

## Shetlands

### Overview:

The Shetland Islands lie between the Orkney Islands and the Faroe Islands, north of mainland Scotland, separating the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the North Sea to the east. Politically linked to the United Kingdom, the Shetland Islands governs itself on local issues through the Shetland Island Council.

### Territory:

The hundred or so islands of Shetland are formed by a range of ancient hills standing on the continental shelf and partly drowned when sea level rose 400 feet (120m) at the end of the last glaciation, about 10-12,000 years ago. Shetland's "jigsaw" shape makes the coastline amazingly long, at least 1,500 km (900 miles). Land: 1,468 sq km, made up of over 100 islands, 15 of which are inhabited. By far the largest island is Mainland which is 899 sq km (351 square miles), followed by Yell and Unst which are 212 sq km and 120 sq km respectively. Coastline: 1,450 km. Highest Point: Ronas Hill- 450 m above sea level.

### Location:

Located 957 km north of London, 477 km north of Edinburgh, 650 km west of Oslo, 1,123 km east of Reykjavik, 643 km south of the Arctic Circle.

### Latitude and Longitude:

01 W 60 N. GMT Time in the winter months, and goes ahead one hour in the summer (British Summer Time).

### Time Zone:

GMT

### Total Land Area:

1466

### EEZ:

### Climate:

Temperature: January min. 1.2 C; August max. 14.1 C. Rainfall: 1,037 mm p.a. (41.5"). Mean wind speed: 15 mph; 60 days of gales. Air frost: 33 days. Snow falling: 70 days, lying on 10 days. Rain or showers: 269 days.

### Natural Resources:

Rich fish stocks.

### ECONOMY:

| Total GDP: |                      |
|------------|----------------------|
| 1998       | 1,254,240,000.00 USD |

| Per Capita GDP: |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1996            | 12,748.00 USD |

| % of GDP per Sector: |         |           |          |
|----------------------|---------|-----------|----------|
|                      | Primary | Secondary | Tertiary |
|                      |         |           |          |

| % of Population Employed by Sector |         |           |          |
|------------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|
|                                    | Primary | Secondary | Tertiary |
| 2003                               | 10%     | 16.5%     | 71.5%    |

### External Aid/Remittances:

### Growth:

| Labour Force: |        |
|---------------|--------|
| 2001          | 15,698 |

| Unemployment |                               |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Year:        | Unemployment Rate (% of pop.) |
| 2003         | 2%                            |

### Industry:

Industries: Animal husbandry, fishing and fish processing, oil production, tourism, services. Value of Key Sectors of the Shetland Economy (£ m) (2002): Oil Production Operations 65.0; Combined Fisheries Output 208.2; Agriculture 13.1; Knitwear 3.0; Tourism 12.6; Shetland Islands Council 133.4; Total 435.3. Shetland Island Council Finances 2002/03 (£'000): (Revenue,Capital>Total): GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURE: Executive Services 13,644; 14,619; 974; Community Services 49,450; 6,928; 56,378; Economic Development Unit 2,601; 1; 2,601; Infrastructure Services 18,562; 7,110; 25,672; Ports & Harbours Operations 9,454; 1,267; 10,721; Committee Expenditure 93,710; 687; 94,398; Source of Finance: Revenue Support Grant





**Official Currency:**  
British Pound Sterling

**Banking and Insurance:**  
Number of Banks and Credit Unions:  
Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:  
Number of Insurance Companies:

Banks are open Mon-Fri 0900 - 1700. Automatic Teller Machines are situated outside all banks and at the Toll Clock Shopping Centre and the Sound Service Station in Lerwick.

**Financial Services:**

**Communications/E-Commerce:**

**Public Ownership:**

**Land Use:**

**Agriculture/Forestry:**

Farming has played an essential role in Shetland for centuries. Shetlanders have been working the land, keeping sheep and cattle, growing crops, for over 5,000 years. Much of the islands are divided into smallholdings, known as "crofts". Shetland has its own breed of sheep, which, although small and hardy, is prized for its high-quality meat and wool. It is the main source for the world famous Shetland Knitwear, and Shetland Lamb exports.

