Queen Scallop Fishery

The Shetland queen scallop (*Aequipecten opercularis*) fishery comprises some limited targeted queen fishing, with the majority of landings resulting from bycatch in the king scallop fishery (*Pecten maximus*). Local processing of queen scallops is minimal, and market conditions are believed to be the primary driver of the fishery, influencing both effort and landings.

Historically, the queen scallop fishery held significance in Shetland. Since the recording of data via the submission of SSMO logsheets, annual landings have fluctuated between one and 38 tonnes, reflecting the irregular nature of the fishery (Figure 1). The overall trend in queen scallop landings around Shetland declined between 2000 and 2015, with a slight peak in 2016 when landings exceeded 14 tonnes. However, landings have since dropped to below 5 tonnes annually from 2018 to 2024 (Figure 1). From 2008 to 2020, there was minimal targeted queen scallop fishing, until a notable increase was recorded in 2021 to 3.2 tonnes and has since fluctuated between 0.4 tonnes and 2.7 tonnes in 2022 and 2024, respectively.

The mean landings per unit effort (LPUE) from targeted fishing have exhibited variability, partly due to the sporadic nature of the fishery and significant variations in LPUE between vessels. Consequently, drawing conclusions from LPUE data is challenging.

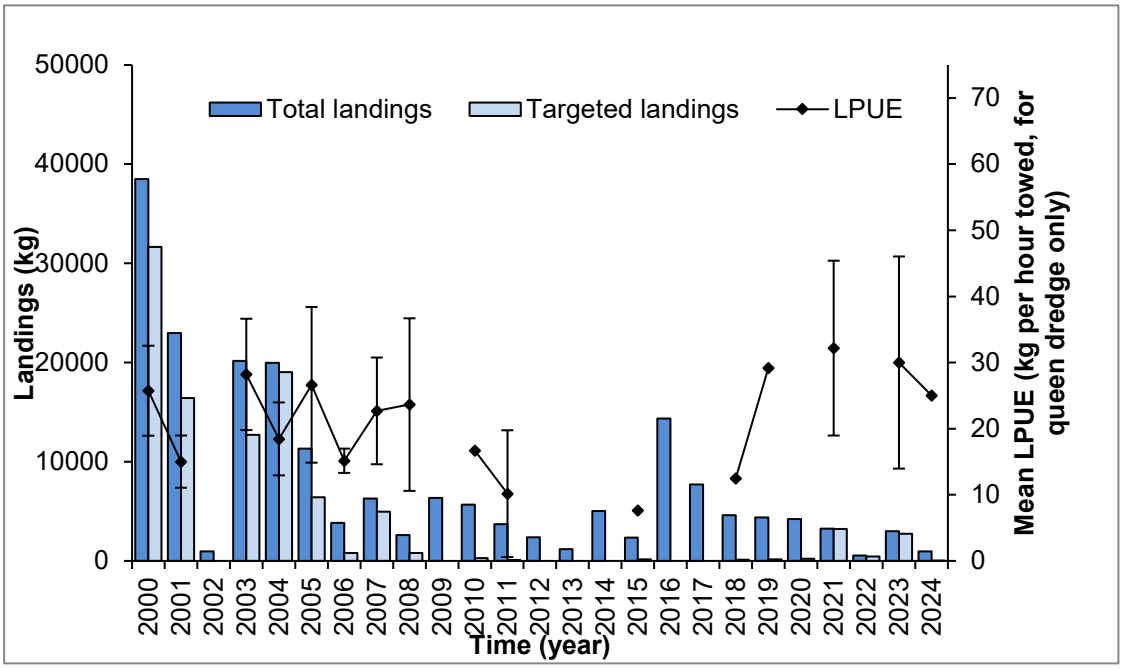

Figure 1 Total queen scallop landings, and the mean LPUE (catch per hour per dredge) obtained from SSMO logbook data with 95% confidence intervals shown.

Targeted queen fishing occurred in one SSMO square in 2024 on the west coast of the Mainland, K14 (Figures 2&3). The landings as bycatch were caught in Yell Sound and off the east coast around Whalsay (Figure 4). Typically, both the targeted and bycatch fisheries show consistent spatial distribution from year to year.

