



Operating Costs in the Lough Foyle Oyster Fishery

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Introduction

- ❑ High fishing intensity is costly and leads to both diminishing returns and increased pressure on stocks
- ❑ It is imperative that fishing practices are adaptable and reflect changes in the value of the resource and the cost in harvesting it
- ❑ In recent years fuel costs have risen faster than the price of oysters
- ❑ The aim of this project was to assess current fishing practices (days at sea/ distance travelled/ fuel consumption etc.) in the Lough Foyle Oyster Fishery

Developing improved fishing practise in the Lough Foyle oyster fishery to ensure sustainability and increase profitability

Methods

Data obtained from the Loughs Agency and consultation with other available sources about the Lough Foyle oyster fishery to establish:

- ❑ Operating practise throughout the fishing season
- ❑ Catch per unit effort
- ❑ Operating ranges in the context of oyster values at first point of sale and fuel costs.



Oyster fishing vessels on Lough Foyle, in Greencastle, County Donegal, Ireland.

Results

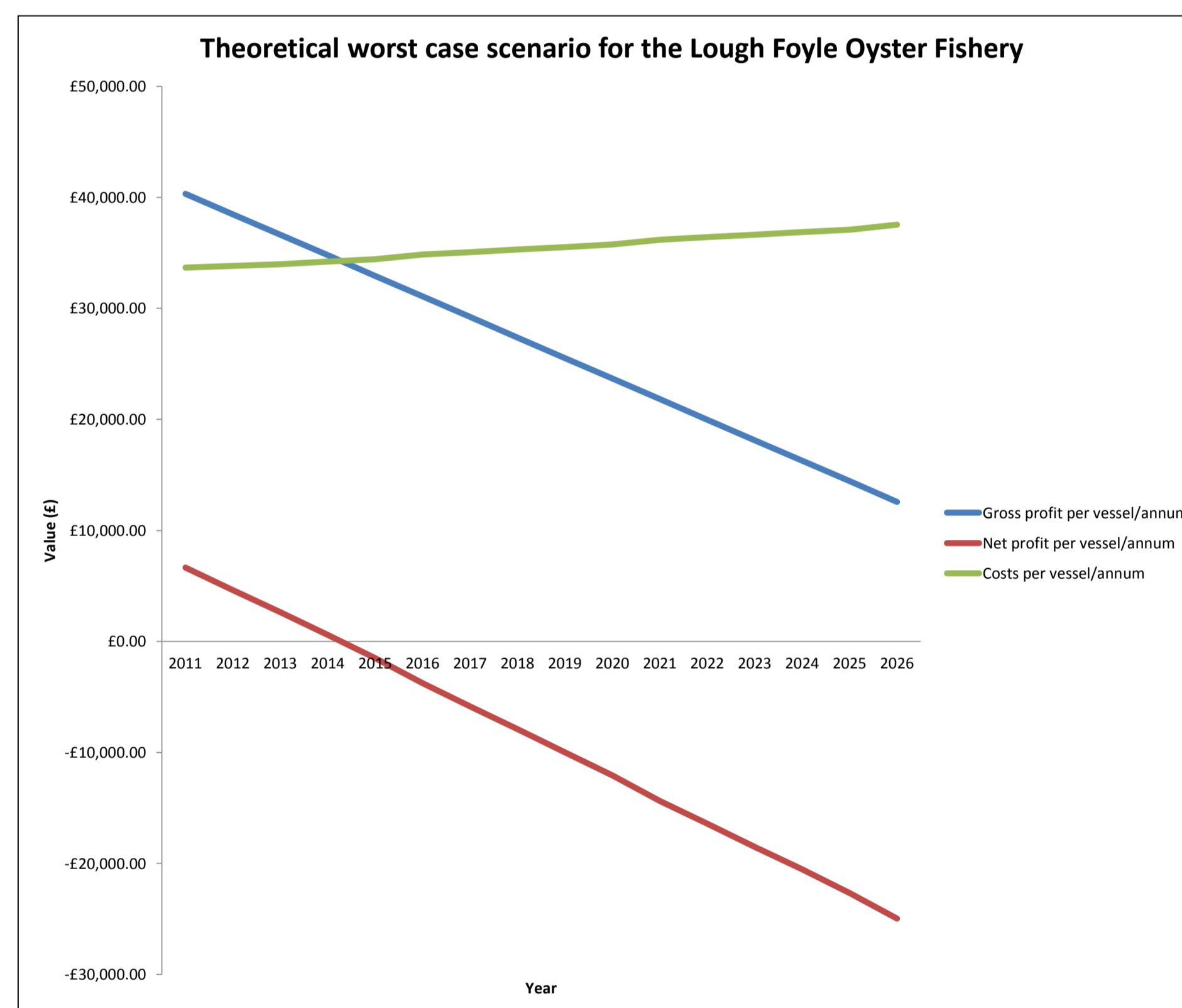


Figure 1 illustrates a theoretical scenario, if *O.edulis* populations continue to be harvested at the current rate alongside increasing fuel, labour and vessel maintenance costs the fishery will decline in profitability as the costs are higher than the revenue generated from oyster sales.