**Marine Activity:**

**Fishing:**

The fishing grounds around Shetland are some of the richest waters in the North Atlantic. In recent years, as the Shetland fishing industry has continued to expand and develop, there has been a need to establish a number of complementary bodies to fully represent the interests of Shetland Fishermen

**Marine Life:**

Shetland has many species of fish including mackerel, ling, haddock, halibut or porbeagle shar

**Critical Issues:**

## JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

**Capital:**

The administrative centre and only burgh is Lerwick (pop. 6000).

**Political System:**

Political System (Island): Shetland Islands Council delivers the full range of Scottish Local Government Services. The Council's status is the same as any of the other 31 Scottish Councils established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994. Its history as a unitary authority, like the other Scottish Islands Authorities, goes back to 1974, so the Council has 25 years experience of integrated service delivery to draw on. In common with Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council has additional powers conferred by the Zetland County Council Act 1974 designed to enable the Council to plan for and accommodate the development of the oil industry. The present administration's corporate plan emphasises the need to empower Shetland's population and communities by seeking "locally based solutions wherever possible to respond to community need". Community planning, promoting sustainable development, modern integrated transport systems, accessible high quality services and a diverse but inclusive society are the main aims. All services are being planned to fulfil those aims. By doing so the Council will ensure that empowerment is real by providing the resources necessary for community development at community level in addition to the process of consultation. Shetland Islands Council will campaign for appropriate consideration for island communities at national and European level. The leading theme of the campaign will be to redress the erosion of local government services which has taken place over the past 20 years in the UK. In particular the Council seeks greater influence over Shetland's water and drainage services, currently run from the Scottish Mainland. Political System (Scotland & the UK): Shetland shares a single representative at the Westminster Parliament with Orkney. The Shetlands have their own member of the Scottish Parliament and share one of 7 proportionally elected Scottish members of the European Parliament. Within this framework Shetland desires to have a greater say in the legislative process to ensure that legislation takes better account of the needs of small and remoter communities than has been evident in the past. There are still many services and administrative arrangements conducted out with the Islands which would be more effective if they were managed within the Islands. Devolution needs to be practised at all levels.

**Political Parties:**

Scottish National Party, Scottish Liberal Party, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, Scottish Liberal Democrats, UK Independence Party, Scottish Socialist Party, Operation Christian Vote, British National Party, Scottish Wind Watch, Fergus Alexander Tait. European Assembly election results in the Scottish Region, June 2004: Scottish Labour Party. European Assembly election results in the UK Parliamentary constituency of Orkney and Shetland, June 2004: Scottish Liberal Democrats. General Election results in the Orkney and Shetland UK Parliamentary constituency, May 2001: Alastair Carmichael, Liberal Democrat Scottish Parliamentary election results in the Shetland constituency, May 2003: Tavish Scott, Scottish Liberal Democrat.

**Important Legislation:**

Constitution: The British Constitution

**Principal Taxes:**

**Associated Power:**

United Kingdom (Scotland)

**Citizenship:**

**Paradiplomacy:**

## HUMAN RESOURCES

| 2003   |               |            |                       |
|--------|---------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Island | Area (km sq.) | Population | % of Total Population |
|        |               |            |                       |

Population by Age (2003): Male (M %), Female (F %), Total (T %); 0-14: M 2172 (9.9%), F 2125 (9.7), Tot 4297 (19.6%); 15-29: M 1982 (9.1%), F 1694 (7.7), Tot 3676 (16.8); 30-49: M 3295 (15.1%), F 3159 (14.5), Tot 6454 (29.6); 50-64: M 2250 (10.3%), F 2005 (9.2), Tot 4255 (19.5); 65+: M 1345 (6.1%), F 1843 (8.4), Tot 3188 (14.5). Total: M 11 044 (50.5%), F 10 826 (49.5), Tot 21 870 (100.0).