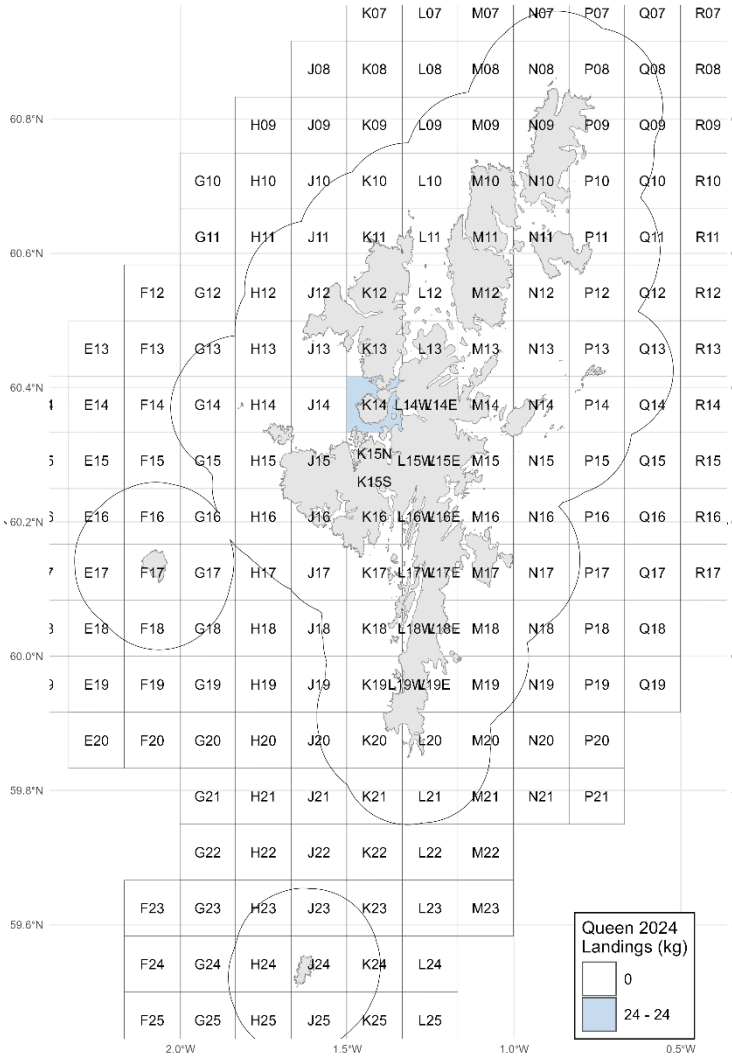

Figure 2 Geographic distribution of queen scallop landings per SSMO statistical square in 2024.

