfish, 2013 – 2020.

Since the ban on fishing for Tope Shark by the fishing method of Longlines in January 2015, landed weights saw a very sharp decline as other fishing methods are not as successful for catching this species. Since 2015, Tope landings have hovered around 0.5 tonnes annually.

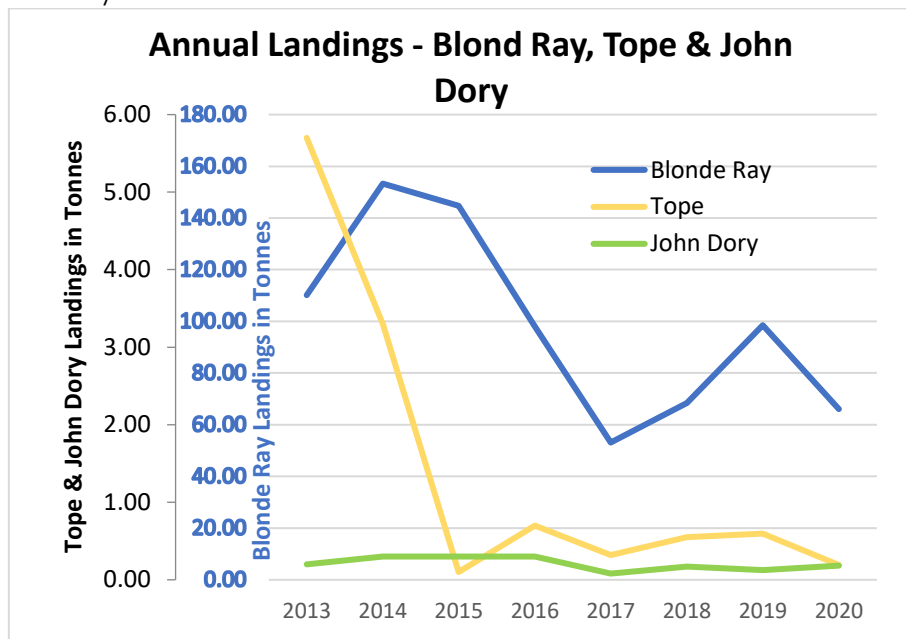


Figure 11 Plot showing the annual landings for Blond Ray, Tope and John Dory from 2013 – 2020.

European Seabass landings continued a gradual decline. These figures could be attributed to the measures introduced in 2017 in an effort to manage the fishery sustainably and restrict those able to catch and retain the species. (see Figure 12).

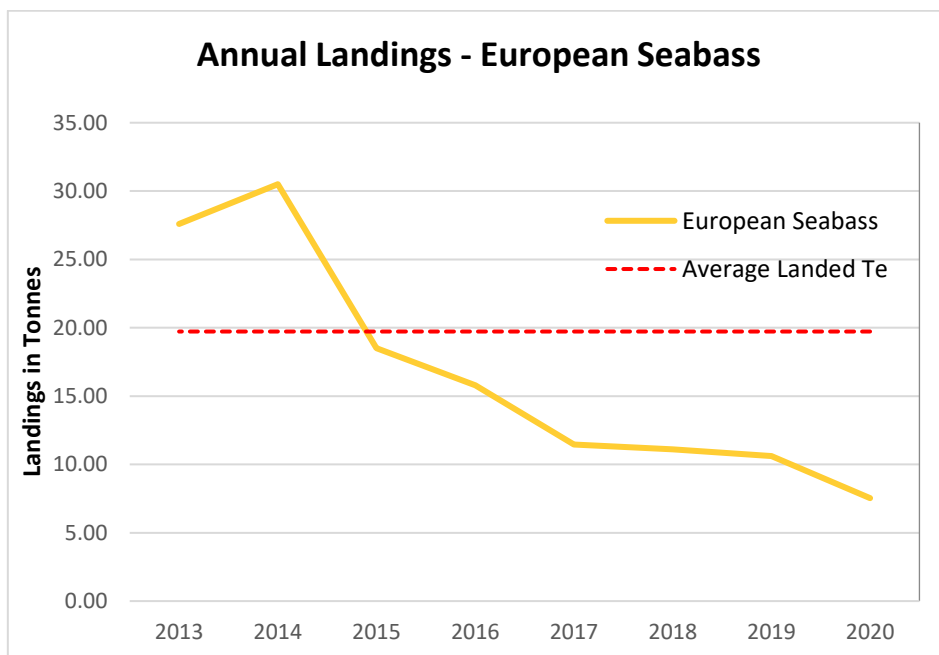


Figure 12 Plot showing the annual landings for European Seabass 2013 – 2020.

