

Fish Trade Dataset Introduction – Version 4 (12.12.2023)

Sheet 1 – Main Data

This dataset relates to the book [*Ireland's Sea Fisheries, 1400-1600 Economics, Environment and Ecology*](#); for more information on how it was generated, see Appendix 2 of the book. The following data was collected from a variety of sources to study Ireland's export of fish in the late medieval and early modern periods. The data is focused on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but contains data for the seventeenth century as well. The data presented here was initially part of a relational database constructed in Microsoft Access but has since been extracted and is presented here as a single spreadsheet. This introductory section will outline what data has been included from each primary source and explain each column headings. The second part of this introduction covers the column headings for the gazetteer (list of place names).

If you need help navigating this data, please contact the author at hayesp6@tcd.ie.

Sources

This section outlines what data has been collected from each primary source:

Condon, M, and Evan Jones. "Bristol' Particular' Customs Account Transcriptions." University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/history/research/cabot/publications/>:

All the data from the fifteenth-century Bristol accounts was included in the dataset.

The full list of fifteenth-century accounts from Margaret Condon and Evan Jones can be seen below.

They are also all available online here: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/history/research/cabot/publications/>.

Childs, Wendy R. "Ireland's Trade with England in the Later Middle Ages." Irish Economic and Social History 9 (1982): 5-33:

Data was included from Table III, Value of Irish imports to Bristol, pp. 19-20.

Jones, Evan, and Susan Flavin, eds. Bristol's Trade with Ireland and the Continent, 1503-1601: The Evidence of the Exchequer Customs Accounts. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009:

Only data related to fish was included in the dataset. This decision was made because the original dataset is very long, and fish was the main focus of this study. The full original datasets can be found online here: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/History/Ireland/datasets.htm>.

Wilson, K P, ed. Chester Customs Accounts, 1301-1566. Liverpool: Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1969:

Information about any ships coming from or going to Ireland was included in the dataset.

Hunter, R J, and Brendan Scott, eds. The Ulster Port Books, 1612-15. Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2012:

The full Ulster Port Book dataset has been included here. The data was kindly provided by the Ulster Historical Foundation.

Taylor, Duncan, 'The Maritime Trade of the Smaller Bristol Channel Ports in the Sixteenth Century' (PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 2009).

Data included from:

Table 3.3 Port of Bridgwater: Imports of fish (£ rebased to 1506/7), p. 59.

Woodward, Donald, 'Irish Trade and Customs Statistics, 1614-1641', Irish Economic and Social History 26 (1999): 54-80:

Data included from:

Appendix VIIIa & VIIb, Irish Exports for 1616-17, by Port, pp. 67-68.

Appendix IXa & IXb, Irish Exports for 1621-2, by Port, pp. 69-70.

Appendix, Xa,Xb,Xc, Irish Exports for 1626, pp. 71-73.

Appendix XI, Irish Exports from 1640-1, pp. 74-75.

Woodward, Donald, 'The Trade of Elizabethan Chester' (PhD thesis, University of Hull, 1970):

Chapter 2, The Irish Trade, p. 10

Main Data Column Headings

Because this data was drawn from various sources, not every entry contains data for every field. Blank fields mean that information was not available in the original source.

Many of these headings were based on the headings used in Ireland-Bristol Trade in the Sixteenth Century project but have been modified and expanded for this broader dataset.

The descriptions below outline the meaning of each column heading:

Main Source: This is the original source of the data.

Sub Source: The sub-source denotes what part of the main source the data originated. For example, the Welsh Port Books are divided by ports and years, so this field tells the reader what port and period the data relates to, i.e., 'Beaumaris, 1575-6'

Ship ID: Ship ID is the unique identifying number given to each ship. In this dataset, each item of cargo carried by a ship is listed on a separate row, but each item of cargo will share the same Ship ID.

Ship Name: The name of the ship carrying cargo to or from a port.

Tonnage: The tonnage of the ship in tuns burden. The tonnage was calculated by the maximum number of tun wine barrels a ship could carry. These were often rough estimates, and the same ship could be given a different tonnage by different customs officials.¹

Home Port: The home port of the ship, which means the town or area where it was based.

Home Port Modern Name: In cases where outdated names or spellings of ports were used, so this column is used to provide the equivalent modern name.

Country of Home Port: The country in which the ship's home port was located. Modern country names are used in most cases.

Master First Name: The first name of the ship's master.

Master Surname: The surname of the ship's master.

Direction of Travel: This field denotes if a ship was coming into or leaving a port. A ship marked as 'IN' was importing and a ship marked as 'OUT' was exporting goods.

Origin: The port a ship originated from on its voyage. This field contains the original name found in the primary source.

Origin Modern Name: This field provides the modern name wherever possible of the port a ship originated from. Many spellings and names have changed over time, so the modern names help with mapping the data.

¹ See <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/History/Ireland/datasets.htm> for more.

Country of Origin: The country a ship's port of origin was located.

Destination: The final port of destination for each ship. This field contains the original name found in the primary source.