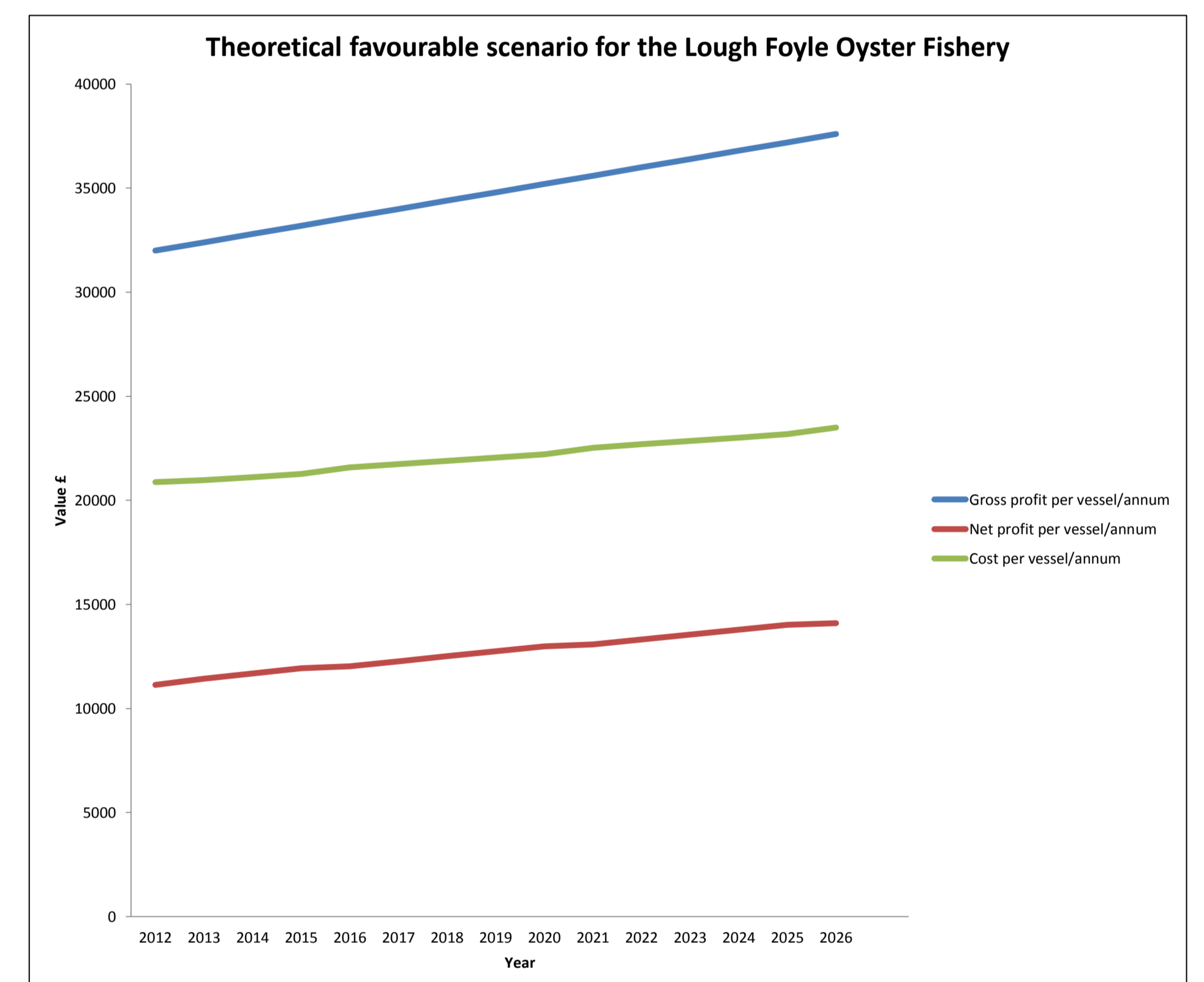


Figure 2 illustrates a theoretical scenario, if the fishing season is reduced there will be a reduction in the harvest of *O.edulis* reducing over supply to the market leading to increased prices at first point of sale. As there are fewer days fishing associated fuel and maintenance costs are reduced and overall profitability within the fishery will increase.

Summary

- ❑ Fuel is a major element in the operating costs of inshore fishermen who are finding it increasingly difficult to break even.
- ❑ This study demonstrates that if fuel costs continue to increase along with associated vessel costs the profitability of the fishery will decline if current fishing practices continue. The reality of this will be increased pressure on localised stocks of *O.edulis* and diminishing returns.
- ❑ The theoretical models produced within this project will develop recommendations to improve current fishing practises to ensure *O.edulis* is harvested sustainably and ultimately to ensure the existence of a profitable oyster fishery within Lough Foyle.

