

Orkney Islands

Overview:

The Orkney Islands lie off the northern tip of Scotland where the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean meet. Orkney consists of about 70 islands and islets of which only 20 are inhabited, divided into three distinct regions, the North Isles, the South Isles and the Mainland, a corruption of the Old Norse name "Meginland".

Territory:

Land Area: 974 sq. km, made up of over 70 low-lying islands of which 20 are inhabited. Orkney is, at its widest, 47 km from east to west and 80 km northeast to southwest. More than half of the area is taken up by the Mainland, the group's largest island, which was originally referred to as "Hrossey"--"Horse Island" in Old Norse. The majority of people live on the Mainland, with the greatest population concentrations being around the main towns of Kirkwall and Stromness. Coastline: 917 km. Location: 59 N 3 W. Highest Point: Ward Hill on Hoy Island- 477 m above sea level.

Location:

Off the northern tip of Scotland where the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean meet, at latitude 59 degrees north which lies about 83 km south of Greenland. Separated from the Scottish mainland by the 11 km wide Pentland Firth.

Latitude and Longitude:

Between 58 41 and 59 24 North, and 2 22 and 3 26 West. Orkney lies on the same time zone as London, Greenwich Mean Time in the winter months, and goes ahead one hour in the summer (British Summer Time).

Time Zone:

GMT +0

Total Land Area:

990

EEZ:

Climate:

Orkney's climate is remarkably equable for its latitude. The weather is greatly influenced by the sea and the Scottish mainland. The sea's influence come from the North Atlantic drift which ensures that the sea temperatures only vary by about five degrees between summer and winter. Winter Average: 5-6 degrees Celsius; Summer Average: 15-19 degrees Celsius;

Natural Resources:

Rich fishing stocks, North Sea oil. The Orkney Islands are particularly valued for their natural heritage value and a range of sites are designated for conservation under European, national and local legislation. The protected area designations are as follows: The East Sanday Coast Ramsar Site. The site supports internationally important populations of wintering waders which include Purple sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) and Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*). The Natura 2000 network which includes two types of area: Special Areas for Conservation (SAC) classified under the Habitats Directive; and Special Protection Areas (SPA) classified under the Birds Directive. There are also Ramsar Sites; sites of Special Scientific Interest; Geological Conservation Review sites, and local nature reserves. All are in the interest of preserving the local flora and fauna of the islands.

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
1998	316,000,000.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
1998	16,140.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
1995	19.5%	21.2%	59.3%

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
1995	15.7%	18.9%	65.4%

External Aid/Remittances:

The Scottish government grants monies to the Orkney Islands Council by way of the Aggregate Exchequer Fiance (AEF). This grant is based on the resident population: 19,950 (2007). AEF 2007/08 (Å£000)61,087; AEF per head (Å£)3,118; and Band D Council Tax 2006/07 (Å£)1,037.

Growth:

The Orkney economy has seen growth in areas other than the traditional agriculture, livestock farming, and fishing. These include tourism; food and beverage manufacture; jewellery, knitwear, and other crafts production; construction; and oil transportation through the Flotta oil terminal. Public services also play a significant role. There were 94 business start-ups in 2005 (4.8% per 1,000 pop.) Orkney individuals are more likely to enter into self-employment due to lack of alternative employment opportunities.

Labour Force:	
1995	9,183

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2001	3%
2004	2.2%
2005	1.1%

Industry:

Agriculture, fishing, oil extraction, services, tourism. Industries by % of GDP (1995): Value Added by industry (% of GDP): Oil Terminal 14.70; Agriculture 14.51; Construction 10.17; Distribution 9.82; Other Private Services 8.13; Health & Social Work 6.02; Education 5.47; Public Administration 5.32; Banking, Finance, Insurance 5.13; Fish Catching 4.14; Transport, Post & Telephone 4.03; Food & Beverage 4.03; Hotels & Catering 2.64; Mechanical & Other Engineering 1.52; Fish Farming 1.32; Crafts, Textiles & Apparel 1.12; Utilities 0.97; Quarries 0.87. Industry, % of Labour Force: Agriculture, hunting & forestry 10.58; Fishing 3.43; Mining and quarrying 1.70; Manufacturing 7.80; Electricity, gas and water supply 0.84; Construction 10.25; Wholesale & retail trade and repairs 12.99; Hotels and restaurant 5.28; Transport, storage& communication 8.92; Financial intermediaries 1.42; Real estate, renting, real business activities 6.63; Public administration, defence social security 6.51; Education 7.30; Health and social work 11.80; Other 4.55; Total 100.00 (*Does not include full time students)