Destination Modern Name: This field provides the modern name wherever possible of a ship's port of destination.

Country of Destination: The country a ship's port of destination was located in.

Year: The year a ship was recorded in the records.

Month: The month a ship was recorded.

Day: The day a ship was recorded.

Ship Document Reference: This is the document reference that relates to data about a particular ship. For most records, this is a folio reference to the original manuscripts.

Commodity: The name of a commodity carried by a ship. Every item of fish found in the records has been given the prefix 'Fish,' to make this item easier to identify in the dataset.

Unit: This is the historical unit that was used to carry cargo. Conversions for units of fish can be found in the following section just before the main dataset.

Quantity: This is the quantity of a particular unit carried by a ship.

£, s., d., f.: These four columns contain the nominal customs value of items of cargo in Pounds (£), Shillings (s), Pence (d), and farthings (f). There were 240 pence to the pound, 12 pence to the shilling and .25 pence to the farthing.

Mod £: This is the customs value converted to pre-decimal pound sterling and used the following formula:

$$(\pounds * 240 + s * 12 + d + f * .25) \div 240 = \text{Mod } \pounds$$

Live Weight Per Unit (kg): This is the live weight value of the unit in kilograms. For example, if the commodity is white herring and its unit was a barrel, this field would give the live weight value of a barrel of white herring (157.82kg).

Tonnes Live Weight: This is the total live weight in tonnes for each row. The TLW is calculated with the following formula:

$$[\text{Quantity} * \text{Live Weight Per Unit (kg)}] \div 1000 = \text{Tonnes Live Weight}$$

Merchant First Name: The first name of the merchant who was responsible for a particular item of cargo.

Merchant Surname: The second name of the merchant who was responsible for a particular item of cargo.

Merchant Home: The hometown of the merchant.

Merchant Home Country: The country the merchant's hometown was located.

Commodities Document Reference: This is the document reference that relates to individual items of cargo. This is often the same as the ship document reference but sometimes the cargo lists span multiple pages and this field registers that.

Sheet 2 - Gazetteer

The gazetteer provides a list of locations and their corresponding geographic coordinates found in this dataset (and also in the Qualitative Fishing and Piracy Events datasets). This list contains a mixture of modern place names and historical names that are no longer in use. The section below explains the column headings and the type of coordinate system used in the dataset.

Gazetteer Column Headings

ID: This is a unique identifying for each location

Place Name: This is the place name of a location mentioned in the related data

Country: This is the modern country or territory in which a place name was located.

Decimal Longitude: This field lists the decimal longitude of a location. This dataset uses Decimal Degrees (DD) to define locations; these come in pair of longitude and latitude geographic coordinates which are defined as decimal fractions of a degree.

Decimal Latitude: This field lists the decimal latitude of a location.

Source: This is the mapping platform used to find the coordinates.

Geodetic Datum: This field lists the coordinate system that the decimal latitude and longitude relate to. In the case of this work that system is World Geodetic System 1984 or WGS 84 for short.

Sheet 3 - Fish Live Weight Conversions

To generate live weight estimates, each species and historical unit needed to have a relevant conversion factor. This sheet contains a list of all the live weight conversion factors used in this study and the sources they are based on.

For a longer explanation of how the calculations work, see Appendix 1 of the book.

Fish Live Weight Conversions Column Headings

ID: A unique identifying number for each conversion

Source Unit Description: How the original source described the unit. In many cases different spellings of the same unit were standardised in the dataset, but some alternative spellings remain here.

Related Commodity: This field records the fish product that relates to each unit.

Unit Weight or Volume: This is the weight or volume of a unit before it is converted to live weight. For example, ID 18 relates to a C of hake. We know there were 120 hake per the C, so this figure is the weight of one individual hake. ID 43 is a pipe of salmon and is an example that works based on volume. Evan Jones as estimated a pipe had a volume of 476.96L, so we assume it contained 476.96kg of processed salmon. To reach the final live weight number, this figure is multiplied by the live weight conversion factor for salmon provided by the FAO.

Unit Type: This field denotes if a unit conversion works based on the weight or volume of the unit.

Live Weight Multiplier: This field contains the multiplier used to reach the final live weight figure. In the case of ID 18, this multiplier is 120, as one C contained 120 hake. In the case of ID 43, this is 1.50, the FAO live weight conversion factor for salmon.

Unit Live Weight: This field is the final live weight figure of a unit.

Accuracy Indicator: This field contains a ranking of 1-3 that indicates how accurate the conversion used is. A 1 is the lowest score and indicates a conversion with limited information and needs improvement. A score of 2 means the conversion is accurate but could be improved upon with new information. A score of 3 means that the conversion is very accurate, and no better information could be found for this study.

Process Notes: This is a short note that describes the process by which this conversion factor was reached.

Source for Unit Weight or Volume: This field records the source or sources used to reach the Unit Weight or Volume.

Source for Live Weight Multiplier: This field records the source or sources used to calculate the Live Weight Multiplier.