

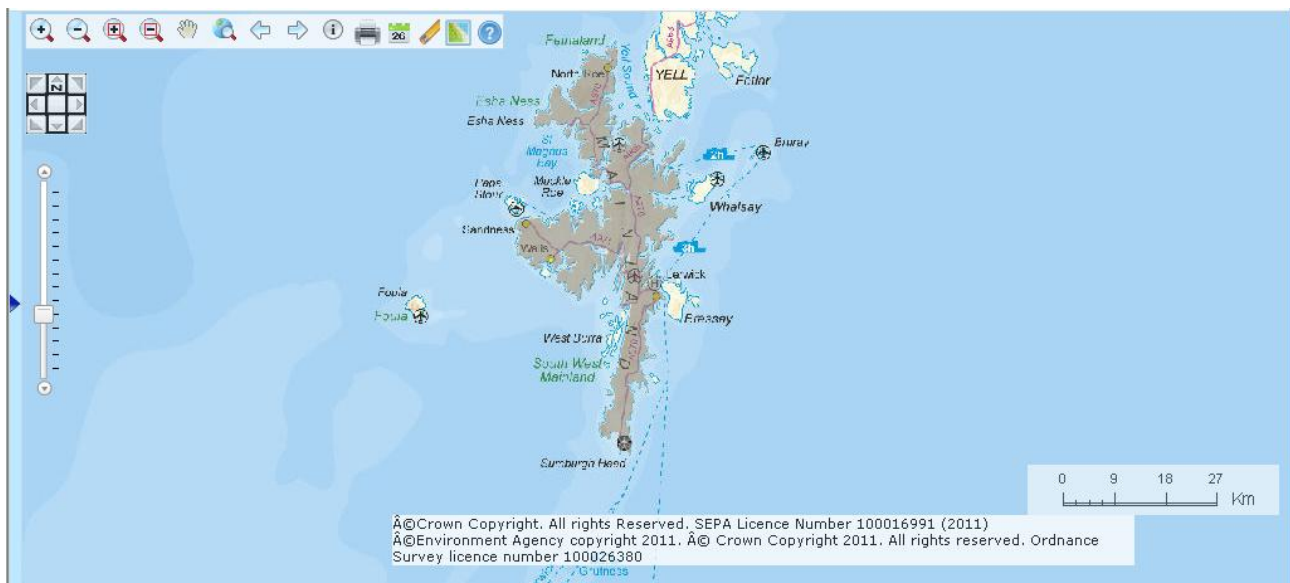
# River Basin Management Planning

## Shetland Coastal catchment summary

### 1 Introduction

The Shetland Coastal catchment covers the whole of mainland Shetland, and includes settlements such as Lerwick, Scalloway, Brae, and Voe as well as the Sullom Voe oil terminal. It includes all rivers with catchments over 10km<sup>2</sup>, and lochs with a surface area of over 0.5km<sup>2</sup>.

The catchment is shown in grey on the map below. Further information on the Shetland Coastal catchment can be found on SEPA's interactive map at [www.sepa.org.uk/water/river\\_basin\\_planning.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx)



### 2 Classification summary of the catchment

SEPA monitors the water environment on an ongoing basis and uses the resulting data to produce annual classifications. The summarised results for 2008 show that the catchment contains:

- One water body at high ecological status – the Burn of Hillwell downstream of Spiggie Loch.
- 12 water bodies at good ecological status. These are Eela Water, Loch of Vaara, Loch of Girsta, Laxo Burn/Gossawater Burn, Burn of Grunnafirth/Burn of Forse, Burn of Strand/Burn of Griesta, Burn of Dale, Burn of Laxdale/Burn of Voxter, Burn of Hillwell (upstream of Spiggie Loch), Stromfirth Burn, South Burn of Burrafirth and Gibbie Law's Burn.
- One water body at moderate ecological status, and three water bodies at poor ecological status. Table 1 gives further details of these water bodies.

The catchment is underlain by the Shetland groundwater body, which is classified as being at good status. Most coastal water bodies around Shetland are already at good or high status, but three (Bressay Sound, Scalloway and Clift Sound) are at moderate ecological status because of marine pollution.

### 3 Details of pressures in the catchment

The main reasons for downgrading of water bodies in the Shetland Coastal catchment are diffuse pollution linked to agriculture, and abstraction and flow regulation relating to water supply. In addition, some surrounding coastal waters are at moderate status due to marine transport pollution, and there are pressures on some shellfish waters in the catchment. These pressures are discussed in more detail below, and are summarised in Table 1.

#### **Point source pollution**

Scottish Water sewage discharges to the coastal water bodies of Sullom Voe and Sumburgh Head to Kettle Ness were upgraded during 2007, and SEPA and Scottish Water will continue to work in partnership to prioritise areas where additional investment is required on sewage discharges.

