

Finland's boating industry turning a corner – wholesale deliveries already back in growth

Consumer uncertainty and the economy's slower-than-expected turnaround were still reflected in the boating industry's 2025 sales. However, growth in the registered fleet, strong trading activity in used boats, and Finnboat's wholesale delivery statistics all indicate a shift towards improvement. The sector's business cycle barometer also points to cautious optimism for 2026.

In 2025, registrations of new boats fell by 23% compared with the previous year. Nevertheless, the Finnish boat register grew as older stock from previous model years was cleared: by year-end, the register contained almost 3,000 more watercrafts than a year earlier. Even so, the overall increase in the number of registered watercrafts remained just over one percent. Continued brisk trading in used boats - up by as much as 12% - also demonstrates the enduring popularity of boating.

Finnboat member companies' reported wholesale delivery statistics for small boats and outboard-powered boats were up during the first three quarters of 2025 in both domestic deliveries and exports. Wholesale deliveries of outboard engines totalled 6,819 units, representing growth of as much as 14%.

In Finland, the key indicator of boating activity is the number of boat registrations, which began rising after the financial crisis from 2013 onwards and peaked in the pandemic year 2021. The Finnish boat register includes all boats longer than 5.5 metres or fitted with an engine of more than 15 kW (20 hp).

The boating industry employs around 3,500 people in Finland, and the combined turnover of Finnboat member companies was, according to a preliminary estimate, approximately EUR 800 million, in line with recent years.

"2025 was still challenging for the boating sector, but the statistics show a cautious shift in a better direction. A survey conducted among Finnboat members also forecasts slightly improved conditions. Despite turbulence in global politics, activity in several key export markets has been on the rise, and as inventories have been cleared, the situation for manufacturers has also improved somewhat," says **Jarkko Pajusalo**, CEO of the Finnish Marine Industries Federation Finnboat.

Boaters gather in February at the Helsinki Boat Show

Finnish boaters traditionally kick off the 2026 season in February at the Helsinki International Boat Show, the Vene 26 Båt event. Around 400 different boats will be on display, ranging from large yachts to small rowing boats. The ten-day show opens on Friday, 6 February.

According to Pajusalo, the Helsinki Boat Show is an extremely important sales and marketing event for the industry and marks the opening of the sales season. The show has also strengthened its position as the most important boat show in Northern Europe, and the event's growing international profile will be reflected at this year's show.

In terms of the boats on display, the largest group by number consists of versatile "cottage boats" for general use—boats commonly used for summer cabins and everyday boating. 87% of new motorboats sold in Finland are no more than seven metres in length. Last year, 1,387 new motorboats up to seven metres were registered, compared with 48 boats over ten metres and 18 boats over 12 metres.

According to Pajusalo, consumer caution and weak purchasing power have been particularly visible in sales of this most popular segment—smaller outboard-powered motorboats - but the recovery of purchasing power has already begun to improve the situation.

"Boating holds a strong place in enthusiasts' hearts, but in tight times it is also among the first areas where people cut spending. The pace at which demand for boats - like all durable consumer goods - returns will now depend on consumers' confidence in the global political situation and in their own finances. Purchasing power in Finland and neighbouring markets has improved for a second year in a row, but the recovery in confidence has been slower than expected, especially in Finland," Pajusalo says.

The registered watercraft fleet grew as old stock was cleared

In 2025, 2,021 new watercrafts of various types were registered (2,631 in 2024), meaning a 23% decline compared with the previous year. 1,594 motorboats were registered (1,895), and 26 rigid inflatable boats (RIBs) (31). 353 personal watercrafts (PWC) were registered (653). First-time registrations of new boats include boats manufactured in the current year and the two preceding years.

Despite this, the registered fleet grew in 2025 by a total of 2,927 units. The difference compared with first registrations was driven by the clearance of older inventory, especially in motorboats and personal watercraft. For motorboats, the gap was as much as 730 units, and for personal watercraft 195 units.

The top ten list for first registrations of motorboats was dominated by domestic brands. Buster remained number one (333 registered boats). Silver rose to second place (170), Suvi was third (153), and Faster fourth (143).

Near the top of the overall first-registration rankings for all watercraft types was also the personal watercraft brand Sea-Doo (279 units).

A total of 17 new sailboats were registered - exactly the same as in the two previous years. The most popular brands were the French Beneteau (4) and the German Hanse (4). Single units were also registered from Dehler, Excess, Lagoon, Neo Yachts, and X-Yachts. In addition to factory-built sailboats, four self-built boats were registered.

At the same time, trading in used boats continued at a clearly higher level than before the pandemic. According to the boat register maintained by the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom, a total of 26,323 ownership transfers were recorded, corresponding to 12% growth in second-hand sales. Boats changed owners as much as 20% more actively than in the pre-pandemic peak year 2019.

"Boats are among the world's longest-lasting durable consumer goods, which means they often change owners several times during their lifetime. A long-lasting product is also ecological—especially if it is upgraded with modern technology that places less burden on the environment," Pajusalo notes.

