

# North Eastern IFCA Edible Crab (*Cancer pagurus*) Fishery Status Report 2025



## Landings

Landings data information is collected from monthly NEIFCA shellfish catch returns submitted by permitted vessels and for comparison of landings, MMO iFish2 data are included as well. These returns include landed weight, the number of active days, fishing effort, and the area fished. A breakdown of key statistics for the Edible Crab fishery within the NEIFCA district can be found in the Multiple Indicator Framework (Table 1).

Landings per unit effort (LPUE) is a key metric for analysing trends in the fishery, allowing for the observation of seasonal variations (Figure 2). LPUE is expressed in kilograms per 100 pots hauled (kg/100 pots).

Crab landings declined by 36.5% between 2024 and 2025, falling from 780 to 495 tonnes based on NEIFCA catch return data, while MMO data indicates a smaller decrease of 9.3% (Table 1). The largest declines occurred in Bridlington and Scarborough, whereas Hornsea, Whitby, and Redcar remained relatively stable from 2023–2025. In contrast, Hartlepool has shown year-on-year increases in crab landings since 2023.

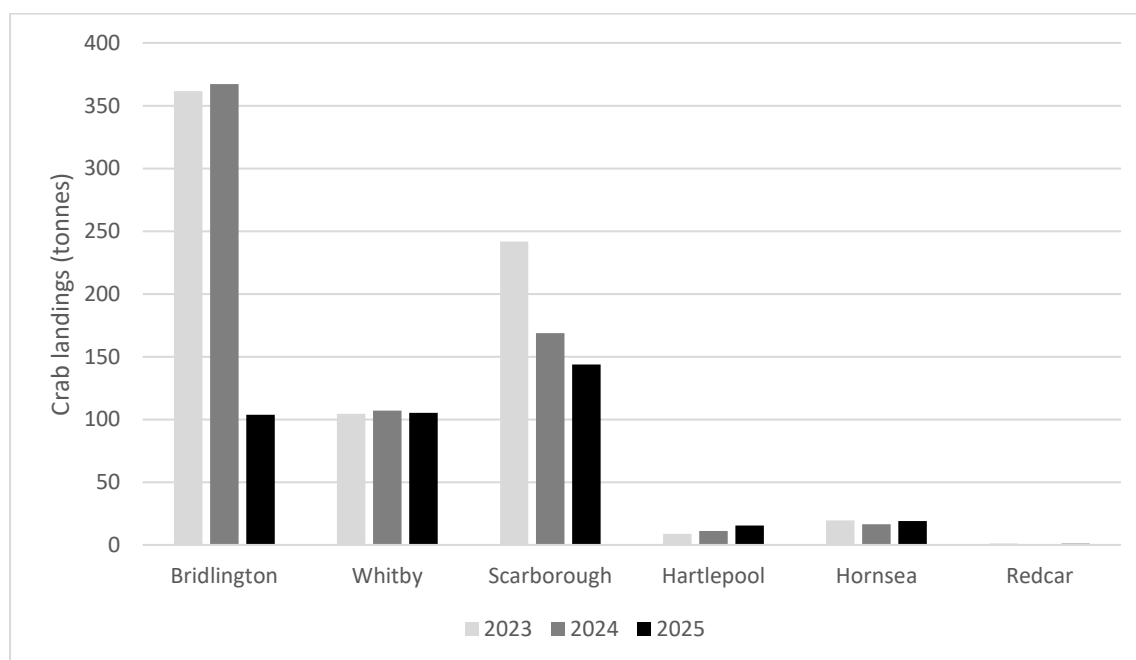


Figure 1. Landed weight of *C. pagurus* to the main NEIFCA ports between 2023 and 2025. Data: NEIFCA catch returns.

The LPUE of *C. pagurus* declined further in 2025 (Figure 2), with only January and November showing higher values than in previous years. The main fishing season of *C. pagurus* typically occurs from October to December; when LPUE would normally be expected to rise; however, in 2025 there was little evidence of this seasonal increase.

Inshore fishers also report that a traditional “spring crab” fishery—characterised by elevated catches in March and April—has largely diminished in recent years. Figure 2 shows only a slight increase in LPUE during these months, providing limited indication of this former pattern. Because the dataset

extends only from 2023 onward, it is likely that the decline in the spring fishery occurred prior to the period covered by the available data.

