



What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity (short for biological diversity) simply means the variety of life from the smallest midge to the largest whale. It also includes you and me. It doesn't just concentrate on rare plants, animals and habitats but rather, it takes a holistic view of all living things – species and habitats and the genetic variation between these.

Our biodiversity is considered to be a measure of the state of the environment and if no action is taken to protect it, it is predicted that many global processes will be altered/impaired. If that happens, it could result in dramatic consequences for our future.

Why have Biodiversity trails?

The biodiversity we have in Shetland is second to none and it would be difficult to ignore its unique landscape and wildlife value. Trails in this leaflet are of varied distance and type, and have the infrastructure in place to accommodate responsible walkers who want to appreciate this without detriment to the landscape and working farm environments.



Shetland is fortunate enough to have many wildlife reserves and conservation designations; whilst the trails identified in this leaflet are mainly in areas outside of these places they still have high biodiversity value.

A few tips!

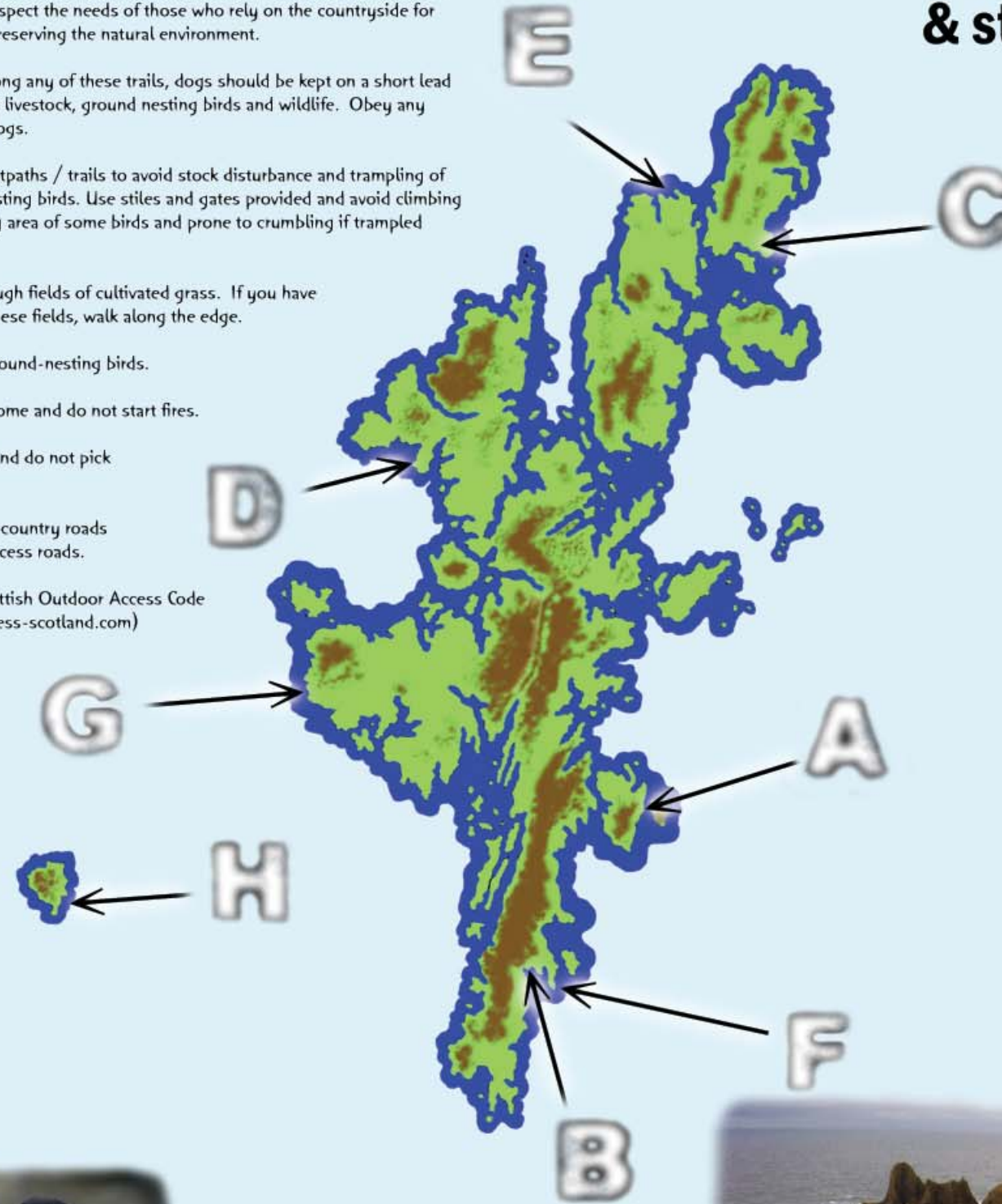
- If you have some, take your binoculars for a more close up view of Shetland's wonderful wildlife and landscapes and don't forget your camera!
- Ensure that suitable clothing and footwear is worn. If the weather is warm and sunny, be careful as in Shetland, the weather is prone to change suddenly and so waterproofs are an essential item to carry in your rucksack.
- Always take refreshments with you, in case you get lost and become dehydrated. Also it is a good idea to take a map and mobile phone in case of emergencies.
- Take care when walking near cliff tops as the edges can be crumbly and dangerous.
- If you are walking alone, leave a note of your route, when you left and when you expect to get back.

