Fishing vessels are typically designed with a specific purpose. That purpose is to locate, catch, and preserve fish while out at sea. The planned operations of a vessel determine the overall size of the vessel, the arrangement of the deck, carrying capacity, as well as the machinery and types of equipment that will be supported by the vessel. Due to the inherent differences in fishing communities around the world, there is a wide range of types and styles of fishing vessels. Vessel sizes can range from the 2 m (6 ft) dug out canoes used in subsistence and artisanal fisheries, to factory ships that exceed 130 m (427 ft) in length. Commercial fishing vessels can also be characterized by a variety of criteria: types of fish (See Biology & Ecology) they catch, fishing gear and methods used (See Fishing Gear), capacity and processing capabilities, and the geographical origin of the vessel. In 2002, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated the world fishing fleet had approximately four million vessels, with an average vessel size ranging from 10-15 m (33-49 ft). Based on a quarterly catch statistics report, published by the Pacific Fisheries Information Network (PacFIN), approximately 1,950 vessels landed their catches in California ports.

Due to the technological innovations that began in the 1950s, many fishing vessels are now classified as multi-purpose vessels, because of the ability to switch out gear types depending on the targeted species. However, single use vessels still exist in the world fishing fleet today. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has identified eight general vessel classifications by fishing method, which we have provided detailed information on. Most, if not all, modern commercial vessels are also equipped with advanced technological equipment for navigation and fish finding.

Lift Netters

Similar to gillnetters (See Fishing Vessel Types) and seiners (See Fishing Vessel Types), lift netters are designed to fish with large nets. Lift netters deploy and retrieve large lift nets over the sides of the vessel using outriggers. Often the vessels use powerful lights to attract fish to the surface.

Lift netters are typically greater than 10 m (33 ft) in length. The smaller boats typically have an open deck layout and have few mechanized features. The larger decked vessels are designed for open-ocean fishing and are equipped with mechanized winches to help with the deployment and retrieval of the nets. Small lift netters are used in both commercial and artisanal fisheries in Southeast Asia and Africa, whereas Russians in the Caspian Sea use larger lift netters. Lift netters primarily target various species of Pacific Sardines (See California Fisheries) and other schooling pelagic species.
References


Additional Resources

National Marine Fisheries Services: Fisheries Gear
(link to: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch/fishinggears.htm)

National Marine Fisheries Services: Interactive Illustration with Vessels, Gears and Species
(link to: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/speciesid/Sustainability.html)