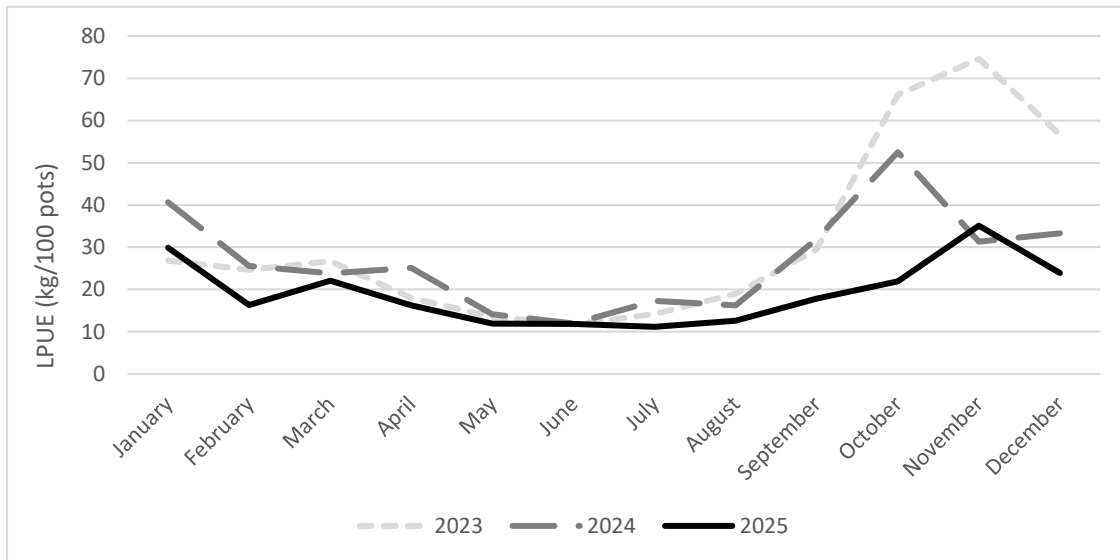


Figure 2. LPUE of *C. pagurus* per month from 2023 to 2025. Data: NEIFCA catch returns.

### Biometric Data

The mean size of landed crabs at the quayside varied very little between 2024 and 2025 for male and female crabs, however when the undersized individuals were included in the analysis (observer trip data) the mean carapace length for males decreased from 137.3mm in 2024 to 128.1mm in 2025 and for females from 142.8mm to 135.4mm (Table 1).

Observer trip data from the fishing areas between Scarborough and Redcar (North) showed an increase in undersized crabs in 2025 for both males and females (Figure 3). This pattern is consistent with anecdotal reports from industry fishers who have noted more undersized crabs appearing in their pots. In contrast, no such increase has been detected in the fishing areas between Flamborough Head and Withernsea (South).