4. Effort

4.1 Potting – Under 10m

Potting effort from 2019 onwards no longer includes the over 10 metre vessels, this is due to the MMO (Marine Management Organisation) not recording individual “pot lifts” in their data sets, instead requiring fishers to report individual fishing trips.

Pots in use increased in 2020, however the number of pot lifts decreased, which could be attributed to the lockdown measures during the year.

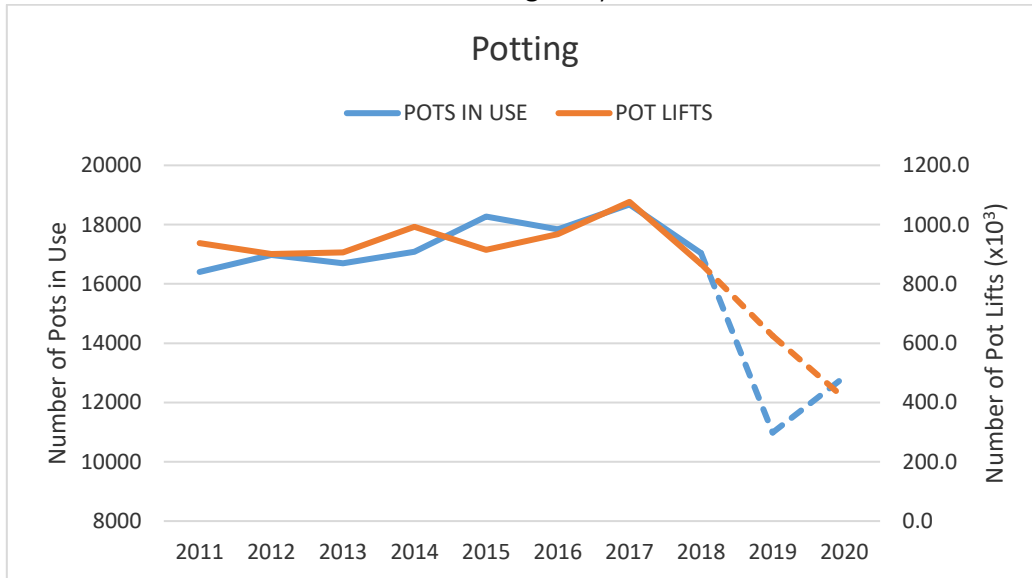


Figure 13 Graph showing annual GU registered potting effort over time from 2011 to 2020

4.2 Set Netting

Set netting effort saw a welcome change in 2020, with figures rising from an all-time low in 2019, up to 212,630m of set netting, which was an increase of just over 84,000m.

Several of the Under 10m vessels took up this method on a more frequent basis, which has accounted for the increase seen in Figure 14.