First-time registrations of watercraft in Finland 2020–2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Motorboats	3,361	3,699	3,242	2,359	1,895	1,594
Sailboats	22	22	18	17	17	17
Inflatables / RIBs	68	104	78	51	31	26
Personal watercraft (jet skis)	1,272	1,276	1,179	785	653	353
Other	46	64	72	60	35	31
Total	4,769	5,166	4,589	3,272	2,631	2,021

Ownership transfers of watercraft 2020–2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Motorboats	24,759	23,930	18,394	19,218	19,012	21,425
Sailboats	1,593	1,573	1,227	1,117	1,193	1,253
Inflatables / RIBs	112	109	119	136	145	173
Personal watercraft (jet skis)	2,309	2,723	2,722	3,040	3,050	3,383
Other	87	102	76	93	106	89
Total	28,860	28,437	22,538	23,604	23,506	26,323

Unit: number of watercrafts. Source: Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom. Note: sailboat figures include motor sailers.

Watercraft exports down 12%

According to Finnish Customs statistics, the value of Finland's boat exports in January–November 2025 fell by around 12% compared with the previous year. More than 3,267 boats were exported to 49 different countries. Measured by units, however, boat exports increased by 9%.

By value, the United Kingdom became the largest export destination, with boats exported worth EUR 43 million. The United States was the second-largest destination: the number of boats exported there increased by 22%, while the value fell by 28% to EUR 32 million. Sweden was the third-largest export destination; export value rose by 5%, and more than 1,200 boats were delivered there, with a total value of EUR 29 million.

During the first 11 months of the year, 20 sailboats were exported, worth a total of EUR 63 million. Both the quantity and the declared customs value decreased compared with the previous year. The most important destinations for sailboat exports were the United Kingdom (EUR 31m), Gibraltar (EUR 5.7m), the British Virgin Islands (EUR 5.0m), Italy (EUR 4.5m) and France (EUR 3.4m).

Export statistics for the 10 largest destination countries, 2025 (Jan–Nov), Number of watercrafts

Country	EUR million	No.	Change %
United Kingdom	42.8	81	+126%
United States	32.3	80	-28%
Sweden	28.9	1,211	+5%
Norway	24.3	937	-23%
Germany	11.9	248	-45%
Greece	8.9	20	+187%
Türkiye	8.8	50	-13%
Gibraltar	5.7	1	–
Denmark	5.2	56	+2%
British Virgin Islands	5.0	2	-26%
Total exports	221.5	3,267	-12.3%

Imports down 28%

The most significant country of origin for imported watercraft remained Mexico. The 773 watercraft imported from Mexico were personal watercraft (PWC), most of which were cleared into the EU via Finland and then re-exported to other parts of Europe. Imports from Mexico decreased by 27%. The second most important country of origin was Poland; imports in January–November 2025 decreased by 21% to EUR 6.2 million and 86 boats. From Sweden, 112 boats were imported with a total value of EUR 2.6 million. Imports from Sweden decreased by 28%.

Import statistics for the 5 largest countries of origin, 2025 (Jan–Nov), Number of watercrafts

Country	EUR million	No.	Change %
Mexico	8.4	773	-27%
Poland	6.2	86	-21%
Sweden	2.6	112	-28%
United Kingdom	2.2	203	-45%
Germany	1.0	3	+400%
Total imports	25.6	2,820	-28%

Finland of archipelagos and lakes as a boating destination

Based on first registrations in 2025, the strongest boating regions in Finland were Uusimaa and Southwest Finland (Varsinais-Suomi). 40 % of all watercrafts in the country were registered in these regions. By municipality, the highest numbers of first registrations were recorded in Helsinki (156), Kuopio (81), Turku (78), Espoo (77) and Tampere (73).

At the end of 2025, a total of 247,185 registered watercrafts were recorded in Finland. The highest numbers were in Helsinki (17,150), Espoo (7,990) and Turku (7,527). Other municipalities with more than 5,000 registered watercrafts were Parainen (7,202), Kuopio (5,846), Raseborg (Raasepori) (5,487) and Porvoo (5,305). In addition to registered watercraft, especially in lake areas there are hundreds of thousands of small boats that are not subject to registration.

Business cycle barometer signals a cautiously positive year

As usual, Finnboat collected assessments from its members around the turn of the year regarding expectations for turnover and personnel. 53% of companies anticipate stable turnover, 44% expect growth and only 3% expect a decline.

Despite temporary layoffs in manufacturing, overall employment in the boating industry is nevertheless expected to remain at a good level, reflecting confidence in the sector's future. 72% of companies estimate that headcount will remain unchanged, and 25% estimate that it will increase in 2026. Only 3% of companies estimate that staffing levels will decrease.

Personnel outlook for 2026

- 23% of companies estimate an increase in headcount (23% the previous year)
- 3% of companies estimate a decrease in headcount (9%)
- 74% of companies estimate headcount will remain unchanged (68%)

Turnover outlook for 2026

- 47% of companies estimate turnover will increase (44% the previous year)
- 3% of companies estimate turnover will decrease (13%)
- 50% of companies estimate turnover will remain unchanged (43%)

Temporary layoffs were implemented in 2025 by 17% of the 77 companies that responded to the barometer (15% the previous year).

Further information:

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