Recreational yachting

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INGEN

A activity born in the Channel

Reference points

19 major races or regattas sailing out of Channel ports

Number of leisure boats (2009)

Channel area: 1 326 765 French side: 339 862

Number of marinas (2012)

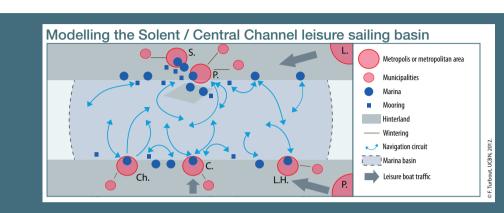
English side: 986 903

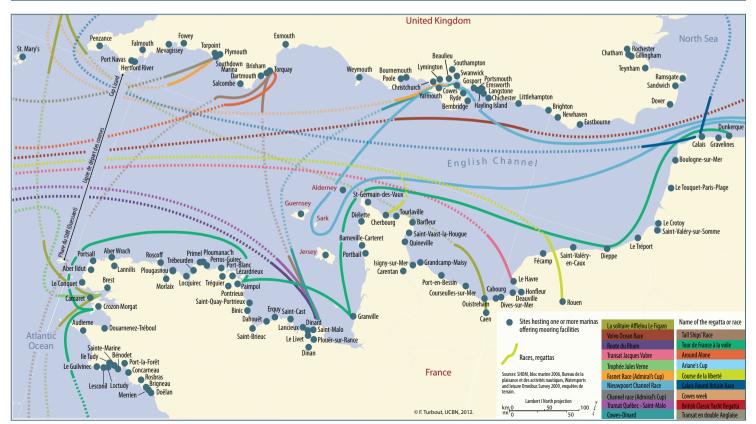
Channel area: 126

Channel Islands: 3

French side: 80

English side: 43





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Total number of yatchsmen (2009)



Yacht clubs were first introduced in Cowes in 1815, and then Le Havre in 1838, at a time where the Channel coast was already becoming the birthplace of modern seaside tourism. Initially yachting was above all the preserve of a well-off clientele, an elite. As it developed and broadened its social base this recreational activity gradually 'colonised' the coast, first making use of existing port infrastructures before creating its own dedicated facilities over time.

There are now some 126 marinas with fixed mooring facilities along the Channel coastlines, as well as a scatter of 'free' moorings using the natural shelters of the coast where available in rias and estuaries. Even so the number of moorings remains inadequate given the increasing number of registered boats, even if many boats only head out a few days a year on average.

There are now more than 1.3 million boats registered in the zone, three-quarters of which on the English side. But while there are more boats on that side of the Channel, France boasts more ports – particularly in LowerNormandie and Brittany. These provide major tourist attractions for countless coastal municipalities. As such the Channel ranks as one of the world's top yacht basins.

This recreational boating activity whether involving sailing boats or motorcruisers, generates, alongside traditional employment sectors, specialist jobs in ever more innovative activities using the most cutting-edge technologies, as in developing materials that can withstand extreme sailing conditions, as well as new increasingly resistant hulls, designed for the major ocean races ... For the Channel area is also the starting line for some of the most prestigious, world-famous yacht races.

Around 19 major solo or crewed yacht races regulary set off from Channel ports: the Tall Ships Race, the Route du Rhum, the Transat Jacques Vabre or La Solitaire du Figaro are all events bringing the public into contact with this world of sailing. When the great racing boats cross the imaginary line connecting Lizard Point to Créac'h lighthouse on the island of Ushant after several weeks at sea, they are welcomed by an enormous crowd of loyal fans who never miss out on their arrival.

The Solent – and more generally the whole of the Channel – has become renowned for these races and regattas, thereby renewing its historic links with the great circumnavigators of old.