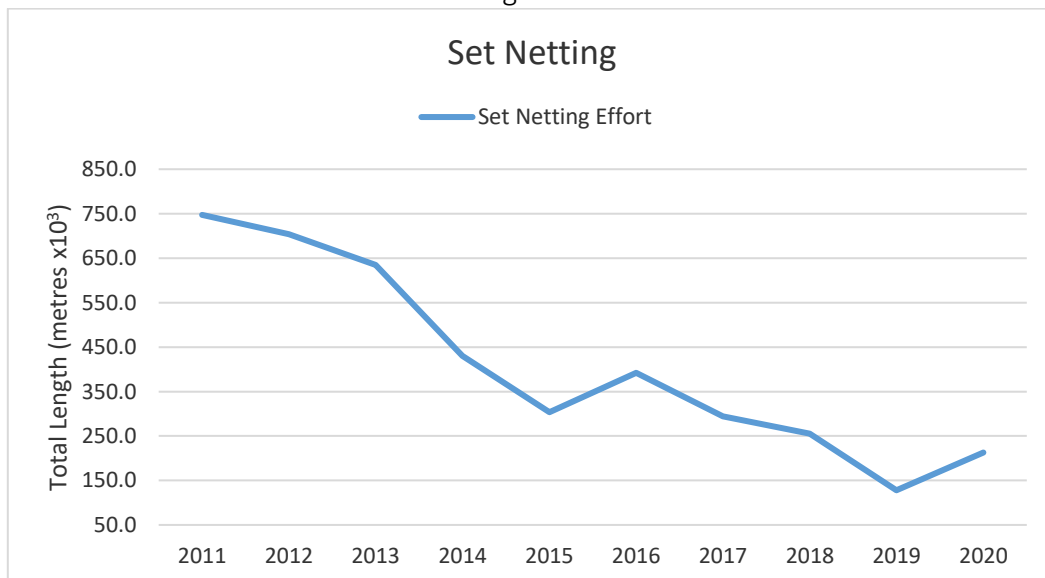


Figure 14 Graph showing the annual recorded GU registered netting effort in “thousands” of metres used.

4.3 Trawling

Demersal trawling is still the predominant trawling method used in local waters. Trawling effort from 2019 onwards no longer includes the over 10 metre vessels, this is due to the MMO not recording hours fished in their data sets. Demersal Trawling effort in the Under 10m fleet increased marginally in 2020, a stark contrast to Beam Trawling effort which fell to just 3 hours.

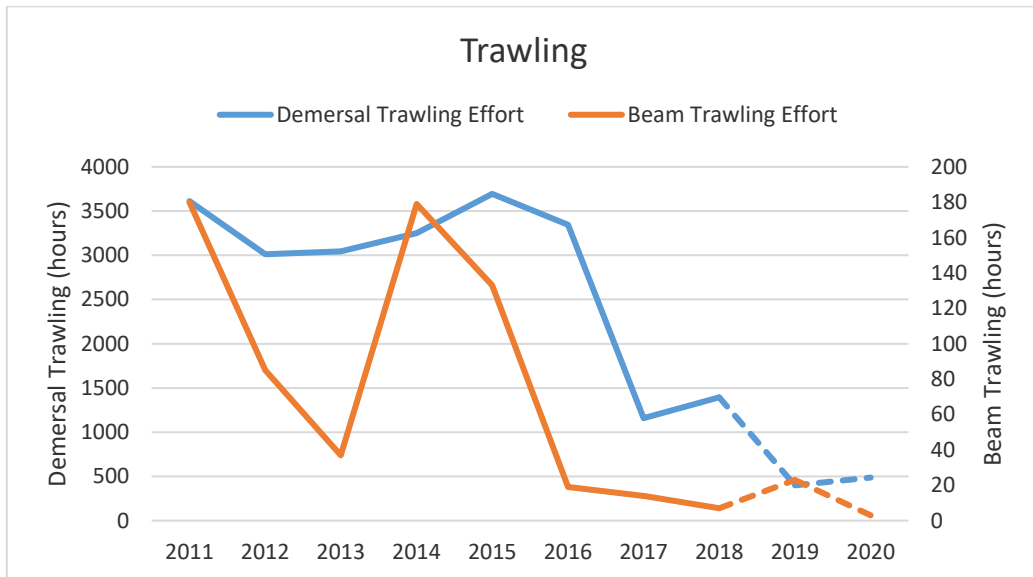


Figure 15: Graph showing the annual recorded trawling effort in hours 2011 – 2020.

4.4 Hand Diving

Lockdown measures in 2020 saw the occasional closure of the Hyperbaric Chamber and diving was discouraged. This has directly affected the Hand Diving effort of 2020, recording the lowest figure for effort since our records began.

