

Queen Scallop Fishery

The Shetland queen scallop (*Aequipecten opercularis*) fishery is comprised of some limited targeted queen fishing, with the majority of landings resulting from bycatch in the king scallop fishery (*Pecten maximus*). Few queen scallops are processed locally and market conditions are thought to be the driver of the fishery, affecting effort and landings.

Historically, the queen scallop fishery was an important one in Shetland. Since data has been recorded via the submission of SSMO logsheets, annual landings have ranged between one and 40 tonnes, and these fluctuations in landings reflect an irregular fishery (Figure 1).

The overall trend in landings of queen scallops around Shetland declined between 2000 and 2015 with a slight peak in 2016 with landings of just over 7.5 tonnes. This has since fallen under 5 tonnes in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 (Figure 1). Since 2008, there has been very little in the way of targeted queen scallop fishing, until 2021 when 3234 kg were targeted landings.

The mean landings per unit effort (LPUE) from targeted fishing has shown a degree of variability, partly due to the sporadic nature of the fishery and also to significant variations in LPUE found between vessels. It is therefore difficult to draw any conclusions from LPUE data.

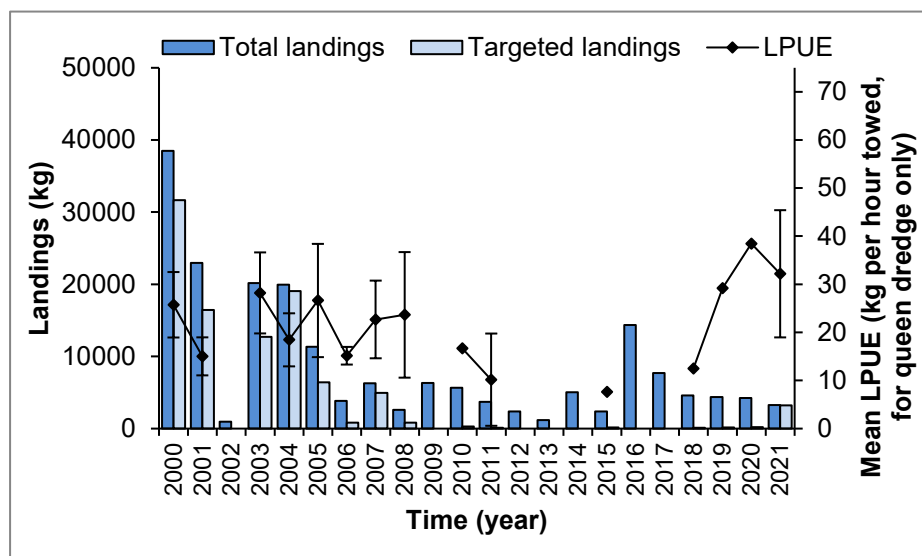


Figure 1 Total queen scallop landings, and the mean LPUE (catch per hour per dredge) obtained from SSMO logbook data with 95% confidence intervals shown.

Targeted queen fishing occurred in four SSMO squares in 2020 on the west coast of the Mainland (Figures 2&3), while the landings as bycatch were caught in St Magus Bay, off the east coast of Scalloway, and to the west of Whalsay (Figure 4). Typically, both the targeted and bycatch fisheries show consistent spatial distribution from year to year, though 2021 shows differences. New landings are recorded in K14, L16W, L17W, and K17 on the east coast and M14 on the east coast.

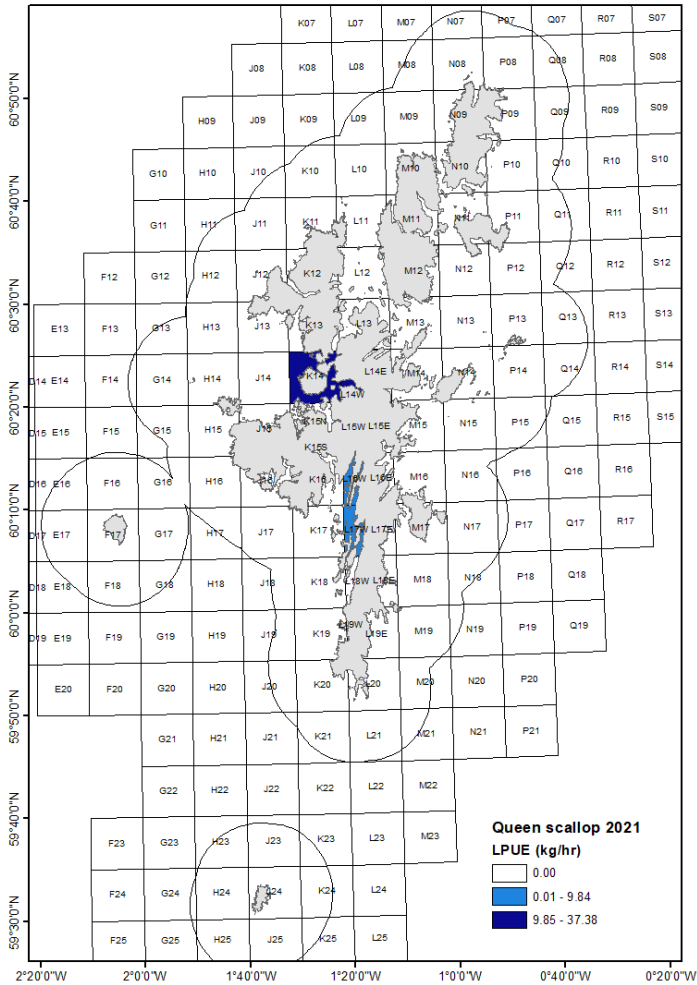


Figure 2 Geographic distribution of queen scallop LPUE per SSMO statistical square in 2021.