| Population: |                     |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Year        | Resident Population |

| Age of Population: | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-49 | 50-64 | 65 and up |
|--------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| 2003               | 4297 | 0     | 0     | 0     | 3,188     |

**Migration:**  
Vital Statistics: Population 1999 22 740; Births 280; Deaths 196; Natural Change 84; Migration and other Changes -384; Population 2000 22 440.

| Crude Birth Rate: |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1999              | 12.3% |

**Life Expedtancy:**  
men (76.6 years) and women (81.5 years)

| Crude Death Rate: |      |
|-------------------|------|
| 1999              | 8.6% |

**Ethnicity:**  
Ethnic Groups (2001): Total resident population 21,988; Scotland Å—(inc UK part not specified) 85.51; England 10.91; Wales 0.56; Northern Ireland 0.30; Ireland Å—(inc. part not specified) 0.21; Rest of Europe 0.81; Elsewhere 1.70. Nationality: British, Scottish, Shetlander.

**Class Division:**

**Languages:**  
English and local Gaelic dialects.

**Religion:**  
Christian, smaller groups such as Buddhist, Jewish, and Muslim.

**Literacy:**  
n/a

**Education System:**  
There are 34 schools in total. There are two High Schools, six Junior High Schools with primary and nursery departments attached, and twenty six Primary Schools. Seventeen of the primary schools are one- or two-teacher schools.

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| <b>Total Pre-schools:()</b>       |    |
| <b>Total Primary Schools</b>      |    |
| <b>First Level:</b>               | 26 |
| <b>Second Level:</b>              |    |
| <b>Third Level:</b>               | 6  |
| <b>Total Secondary Schools:</b>   | 2  |
| <b>Total Professional Schools</b> |    |
| <b>Universities:</b>              |    |

| 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 |             |       |            |

The education authority has the task of challenging and supporting schools in remote, diverse and sometimes fragile local communities, each with varied needs. The role of the Education Service, in preparing Shetland pupils to respond to rapidly changing opportunities in employment, further and higher education is a key part of developing the economic and social sustainability of the island communities.