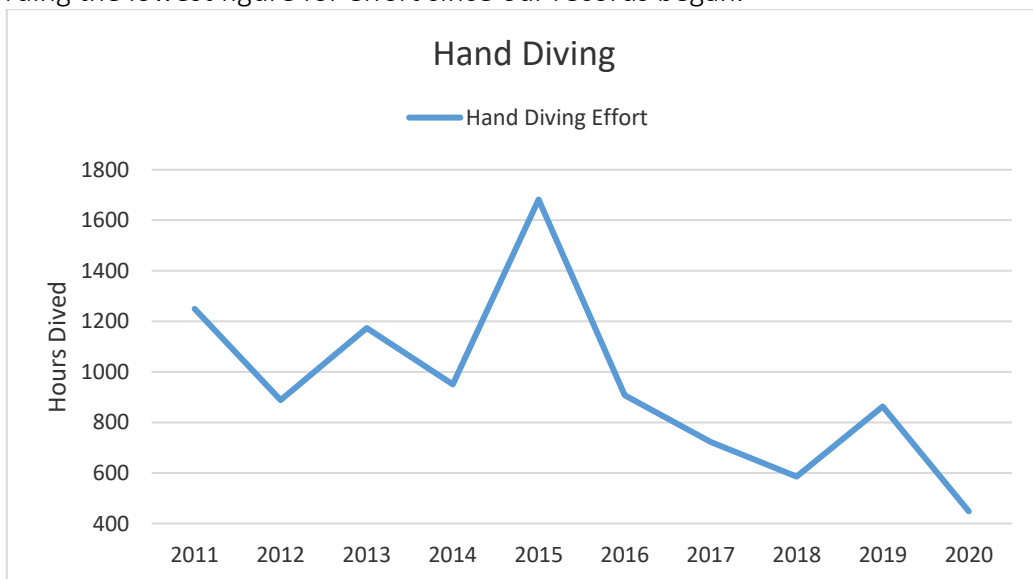


Figure 16: Graph showing the recorded annual hand diving effort for GU registered vessels in hours, from 2011 – 2020

4.5 Long Lining

Longlining figures showed a slight decrease from the previous year, returning to a similar figure found in 2018. This method of fishing has been in slow decline for some time now, with only 41,435 hooks set in 2020.

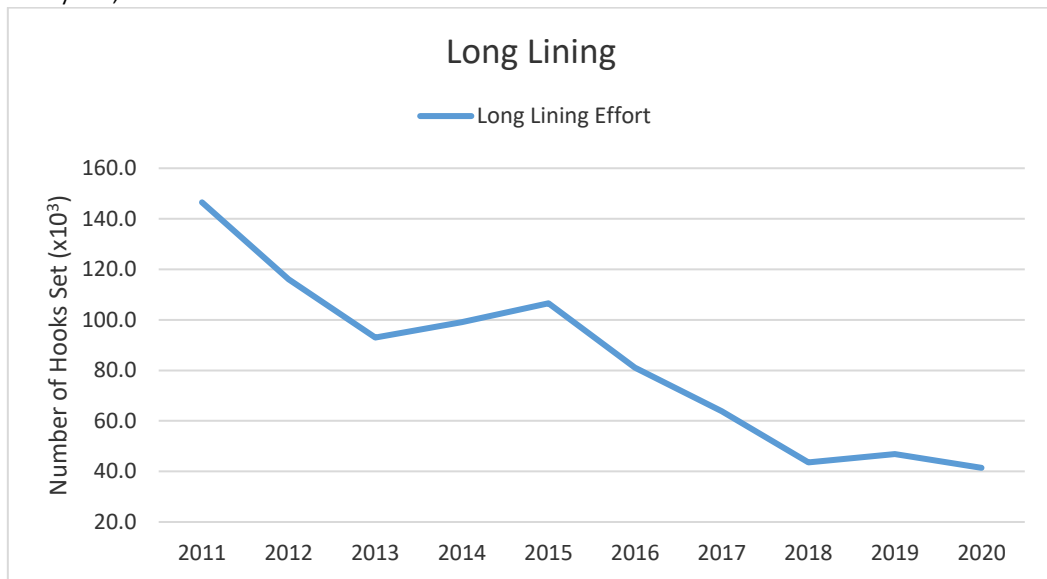


Figure 17: Graph showing the recorded annual long lining effort in “thousands” of hooks set, for years 2011 – 2020.

4.6 Angling

The lowest Angling effort ever recorded of only 6089 hours. This could be directly attributed to the COVID-19 Pandemic which forced a lot of fishing operations to cease.

