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## FACTSHEET D

## HERRING SEASONS

The various species of herring around the British Isles mature at different times of year creating a nationwide pattern of distinct seasons which the fleets followed. There were three distinct seasons around the coasts, a number of fishermen taking part in all three. In the majority of cases, this also applied to the herring lasses who travelled by train, coach or by horse and cart depending on the location and how far these places were from their home base.

The herring season began in late May in the Hebrides and a fortnight later in Shetland. Through the summer, the fleets moved from Orkney and Shetland down the East Coast until they reached Northumberland and Yorkshire by mid September. October to December saw them in Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

### Summer Herring

May – June: the season began in the Hebrides, moving on to Shetland a fortnight later

July – August: the fleets took in the whole of the East Coast of Scotland, moving gradually southwards

### Autumn Fishing

September – October: boats and curers would travel to the Yorkshire ports of Whitby and Grimsby or to the Isle of Man

November – December: from the 1860s, Lowestoft and Yarmouth in East Anglia were included in the year

### Winter Herring

January - March: some boats also took part in a winter season - herring spawning in the Forth, Minch, Irish Sea and off Northern Island were fished at this time

Many fishermen would return home at the end of the autumn season to re-equip their boats for line-fishing over the winter. White fish e.g. haddock and cod could be caught all year round. During winter months, fishermen worked sma' lines close to the shore and during the summer months, many of them would sail further afield to deeper waters and fish Great lines (Gartlins). Others would use the winter to repair nets and gear ready for the next year's herring harvest.