Niche Industry:

tourism, agriculture, fishing

Tourism:

Tourism is vital to Orkney's economy and the Orkney Islands Council works closely with VisitOrkney and the Orkney Tourism Group to promote and develop the industry. Orkney is a popular cruise ship destination during the summer months with a large variety of cruise ships calling mainly into Kirkwall Harbour but also Stromness Harbour. Both harbours offer deep water berthing facilities to some of the largest vessels calling into Kirkwall Harbour at the Hatston Terminal port facility.

Imports and Exports:	
Tot. Value of Imports	0.00 ()
From Eu:	
Import Partners (EU:)	
Partners Outside EU:	
Import Partners:	
Tot. Value of Exports	()
To Eu:	
Export Partners:	
Partners Outside EU.:	
Export Partners:	



Main Imports:	
Main Exports:	

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS

External:

Number of Airports:

Kirkwall is 90 minutes from either Edinburgh or Glasgow, 45 minutes from Aberdeen and a mere half hour from Inverness. British Airways operate flights from all of the above airports, all of which have excellent UK connections.

Number of Main Ports:

Northlink's cruise-quality ferries provide an all-year service through Aberdeen and Scrabster, with a connecting service to Shetland. Pentland Ferries' route between Gills Bay and St. Margaret's Hope adds choice and flexibility. It takes 1 hour and runs several times daily, throughout the year. John O' Groats Ferries provides a May - October passenger service to Burwick on South Ronaldsay, served by the Orkney Bus, ticketed through from Inverness to Kirkwall.

Internal:

Air

Road:

From Perth to Inverness is 114 miles and takes roughly two hours. From Inverness to Scrabster is 111 miles, where you can take a ferry to Orkney. By train you travel to Thurso, where a bus connects to the ferry at Scrabster. There is also a coach connection from Inverness / Wick to Gills Bay. By coach you can go either to Scrabster or to John O' Groats.

Sea:

Other Forms of Transportation:

Economic Zones:

Energy Policy:

Orkney has significant wind, and marine energy resources and renewable energy has recently come into prominence. The European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) is a Scottish Government-backed research facility that has installed a wave testing system at Billia Croo on the Orkney mainland and a tidal power testing station on the nearby island of Eday. At the official opening of the Eday project the site was described as "the first of its kind in the world set up to provide developers of wave and tidal energy devices with a purpose-built performance testing facility." Funding for the UK's first wave farm was announced by the Scottish Government in 2007. It will be the world's largest, with a capacity of 3 MW generated by four Pelamis machines at a cost of over £4 million. During 2007 Scottish and Southern Energy plc in conjunction with the University of Strathclyde began the implementation of a 'Regional Power Zone' in the Orkney archipelago. This ground-breaking scheme (that may be the first of its kind in the world) involves 'active network management' that will make better use of the existing infrastructure and allow a further 15MW of new 'non-firm generation' output from renewables onto the network.

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector					
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)	

Official Currency:

British Pound Sterling £ (GBP)

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:

Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:

Number of Insurance Companies:

Financial Services:

Communications/E-Commerce:

In Orkney, 15% of businesses have broadband access. Lower levels of e-business adoption are influenced by misconceptions regarding availability and a lack of technical skills (2005).

Public Ownership:

Land Use:

The Development Strategy and strategic planning policies covering Orkney are detailed in the Orkney Structure Plan approved by Scottish Ministers on 29 November 2001. Where applicable, each general planning policy as detailed in Part 1 of the Written Statement provides a cross-reference to the relevant strategic policy.

Agriculture/Forestry:

The Agriculture industry on Orkney has been hit hard by the BSE and Foot & Mouth diseases, however, the industry remains strong in the islands. The gross output of the industry in 2001 topped £18.0 million. The industry is dominated by animal husbandry, mainly sheep and cattle grazing, with small amounts of grains and vegetable production.

Marine Activity:

Fishing:

Marine Life:

Critical Issues:

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Kirkwall, administrative capital (pop. 8,500).

