

Fishing Vessel Worker

Fishing vessel workers, also called fishing deckhands, work on fishing boats such as trawlers, drifters, factory ships or small inshore boats. They go to sea to catch fish and shellfish.

The Work

You could be:

- putting out nets, pots or traps to catch fish
- using gear such as winches to bring the full nets back on board
- sorting and gutting fish, storing them in ice and unloading them at the end of the trip
- mending and maintaining nets and other fishing gear
- keeping watch on deck and steering the boat
- cleaning the boat and washing the deck
- cooking for the crew or helping out in the engine room
- using radio transmitters and navigating equipment
- following health and safety rules for work at sea.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Pay for fishing vessel workers can vary greatly, depending on experience, the size of the vessel they work on and also the type of fish or seafood being caught. It is common to be paid a 'crew share', which is a percentage of the profit of the catch, but some may be paid an agreed fee with a smaller percentage share.

Payment arrangements can vary depending on the size of the vessel and type of fishing, for example pots and traps or trawling.

Conditions

- You may have to live on the boat with other crew members, where conditions can sometimes be cramped.
- You may be away from home for several days or weeks at a time.
- You have to work on deck in all weathers including storms, gales and icy conditions, which can be dangerous.
- You may be seasick if the weather is very rough.
- You would have to do a lot of lifting, carrying and climbing.
- You would have to deal with the sight of blood and the smell of fish.

Getting In

- You must be at least sixteen.
- Most entrants are young and often are from fishing families.
- A good general education is useful.
- You might get in by training through the Modern Apprenticeship in Maritime Operations. This would lead to a Diploma in Maritime Operations: Sea Fishing at SCQF Level 5.
- You must be fit and healthy and have a lot of stamina as there is a lot of lifting, hauling and carrying and long shifts.
- You should be good with your hands.

Employers include large companies and small family businesses.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- practical
- reliable
- responsible
- able to work well as part of a close team
- able to follow instructions and safety procedures
- quick to react in an emergency.

You need to have:

- good communication skills
- good balance
- a strong stomach
- good fitness and stamina.

Training

- Before going to sea, you must attend a Maritime and Coastguard (MCA) approved, basic safety training course in sea survival and within three months complete training in fire fighting, first aid and health and safety.
- You would then follow an approved training programme with one of the [Seafish Group Training Associations](#). This would include on the job experience.
- Seafish offers a 15-day training course, 'Introduction to Commercial Fishing', which includes the above mandatory courses. It also includes courses in boat handling, on board procedures and watch-keeping and navigation. This training course is optional.
- You could complete the 12 months Level 2 SQA Diploma in Sea Fishing offered by the Whitby and District Fishing Industry Training School.
- The Scottish Maritime Agency in Peterhead offers a 12-week Maritime Studies - Trainee Deckhand programme in addition to other Certificate of Competence programmes.
- You would take the exams leading to the Certificate of Competency issued by the [Maritime and](#)

[Coastguard Agency \(MCA\)](#).

Getting On

- With experience, you may be able to move up to ship's mate or skipper.
- You may go on to take further courses such as Deck Officer (Fishing Vessel) Classes 1 and 2.
- You may develop an interest in the maintenance and repair of fishing vessel's engines and go on to specialise in marine engineering.
- In time, you may be able to buy your own boat and employ your own crew. Self-employment is quite common in the fishing industry.
- You could also move to a shore-based job in a fishing company, a job in the Merchant Navy, offshore support or harbour tug boat work.

Contacts

Lantra Scotland

Tel: 024 7669 6996

Email: scotland@lantra.co.uk

Website: www.scotland.lantra.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/lantrascotland

Scottish Fisherman's Federation (SFF)

Tel: 01224 646944

Email: sff@sff.co.uk

Website: www.sff.co.uk

X: @sff_uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sff.uk?fref=ts&ref=br_tf

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

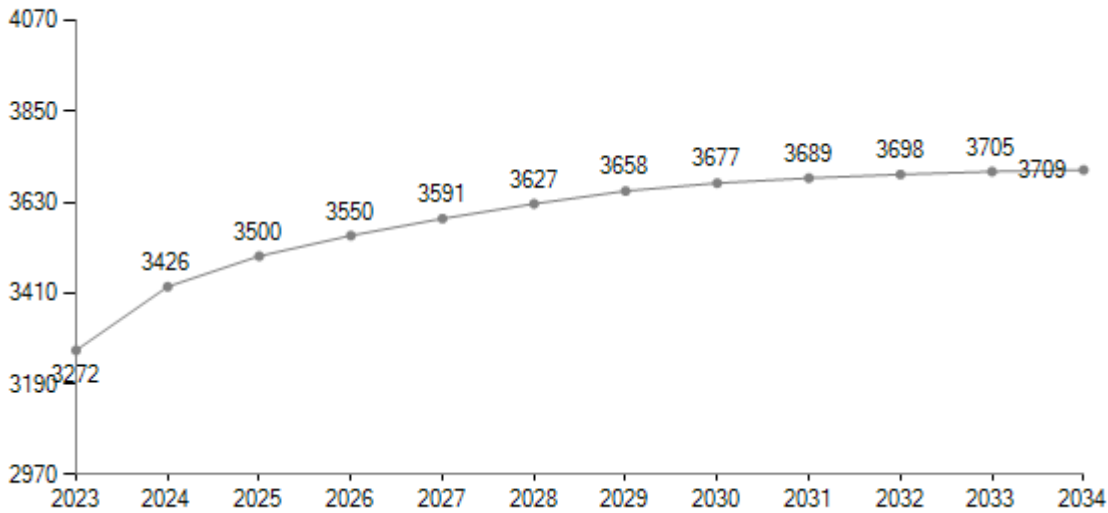


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)