Please note the following points

Shetland is famed for its natural beauty and wildlife. Please follow the following guidelines to respect the needs of those who rely on the countryside for their living whilst preserving the natural environment.

- When walking along any of these trails, dogs should be kept on a short lead and kept away from livestock, ground nesting birds and wildlife. Obey any notice forbidding dogs.
- Adhere to the footpaths / trails to avoid stock disturbance and trampling of plants / ground nesting birds. Use stiles and gates provided and avoid climbing over dykes (nesting area of some birds and prone to crumbling if trampled upon) and fences.
- Do not walk through fields of cultivated grass. If you have to pass through these fields, walk along the edge.
- Do not disturb ground-nesting birds.
- Take your litter home and do not start fires.
- Respect wildlife and do not pick wild flowers.
- When parking on country roads do not obstruct access roads.
- Adhere to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)

Please follow all gates & stiles.



Thanks to Davy Cooper, SIC Planning, Steve Duffield, John Bateson, Micky Maher, Dave Okill, Austin Taylor & Mike Pennington for use of their photographs.



Trails

Biodiversity



Shetland's

Further Information

Bressay Heritage Centre, Maryfield, Bressay. Tel: 01595 820368

Unst Heritage Centre, Haroldswick, Shetland. Tel: 01957 711528

Scottish Natural Heritage, Ground Floor, Stewart Building, Lerwick. Tel: 01595 693345

Shetland Amenity Trust, Garthspool, Lerwick. Tel: 01595 694688

Fetlar Interpretive Centre, beach of Houbie, Fetlar. Tel: 01957 733206

The Old Haa, Burravoe, Yell. Tel: 01957 722339

SIC, Planning Officer - Project Implementation, Infrastructure Services, Grantfield, Lerwick. Tel: 01595 744832

Shetland Islands Tourist Information Centre, Market Cross, Lerwick. Tel: 08701 999440

Conservation Section, Infrastructure Services, Grantfield, Lerwick. Tel: 01595 744833