#### Medical Services:

### HISTORY AND CULTURE

#### History:

Very little is known about the first people to settle in Shetland. The earliest evidence of settlement in Shetland dates to around 3000 BC. Neolithic remains scatter Shetland, and various archaeological digs are further uncovering this mystery. Before this, there may have been Mesolithic settlers (hunter gatherer people). Neolithic people grew barley. The stone tips of their ploughs can often be found lying in the ground. Large areas of land were divided into fields, suggesting a relatively high population. First bronze working occurs in Shetland around 700 BC, although it may have begun to come into Shetland around 800 BC. The climate deteriorated around this time, and blanket peat forced settlement down hill. 'Burnt Mounds' appear at this stage – kidney shaped mounds of heat shattered stone. Standing stones have been erected throughout Shetland throughout history – for this period it is likely they represented boundary markers, navigation aids or memorial stones. The advent of iron in Shetland coincided with the building of houses in groups, and soon after, the building of brochs. Over 120 Brochs stand around the coast of Shetland, but it is believed that there are many more. These are tall defensive towers with hollow walls containing 'rooms' and staircases. The best example of a broch can be found on the island of Mousa. Mousa Broch is the best preserved Iron Age broch in the world. Clearly, the Broch builders feared attacks from the sea – as the network of Brochs string along the coastline, and are heavily fortified. The Picts were people who were far more peace-loving than their predecessors. They were primarily farmers who appear to have led a simple, quiet life. By the 7th Century AD, Shetland was firmly part of Pictland, and the most enduring legacy of these people is their art work: carved stones and silver work. The Norsemen are probably the ancestors of the Islands who most people associate with Shetland. The Vikings came to Shetland around 800 AD. Shetland was right in the middle of the Viking seaways. Thus, it was an ideal place to stop, build houses and establish farms. With them they brought a new style of building, a new political system, new laws and a new language, all of which have left their mark. Indeed, even today Shetland's Norse heritage is very much in evidence. Most of the place names throughout the islands are Norse, and much of the Shetland dialect still in use today is derived from the Old Norse language. Up until 1469, Shetland belonged to Denmark. This year, 1469, the Islands were pawned to Scotland as part of the wedding dowry for the marriage of King James III and Princess Margaret of Denmark. The culture of the inhabitants was little changed at first, other than the introduction of a few English words into the language. Things changed significantly in the 17th century when Earl Robert Stewart and later his son, Patrick, ruled. They were true tyrants who cared little for the islands and their inhabitants and sought only self-gain. Many court favorites came to Shetland and the islands were carved up into large estates, replacing the economic system of self-sufficient small holdings that had existed before. The Stewarts left their mark on Shetland, the best-known being Scalloway Castle, which cost £32,000 to build and furnish over three hundred years ago! The treatment and the hard times experienced under Scottish rule, along with a fierce independent spirit, left a slightly sour taste in the mouth of some Shetlanders. Today, remnants of this may be that some Shetlanders may not like to be referred to as Scots or Scottish – preferring to be 'Shetlandic'. The Lairds were the result of splitting Shetland up into several large estates. These few powerful men had total control over the economy and the tenants found themselves rarely out of debt to them. Worse to come - the clearances of 1820-1870 saw crofts were cleared to make way for sheep. Despite its apparent remoteness, Shetland did not escape these hardships and a great many families were forced to emigrate. Many left for New Zealand, Australia and America. All this changed at the beginning of the 20th century. Unprecedented prosperity was brought about as a result of the Herring Boom. Every man capable of fishing was involved and at one point Shetland exported over one million barrels of herring a year. Shetland also had a major part to play during both World Wars. 'The Shetland Bus' was set up during the Second World War as a branch of the Norwegian Resistance. Many people were able to escape to Britain from occupied Norway thanks to the bravery of the people that operated it. The next boom for Shetland was in the 1970's, with the discovery of North Sea Oil. This led on to the development of that industry, and the support for other industries and infrastructure.

#### Referenda:

Scottish Referendum, September 1997 votes cast in Shetland as follows: "I agree that there should be a Scottish Parliament": 5,430 (62.38% of votes cast); "I do not agree that there should be a Scottish Parliament": 3,275 (37.62% of votes cast); "I agree that a Scottish Parliament should have tax varying powers": 4,478 (51.61% of votes cast); "I do not agree that a Scottish Parliament should have tax varying powers": 4,198 (48.39% of votes cast).

#### Recent Significant Events:

#### Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

#### Sources:

General Register Office for Scotland. Available online (January 2005). National Statistics Online UK. Available online (January 2005). Shetland Island Tourism. Available online (January 2005). 'Shetland in Statistics 2004.' Shetland Islands Council. Available online (January 2005). SCROL Scotland's Census Results Online. Available online (January 2005). Stove, Tom. 'Shetland- The North Atlantic Outlook.' What Status for Europe's Islands? Available online (January 2005).

<http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/sfa/>

[http://www.hie.co.uk/HIE-economic-reports-2007/Export%20Factsheet%20for%20Shetland%20-%20July%202007%20\\_word\\_.pdf](http://www.hie.co.uk/HIE-economic-reports-2007/Export%20Factsheet%20for%20Shetland%20-%20July%202007%20_word_.pdf)

<http://hie.co.uk/HIE-HIE-economic-reports/HIE-SHET99.pdf>

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/press/2007-news/latest-life-expectancy-figures-announced.html>

#### Useful Links:

[IslandStudies.ca](http://IslandStudies.ca)  
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Please address queries to:  
 Institute of Island Studies  
 University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI)  
 550 University Ave  
 Charlottetown, PE, Canada, C1A 4P3

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