

# **WORLD FLEET REVIEW**

**By:**

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Shipping is a vital link in international trade, where ocean-going vessels are one of the most efficient ways of transporting large volumes of basic commodities and finished products.

At the beginning of 2005 the world merchant fleet stood at 895.8 million deadweight tons (dwt). This represents a 4.5 per cent increase over the start of 2004. Newbuilding deliveries represented 49.4 million dwt, while 10.6 million dwt were broken and lost. So the result was a net gain of 38.8 million dwt in 2004.<sup>1</sup>

The tonnage of oil tankers in 2004 increased by a healthy 6.1 per cent and that of bulk carriers by 4.2 per cent. These two types of ships represented 73.3 per cent of total tonnage. The fleet of general cargo ships decreased again in 2004; this category represented 10.3 per cent of the total world fleet in comparison with 13.2 per cent in 2003. The fleet of container ships increased by 7.6 million dwt, or 8.4 per cent, and represented 10.9 per cent of the total world fleet. The deadweight tonnage of liquid gas carriers has been increasing steadily.

**Table 1 ♦ The world fleet structure by principal types of vessels, in thousands of dwt**

Principal types	2003	2004	2005
Oil tankers	304,396	316,759	336,156
Bulk carriers	300,131	307,661	320,584
General cargo ships	97,185	94,768	92,048
Container ships	82,793	90,462	98,064
Other	59,730	47,324	48,991
Liquid gas carriers	19,469	20,947	22,546
Chemical tankers	8,027	8,004	8,290
Miscellaneous tankers	906	947	1,001
Ferries and passenger ships	5,495	5,561	5,589
Other	25,833	11,865	11,565
<i>World total</i>	<i>844,235</i>	<i>856,974</i>	<i>895,843</i>

Note: beginning of year figures.

<sup>1</sup> The review is based on data supplied by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Review of Maritime Transport, 2005.

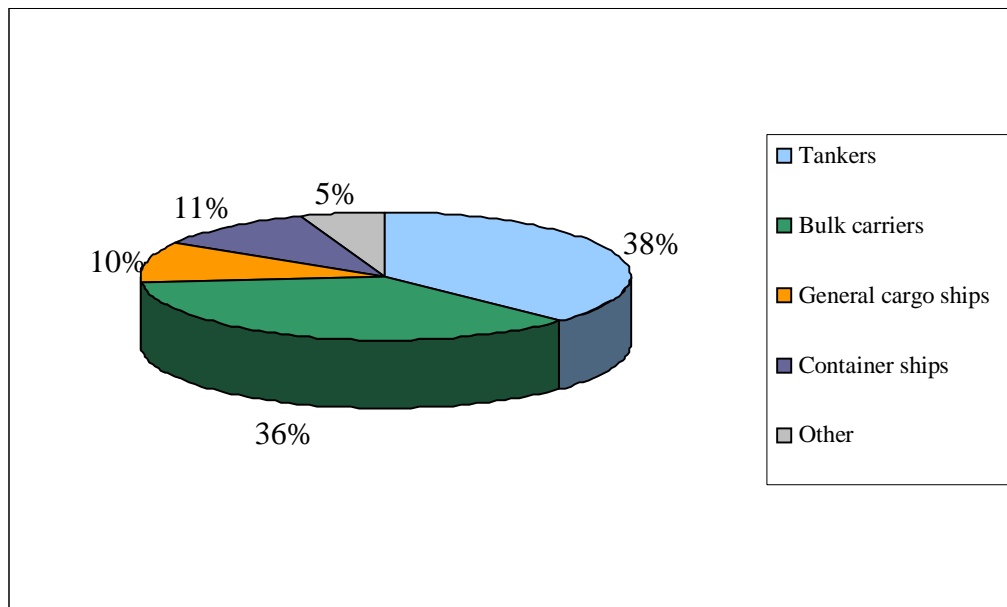


Figure 1 ♦ World fleet structure at the beginning of 2005

The average age of the fleet in 2004 stood at 12.3 years. The average age of tankers decreased to 10.3 years. The share of tanker tonnage 15 years and older decreased to 27.4 per cent in 2004 from 29.9 per cent in 2003, while a level of scrapping activities reached up 7.8 million dwt (compared with 18.4 million dwt in 2003). The average age of bulk carriers increased to 13 years. Container ships continued to be the youngest group of the fleet; the average age in 2004 was 9.4 years, slightly above the 9.2 years average age of 2003. The share of tonnage between 0 and 4 years of age is 31.9 per cent, the highest among all categories of vessels.

Table 2 ♦ Age structure of the world fleet by the types of vessels

Типы судов	0 – 4 years	5 – 9 years	10 – 14 years	15 – 19 years	20 year and over	Average age, 2004	Average age, 2003
All ships	23.0	21.9	16.5	11.3	27.3	12.3	12.5
Tankers	29.0	22.8	20.9	11.7	15.7	10.3	10.9
Bulk carriers	20.2	22.0	14.6	12.4	30.5	13.0	12.9
General cargo ships	7.3	15.0	10.7	10.9	56.1	17.5	17.4
Container ships	31.9	29.3	16.3	8.8	13.7	9.4	9.2
All others	16.0	15.7	11.9	8.1	48.4	15.6	15.8

Note: beginning of 2005 figures.