Political System:

Political System (Island): The reform of Scottish Local Government in 1974 established Orkney, along with Shetland and the Western Isles, as three separate unitary island authorities. Their structure was quite different from the arrangements for local authorities on the mainland of Scotland, which had a two-tier structure. Regional Council exercised a range of strategic powers, whilst district Councils exercised more local powers. In many respects this put the Islands Councils in a privileged position, able to speak clearly for their islands and to plan and exercise all local authority powers in a co-ordinated manner. In terms of normal local authority powers, Orkney Islands Council did not exercise any powers which the two tiers of local government on the mainland did not exercise, but over the 22 years for which these arrangements endured, it was a clear case of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. The Islands Councils carried an authority on behalf of their areas which the mainland authorities did not possess. In 1996, the local authority arrangements were once more re-organised, and the whole of Scotland adopted a unitary structure. There are now 32 unitary authorities in Scotland, with Orkney Islands Council, with its population of 20,000, being the smallest. This change has eroded the uniqueness of the Islands Councils. The 1996 arrangements, introduced by a Conservative government for a variety of political and constitutional purposes, has now been followed by a change the Conservatives never contemplated, indeed strongly opposed: the establishment of a Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh exercising an extensive range of powers devolved from Westminster. Political System (Scotland & United Kingdom): Orkney and Shetland share one seat to Westminster as well as one of seven seats (Scottish seats) to the European parliament. Orkney has one seat to the Scottish parliament.

Political Parties:

Political Parties: Scottish Liberal Democrat, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, Scottish National Party, Scottish Socialist Party, Scottish Labour Party. General Election results in the Orkney and Shetland UK Parliamentary constituency, May 2001: Liberal Democrat; Scottish Parliament election, May 2003: Scottish Liberal Democrat.

Important Legislation:

Constitution: United Kingdom.

Principal Taxes:

Associated Power:

United Kingdom (Scotland)

Citizenship:

Paradiplomacy:

HUMAN RESOURCES

Population (2001): 19,245; Population by Sex: 49.35% Males, 50.65% Females. Population by age (2001): Age % of Population; 0-4 5.11; 5-15 14.84; 16-29 13.73; 30-44 22.05; 45-59 21.52; 60-74 15.00; 75+ 7.76; Total 100.00. Population: 2007: 19,245 an increase of 1.9% 0-4 5.1 5-19 19.3 20-44 31.3 45-64 14.6 85+ 2.1 In 2001, 55.7% of the population of Orkney was 44 years old and younger. By 2005 the population had aged and 53% were 44 years old or younger compared to 53.5% in the Highland Islands overall and 57.8% in Scotland. these changes indicate a propensity towards an ageing population and a resulting challenge for the area. The crime rate based on 2005 population figures: 294 crimes per 10,000 people.

Between 2002 and 2005, house prices escalated with an increase of 80.2% in median house prices. An average house price in 2005 was £80,200.

2007			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population

Employment by Sector: Agriculture and Fishing: 4%; Energy, Water and Manufacturing: 7.6%; Construction: 10.7%; Distribution, hotels, restaurants: 24.4%; Transportation and Communication: 9%; Banking, Finance and Insurance. Etc.: 6%; Public Administration, Education and Health: 35.1%; Other Services: 4%.



Population:					
Year	Resident Population				
Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
2001	3849	0	0	0	4,380

Migration:
 Vital Statistics: Population 1999 19,600; Births 163; Deaths 220; Natural change -57; Migration and other changes -63; Population 2000 19,480 ; %age change 1999 -0.6; Between 2 Feb. 2006 to 16 July 2006, 30 people immigrated to the Orkneys from EU accession and EEA states.

Crude Birth Rate:	
1999	8.3%

Life Expectancy:	
Crude Death Rate:	
1999	11.2%

Ethnicity:
 Population by Ethnicity (2001): Country of Birth, % of Population; Scotland 83.41; England 13.63; Wales 0.44; Northern Ireland 0.41; Ireland 0.15; Rest of Europe 0.65; Elsewhere 1.30; Total 100.00.

Class Division:

Languages:
 English with some local Gaelic dialects.
 At the beginning of recorded history the islands were inhabited by the Picts, whose language is unknown. Opinions on the nature of Pictish vary from its having been a Celtic language, to its not having been Indo-European at all. Katherine Forsyth claims that the Ogham script on the Buckquoy spindle-whorl is evidence for the pre-Norse existence of Old Irish in Orkney. For 950 years - from approximately 800AD until the middle of the 1700s - the spoken language in Orkney was a variant of Old Norse known as Norrœna or Norm. Remnants of this now extinct language can still be clearly heard in today's Orcadian dialect - a dialect shot through with Norse words and turns of speech.