#### **Diffuse pollution**

Shetland Coastal catchment is currently a cycle 2 priority catchment, which means that SEPA will focus diffuse pollution reduction efforts on this catchment between 2015 and 2021, using a combination of assessment work, awareness raising and individual advice for land managers. Some scoping and assessment work may take place during the first RBMP cycle, and a local subgroup has already formed to look at actions to improve the ecological status of Spiggie Loch.

Recent surveys of Weisdale Burn suggest that there may be periods of elevated nutrients from diffuse pollution. Although improvements are not anticipated until 2021, investigations will need to begin before 2015.

Bressay Sound and Scalloway coastal water bodies are currently at moderate status due to the impacts of TBT anti-foulant. These are anticipated to have improved to good status by 2015 due to international agreements eliminating the use of TBT.

#### **Alterations to beds, banks and shores**

Laxobigging Burn is currently at poor status due to a dam which acts as a barrier to migratory fish. This is scheduled for improvement or mitigation before 2027.

#### **Abstraction and flow regulation**

The Burn of Roerwater is currently classified at poor status due to the abstraction of drinking water. Scottish Water has operated this abstraction in compliance with Water Framework Directive standards since December 2007, and this should secure an improvement in status.

#### **Protected Areas**

##### *Shellfish Waters*

All Shellfish Waters in the area achieve mandatory standards, but eight have been identified as failing some guideline standards. The pressures on these sites are thought to be diffuse and point source pollution from agriculture and sewage. Six of these are expected to be compliant by 2015, but Vaila Sound and Whalefirth will require additional measures beyond this date.

##### *Special Areas of Conservation/ Special Protection Areas*

No Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas in the catchment have been reported by SNH as being at unfavourable status.

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### 4 Partnership working

The action plan for Shetland Coastal catchment will rely heavily on landowners to deliver improvements, with support and advice from the Shetland area advisory group members.

Work to tackle diffuse pollution will need a strong partnership approach, and fishery interests, landowners, Scottish Water and the area advisory group will play a critical role in reducing diffuse and point source pollution. The formation of a Spiggie Loch subgroup may help to tackle these issues and could provide a model for other areas of Shetland affected by diffuse pollution.

Beyond 2015, actions will involve a continued focus on diffuse and point source pollution, ongoing management of abstractions and decisions on how to mitigate the fish barrier on the Burn of Laxobigging. In addition, there will be a need to maintain good status for all water bodies, and to identify and address new and emerging pressures.

### 5 Further information

Further information on the Shetland Coastal catchment can be found on SEPA's interactive map at [www.sepa.org.uk/water/river\\_basin\\_planning.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx). This website also has datasheets, and information on diffuse pollution and restoration funding.

Scottish Natural Heritage's 'Sitelink' website provides more information on protected areas for nature. It can be accessed from [www.snh.org.uk/snhi/](http://www.snh.org.uk/snhi/)

The Shetland Marine Spatial Plan has been developed through extensive partnership working and contains a number of actions which will help to improve coastal water bodies and Shellfish Waters in the Shetland Coastal catchment. It can be viewed at [www.nafc.ac.uk/SSMEI.aspx](http://www.nafc.ac.uk/SSMEI.aspx).

Shetland Islands Council is currently preparing a new Local Development Plan, which includes policies on protecting the water environment, and the water supply and sewerage issues relating to development. Further information is available at [www.shetland.gov.uk/planning/CurrentLocalDevelopmentPlanReviewDocuments1.asp](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/planning/CurrentLocalDevelopmentPlanReviewDocuments1.asp)

**Table 1 – Summary of pressures and objectives for surface water bodies at less than good status in the Shetland Coastal catchment**

Water body	Current status	Pressures	Target	Action
<a href="#">Loch of Spiggie</a>	Poor	Diffuse source pollution	Good by 2027	Catchment level work to reduce diffuse pollution
<a href="#">Burn of Roerwater</a>	Poor	Abstraction Flow regulation	Good by 2015	Control pattern / timing of abstraction (Scottish Water – already compliant)
<a href="#">Burn of Laxobigging</a>	Poor	Alterations to beds/banks – fish barrier	Good by	Remove / mitigate fish barrier

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			2027	
<a href="#">Burn of Weisdale</a>	Moderate	Diffuse source pollution	Good by 2021	Reduce diffuse source pollution
<a href="#">Scalloway</a>	Moderate	Diffuse pollution from water transport	Good by 2015	International Maritime Organisation agreement to reduce pollution at source
<a href="#">Bressay Sound</a>	Moderate	Diffuse pollution from water transport	Good by 2015	International Maritime Organisation agreement to reduce pollution at source
Clift Sound	Moderate	Pressures to be determined		