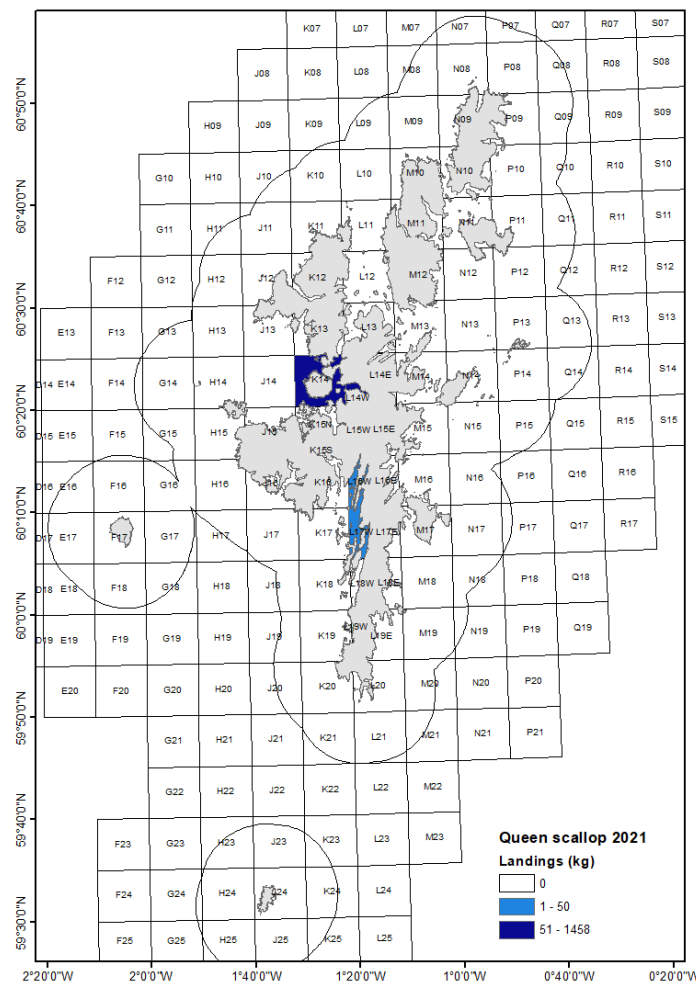


Figure 3 Geographic distribution of queen scallop landings per SSMO statistical square in 2021.

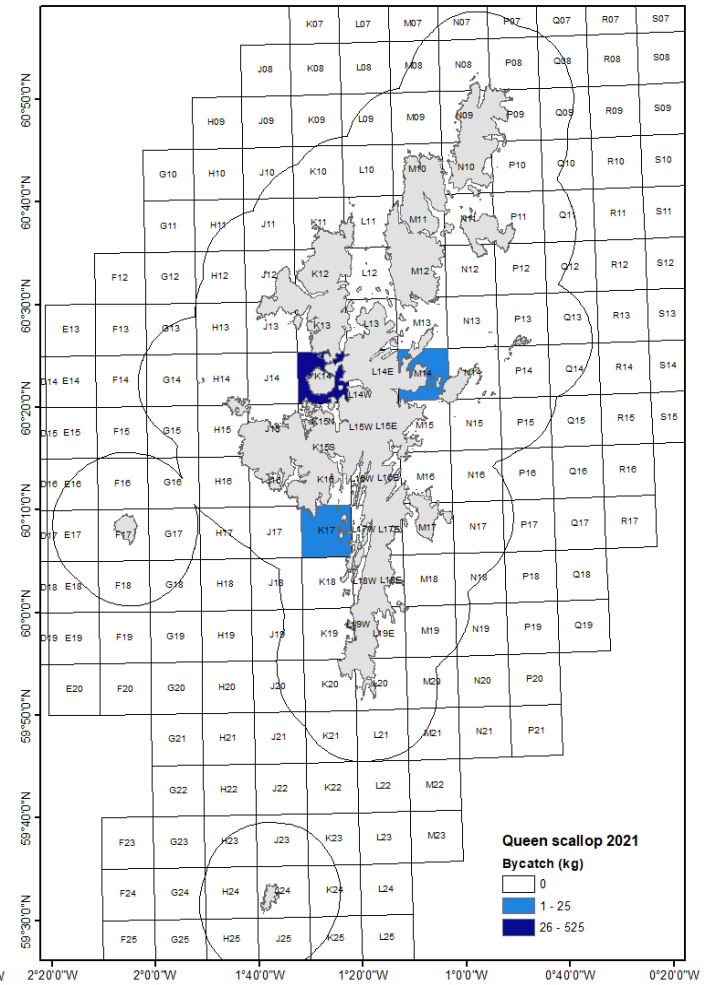


Figure 4 Geographic distribution of queen scallop bycatch per SSMO statistical square in 2021.