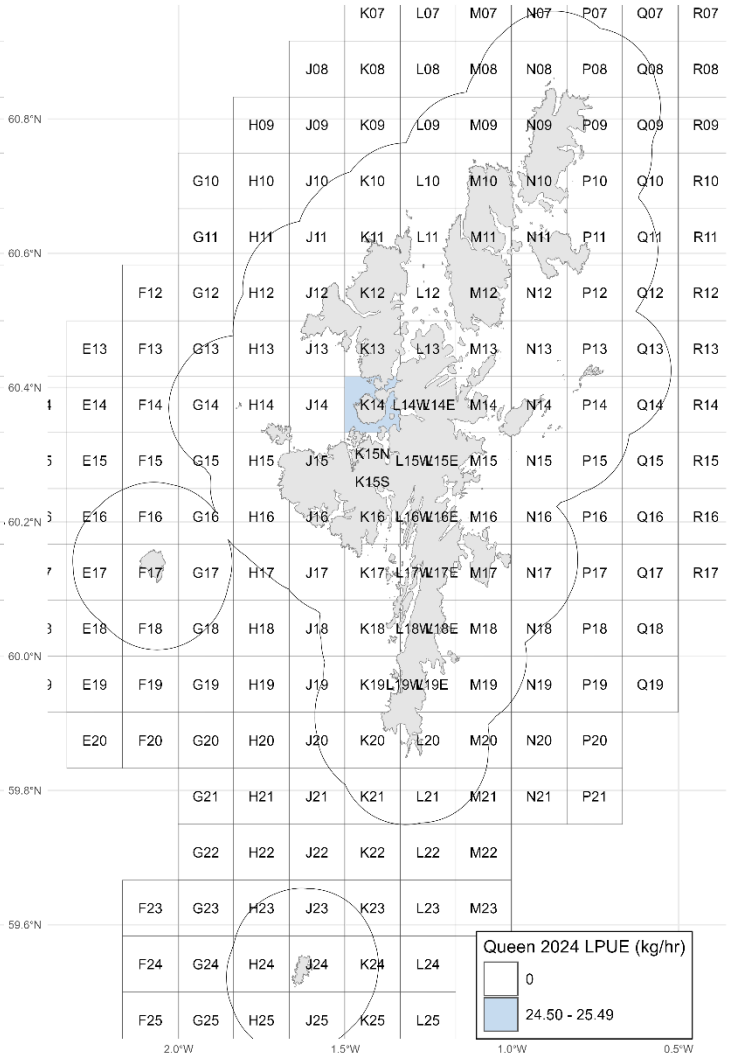

Figure 3 Geographic distribution of queen scallop LPUE per SSMO statistical square in 2024.

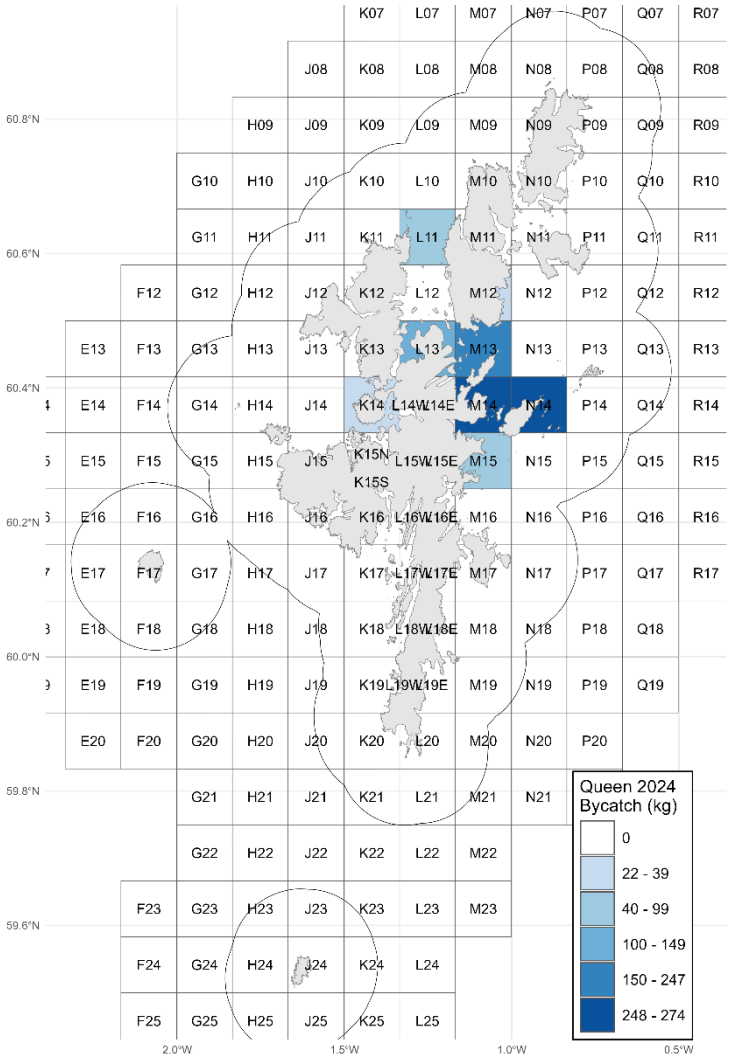

Figure 4 Geographic distribution of queen scallop bycatch per SSMO statistical square in 2024.