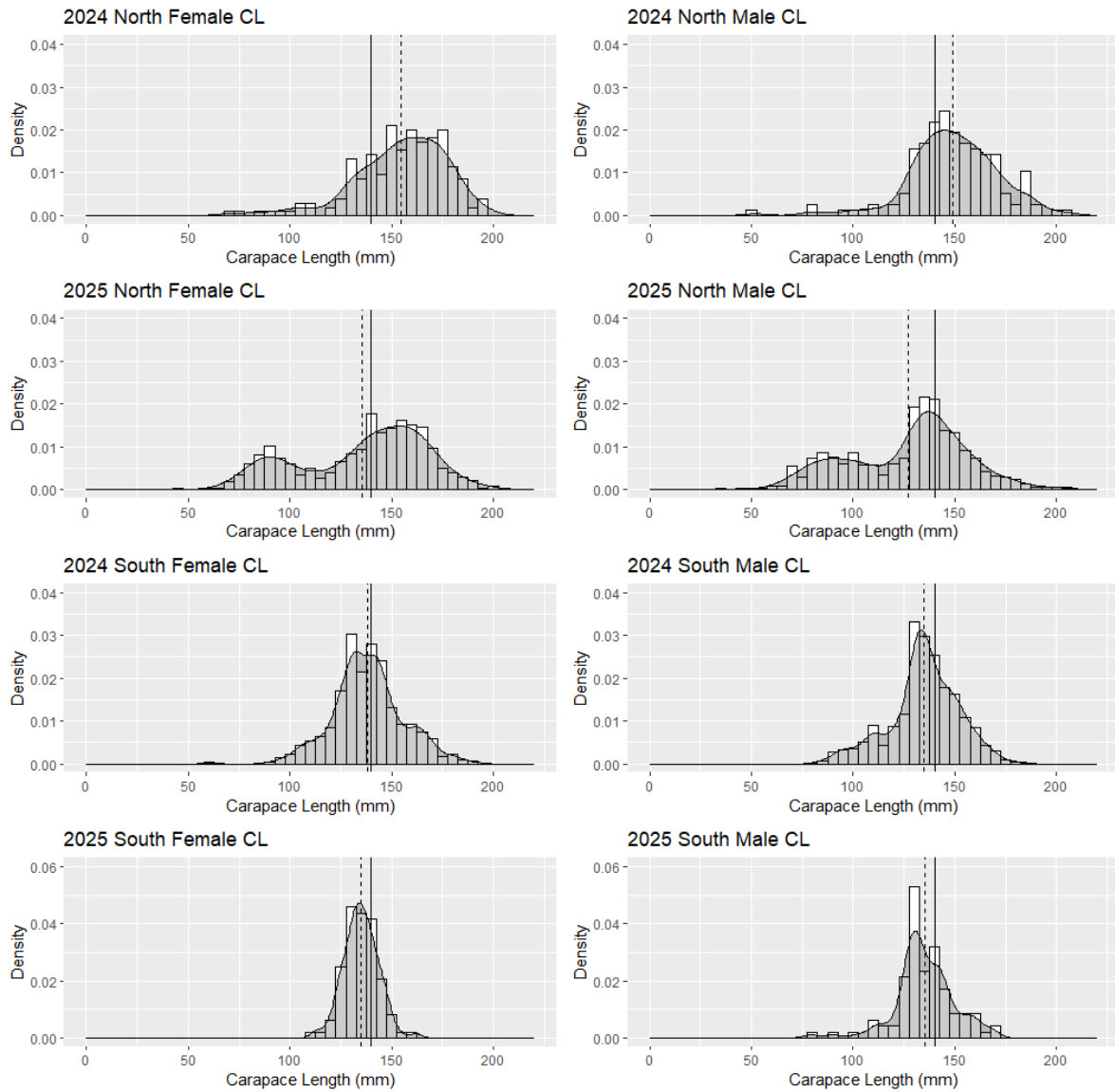


Figure 3. Size density of *C. pagurus* in 2024 and 2025 separated by sex and location. Solid line is the minimum landing size (140mm) and the dashed line is the mean. Data: NEIFCA observer trips.

Table 1: Edible crab (*Cancer paguras*) Multiple Indicator Framework.

<b>Fishery Overview</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025**</b>	<b>Value Ref</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
<b>Total Landings</b>	6152.8	6296.46	5900	2039.7796	4653.4311	4259.396	Tonnes	MMO
<b>Total Landings</b>				854	780	495	Tonnes	NEIFCA Returns
Total Effort (Pots Hauled)				3.32	3.21	2.95	Million	NEIFCA Returns
Total Effort (Pots Set)	N/A	N/A	N/A	110	100	100	Thousand	NEIFCA Returns
<b>Primary Reference Points</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	Value Ref	
Mean LPUE	N/A	N/A	N/A	30	29.3	22	KG/100 pots hauled	NEIFCA Returns
<b>Economic</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	Value Ref	
Average Annual Price	1.78	2.43	2.71	2.59	2.21	1.81	£/kg	NEIFCA IFCO reports
Gross Catch Value	10.95	15.3	15.98	6.81/2.2	10.28/1.7	7.7/0.9	£ Million	MMO/NEIFCA Returns
No. Active Vessels	273	259	226	199	195	185	#	NEIFCA Returns
<b>Biometric Above 87mm (quayside)</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	Value Ref	
Average Carapace Length M (mm)	155	153	154	155	153	153	mm	NEIFCA Survey
Average Carapace Length F (mm)	156	153	156	156	155	155	mm	NEIFCA Survey
Max Carapace Length M (mm)	200	195	213	220	212	210	mm	NEIFCA Survey
Max Carapace Length F (mm)	210	188	203	207	207	205	mm	NEIFCA Survey
<b>*Biometric all sizes</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	Value Ref	
Average Carapace Length M (mm)	N/A	N/A	135	137	137	128	mm	NEIFCA Survey
Average Carapace Length F (mm)	N/A	N/A	142	143	142	135	mm	NEIFCA Survey
Max Carapace Length M (mm)	N/A	N/A	185	220	206	228	mm	NEIFCA Survey
Max Carapace Length F (mm)	N/A	N/A	191	202	196	206	mm	NEIFCA Survey
Sex Ratio (% Female)	N/A	N/A	46.7	41.2	45.1.4	53.4	%	NEIFCA Survey
*This section includes all data from observer trips and NEIFCA surveys NOT quayside sampling therefore includes sizes below 140mm. ** The information provided is correct at the time of publishing,								