Religion:
 Christian with some smaller groups of Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish

Literacy:

Education System:
 There are 17 Primary Schools, 4 Junior High Schools, and 2 Secondary Schools in Orkney. Pupils aged 5-14 spend seven primary years and two secondary years. At 14, pupils may go to Secondary Schools for the third and fourth years of compulsory education and may well stay on until 18 in the fifth and sixth years of secondary studies. The decrease in the population of those aged between 20 and 44 years (2005) in Orkney indicates that more young people are leaving the area than are coming in. The lack of higher education provision in the area is a contributing factor to the net loss of young people. The destination of "school leavers" 2005/06 shows a high percentage entered employment (37.6%) and a lower percentage entered full-time further education (20.4%). Pattern of school leaver destinations may be affected by the availability of education, employment and training in this location.

Total Pre-schools:()	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	
Second Level:	
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:										
	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

Medical Services:

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:
 The Orcadians and Shetlanders are descendants of early Viking settlers with a later Scottish admixture. Ethnically, Orcadians are more closely related to the peoples of Iceland and the Faroe Islands than the other peoples of the British Isles. Culturally, the Orcadians remain more Scandinavian than Scottish with many of the earlier Norse traditions and customs having survived to the present. Orkney was originally settled in the Bronze Age by Picts from the mainland, which came under Norse Viking rule in the eighth century as part of the Viking expansion in the North Atlantic. By the ninth century Scandinavian colonists had settled many of the islands, the earlier inhabitants absorbed into Viking culture. Annexed by Harlod Fairhair, the first king of Norway, the islands were organized as a separate earldom in 875. The details of the Norse conquest and settled can be found in the Orkneyinga Saga, a Norse epic. The islands remained a Norwegian dependency until the Norwegian kingdom, along with its possessions and dependencies, passed to Denmark in 1397. The Danish king, Christian I, in 1468 pledged the islands to James III of Scotland as security for the dowry of Margret of Norway on her marriage to the Scottish King. King James, not in receipt of the dowry, annexed the islands to his kingdom in 1472. Scotland's union with England in 1707 began a long campaign in the islands for separation from Scotland and for a distinct legal status within the United Kingdom. The islands demanded the political and economic autonomy that would recognize their distinct culture and history, a status similar to the autonomy granted to the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands. Due to Orkney's relative isolation and small population it was relatively easy to preserve the islands unique culture and dialects, even though the English language spread to the isolated islands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The islands developed as the UK's major fishing region, while excess population left for the mainland, keeping the population nearly constant during the early decades of the twentieth century. The relative prosperity of the region renewed the island campaign to win separate legal status. The population began to drop after the Second World War due to a decline in the fishing industry. The islanders, forced to leave in search of work denounced the lack of opportunities as a result of their colonial political status. With the discovery of North Sea Oil in the 1970s the population decline was reversed. The islands became a centre for the North Sea oil industry, with oil workers from many parts of the world brought in by the British and international oil companies. With their culture and way of life threatened by a major influx of oil workers and companies, the islanders began to mobilize. Nationalist organizations demanded autonomy and separate legal status to protect their unique culture and to give them local control over the ecological damage done by the oil companies. The region's oil wealth, which stimulated Scottish nationalists to demand that the British government leave control of the booming industry to the Scots, also roused island demands that the Scots keep their hands off their oil. With the rise of Scottish nationalism in the 1980s and 1990s so too did Orcadians' nationalism. Poll after poll resulted in the islands, who were culturally and historically distinct, expressing their preference for separate legal status within the United Kingdom, if not outright independence of the islands. Though many argue that the islands with their small population could not operate as an independent state, they have an oil industry that is worth \$18 million a day in their territorial waters which would provide for a viable, if not wealthy sovereign state.

Referenda:
 Scottish Referendum on Devolution 1997. 57.3% agree that there should be a Scottish Parliament; 57.3 % Yes, 42.7 No 1 agree that a Scottish Parliament should have tax-varying powers: 47.4 % Yes, 52.6 % No.

Recent Significant Events:

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:
 There are pipe bands in Orkney: The Kirkwall City Pipe Band and Stromness Royal British Legion(Scotland)Pipe Band to name two. These bands provide Orkney and the wider communities with a Pipe Band that can be called upon to play at various functions from memorial events to fund raising fetes.

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