Hoswick Visitor Centre, Hoswick, Sandwick. Tel: 01950 431533



Foula Ranger Service, Freyers, Foula. Tel: 01595 753233



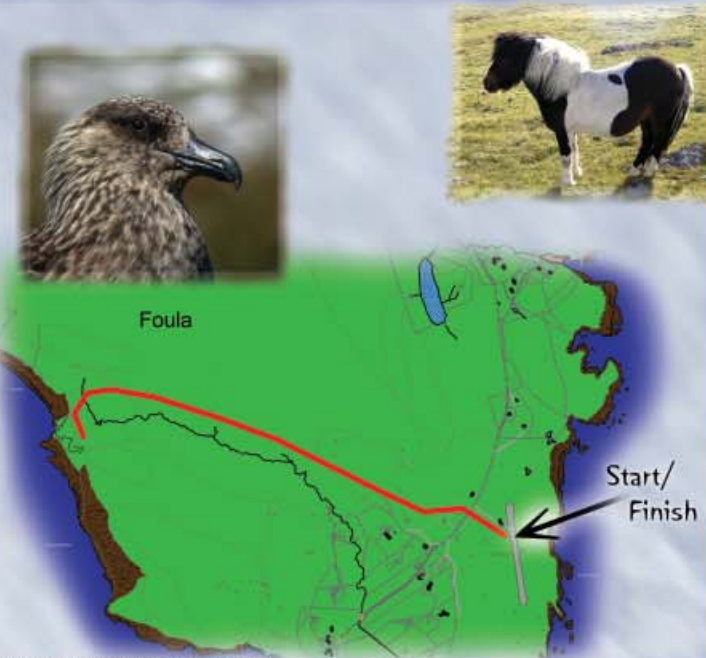
Noss sound, Grutwick and Gorie trail

Starting Point: Noss Sound Car Park - Grid Ref: HU 526409
Route: Circular walk, unsuitable for wheelchairs.
Terrain: Steep, rocky and muddy in certain places.
Distance: 7km - Time Taken: 2 ½ hours

A

Highlights

Arctic tern colonies, shorebird species, seals, harbour porpoises an array of colourful wildflowers, skuas, red-throated divers & spectacular views across to Noss.



Foula - Airstrip to the Sneck ida Smaallie

Starting Point: Foula Airstrip - Grid Ref: HT 972376
ROUTE: Linear walk.
Terrain: Steep, rocky and muddy in certain places.
Distance: 4km - Time Taken: 1 ½ - 2 hours

H

Highlights

Arctic skuas, bonxies, puffins, razorbills, gullimots, shags & gannets. Wildflowers including, tormentil, heath spotted orchids, milkwort, heath bedstraw, butterwort, sundew, lousewort red & sea campion.



Hoswick - Broonies Taing

Starting Point: Hoswick Visitors Centre Car Park
Grid Ref: HU 416238 - **Route:** Linear walk.
Terrain: Steep, rocky and muddy in certain places.
Distance: 2km - Time Taken: 1 hour

B

Highlights

Wildflowers seen here are marsh marigold, cuckoo flower, ragged robin, eyebright, squill, common dog violet & northern marsh orchid. Look out for eiders, tysties, arctic & common terns, shags & seals.



Dale of Walls Loop

Starting point: Netherdale - Grid Ref: HU180525
Route: Circular walk.
Terrain: Coastal cliffs with steep slopes.
Distance: 4km - Time taken: 1 ½ - 2 hours.

G

Highlights

Magnificent views westward to the island of Foula. Colourful wildflowers. Seabirds on the cliffs & shorebirds including oystercatcher, snipe, dunlin & skylark. Grey seals hauled out on the shore.



Muness-Uyeasound

Starting Point: Muness castle Unst - Grid Ref: HU 630012
Route: Linear walk, no wheelchair access.
Terrain: Coastal and croftland. Rough grassland.
Distance: 8km - Time taken: 3hrs

C

Highlights

Beautiful views across to the neighbouring isle of Fetlar. Birdlife includes skylark, wheatear, meadow pipit, curlew, golden plover, oystercatcher, lapwing, eider, gannets red-throated divers, & black guillemot. Excellent for Otters.



Noness

Starting Point: Noness Road end, Sandwick.
Grid Ref: HU 440225 - **ROUTE:** Circular walk.
Terrain: Steep, rocky and muddy in certain places.
Distance: 4km - Time Taken: 1 ½ - 2 hours

F

Highlights

See great & arctic skuas, guillemots, razorbills, puffins, shags kittiwakes, fulmars. Wildflowers include, spring squill, thrift, & birds foot trefoil. On the cliff face sea mayweed, sea campion & scots lovage. Common & grey seals are often seen.



Hillswick

Starting Point: Hillswick Cafe - Grid Ref: HU 283770
Route: Circular walk, no wheelchair access.
Terrain: Coastal including cliffs and croft land.
Distance: 8km - Time Taken: 3-4hrs

D

Highlights

Wonderful cliff top scenery. A good site for otters & seals. Birds include redshank, oystercatcher, curlew, turnstone, ringed plover, purple sandpiper & various seabirds. Coastal flowers including, spring squill, thrift & sea campion.



Gloop - Breckon

Starting Point: Gloop HU 506046
Route: Circular Walk, unsuitable for wheelchairs.
Terrain: Coastal, walk over croftland.
Distance: 7km - Time Taken: 4Hrs

E

Highlights

Gloop fishing memorial & coastguard lookout. Great views across to Unst. Common & grey seals. Amongst the birds to be seen are curlew, golden plover, dunlin & ringed plover, fulmar, shag, puffin, gannet & the occasional Red-throated Diver.