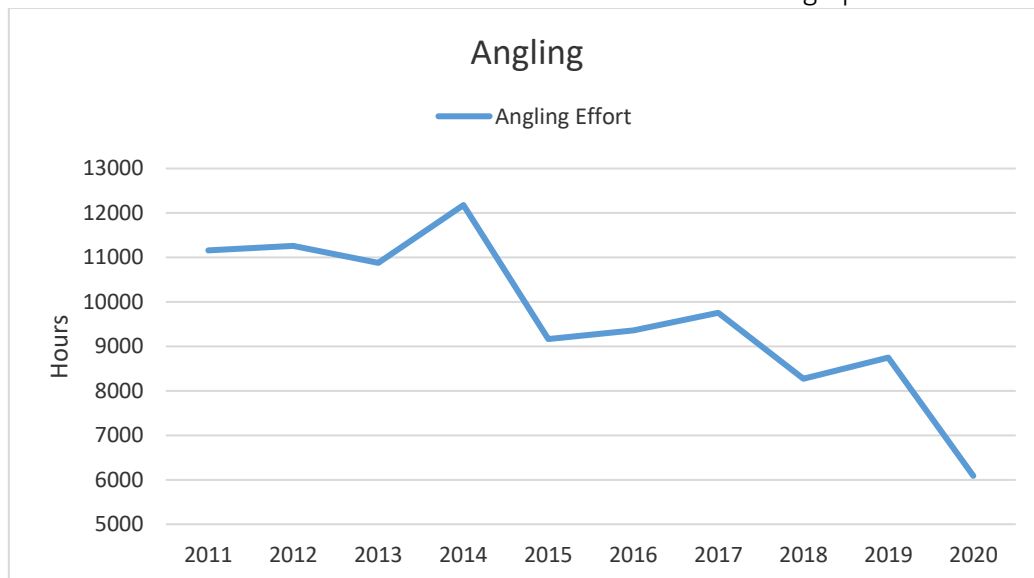


Figure 18: Graph showing recorded Angling effort in hours, annual data from 2011 – 2020.

4.7 Scallop dredging

From 2019 onwards scallop dredging effort no longer includes the over 10 metre vessels, this is due to the MMO not recording hours fished in their data sets. The Under 10m vessels engaged in Scallop Dredging were also impacted by the pandemic and thus recorded less effort during 2020.

Please also note that no Scallop Dredge data was recorded for 2015 fishing.

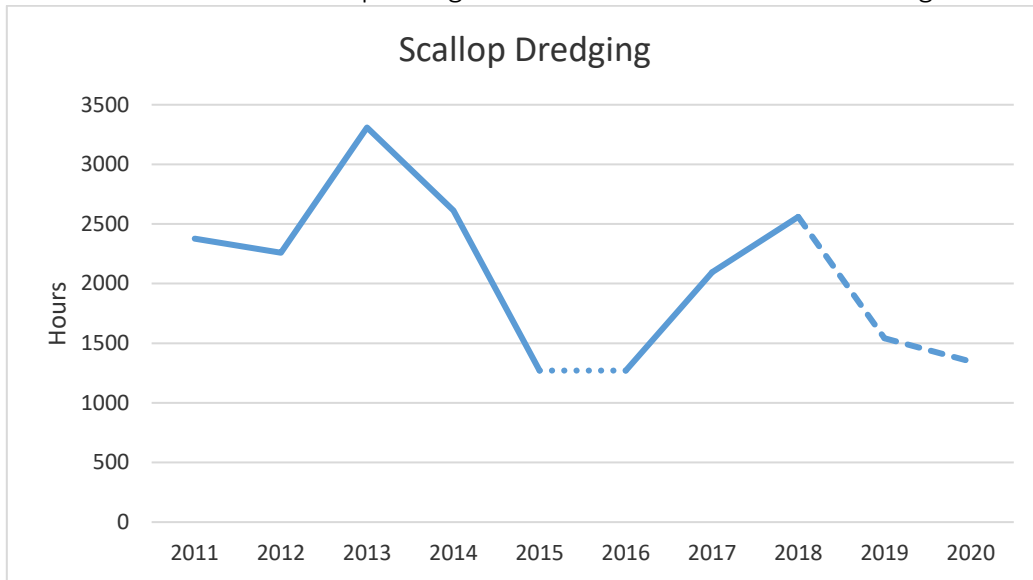


Figure 19: Graph showing the annual Scallop Dredging effort in hours of GU registered vessels from 2011 – 2020.