

Green Crab Fishery

The green crab (*Carcinus maenas*) fishery is sporadic in nature and is frequently incidental bycatch in the velvet crab (*N. puber*) fishery. Landings and effort fluctuate (Figure 1), with peak landings recorded in 2002, followed by a decline until 2008 where landings remained relatively stable around 20 tonnes annually. Landings declined in 2017 to 1.7 tonnes and remained broadly similar from 2018 to 2021. Market conditions and availability of other species are likely to influence landings.

LPUE is seen to be steady around 0.2-0.3 kg/creel since 2011, albeit with a drop to 0.1 kg/creel in 2017. It is difficult to interpret LPUE due to the opportunistic nature of the fishery. This, and the widespread occurrence of this species, mean it is unlikely the fishery is having a significant negative impact on the population, though the data does provide an indicator of annual change. Further, due to irregular reporting and resulting low confidence in data consistency, it is not currently possible to carry out analytical analyses for the green crab fishery.

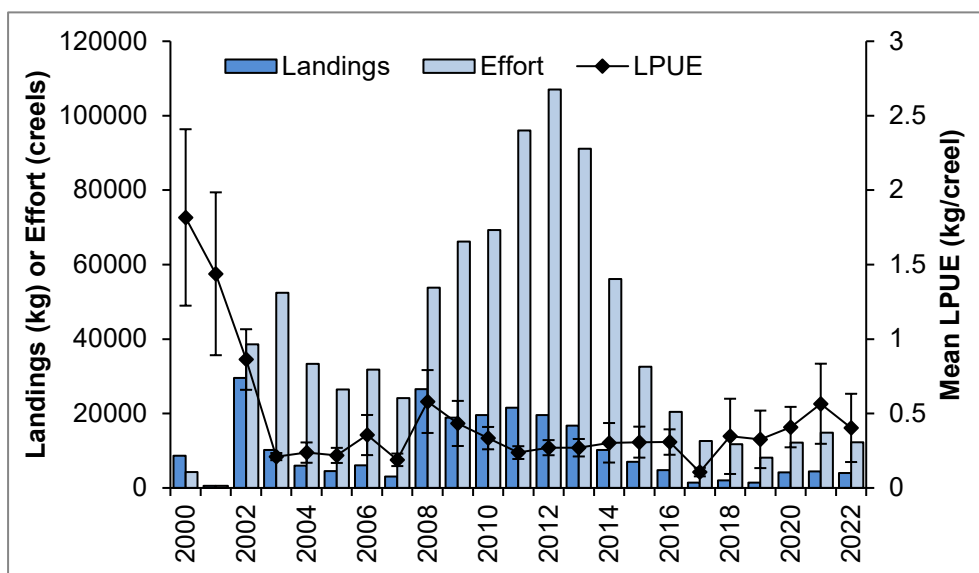


Figure 1 Total green crab landings (kg), total numbers of creels, and the average LPUE obtained from SSMO logbook data with 95% confidence intervals shown.

Reported landings of green crabs are sporadic with high values east of Yell, around Bressay, and in St Magnus Bay (Figures 2-4). However, due to its widespread distribution, this is not deemed an accurate representation of its overlap with the fishery. The fishery presence continues to increase year on year, though inter-annual variation is common.



Figure 2 Geographic distribution of green crab landings per SSMO stat square in 2022.



Figure 3 Geographic distribution of green crab effort per SSMO stat square in 2022.



Figure 4 Geographic distribution of green crab LPUE per SSMO stat square in 2022.