

PEERIE WANDERS

Five walks in Voe, Vidlin, Whalsay & Skerries

to get you out & about to improve
physical health and mental
wellbeing

**Voe, Vidlin, Whalsay
& Skerries**

PEERIE WANDERS

‘Peerie Wanders’ has been designed and developed by NHS Shetland Health Improvement Department in collaboration with Shetland Islands Council. This booklet contains a number of walks to get you out and about to help you on your journey to become more active.

WHY WALKING?



Walking is a great way to be active and stay healthy—it’s not surprising that walking is the most popular leisure activity in Scotland. Walking is free, it’s good for the environment, and is suitable for almost everyone. You don’t have to be fit to start with—you just have to start! If you pick up your pace, you’ll get more health benefits. Taking notice of the natural world also helps with our wellbeing.

WHY BE MORE ACTIVE?

The human body needs to be active to function well, but modern living means that most of us are not active enough. Being regularly active can:

- Increase our energy.
- Strengthen our muscles.
- Lower our risk of heart disease, stroke and osteoporosis.
- Improve our mood and wellbeing.
- Help us sleep better.
- Improve our self-esteem and confidence.



HOW OFTEN SHOULD I BE ACTIVE?

The physical activity guidelines recommend that we should aim to do at least two and a half hours of moderate activity each week, which can be broken up into 30 minutes, 5 days a week. Walking, and any other activity that raises our heart rate and makes us feel warmer, counts towards this. Remember any amount of activity is beneficial and something is better than doing nothing.

GETTING STARTED

The walks vary in length from 1km-5km and are designed for all levels of ability and fitness. The routes may have a red route and blue route: the red route is the shorter route; the blue route gives you an added progression if you want a challenge.

Tips to help you get started:

- Start with the shortest walk at a pace that feels comfortable for you – don't worry if you can't complete it, just do what suits you.
- As you walk more and become fitter, begin walking at a more brisk pace to get more physical health benefits.
- Keep a note of your walks in the diary at the end of this booklet – you can record how you felt during the walk, how long it took you to complete and any other reflections.



PEERIE WANDERS - TOP TIPS

- Wear comfortable sensible footwear, particularly if the terrain is uneven.
- Encourage a friend, family member or colleague to join you.
- If walking alone, tell someone where you're going and how long you plan to be.
- If the visibility is poor, wear reflective clothing.
- Check the weather forecast before you go and dress appropriately.



Look out for Wildlife

On all these peerie wanders, there is the possibility to see a variety of wildlife. Some walks have more opportunities than others, depending on the area, and they will vary throughout the seasons.

The greatest variety will be in the spring and summer when most wildflower species bloom and resident bird species are joined by summer migrants. Although autumn and winter are quieter times of year, there is still plenty to look for. We have provided prompts in each walk of the wildlife you might come across.



Nature connection prompt

Find a pattern in nature that looks like a face.

RSPB Shetland Audio Trail



Scan me with your smart phone camera!

For a sound bite of some of Shetland's nature friendly places, have a listen to RSPB's audio trails. You can listen to these directly from your phone by scanning the QR code.





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WALK 1 - Loch of Houll loop, Whalsay

Head to the area of Brough in Whalsay where you will see the vast Loch of Houll to begin your walk. If you are driving, there is an area nearby where you can park. Around the loch there is a path to follow making this an accessible walk.

- Length: 1.8 km/1.1 mile circular walk.
- Est time: 30 minutes.
- Look out for: wildflowers and wildfowl, greylag geese, mallard and teal.
- Terrain: gravel track for most of the way round.
- Potential Hazards: this route takes you alongside a loch.



Nature connection prompt: Notice any reflections of shapes or colours on the water. Can you work out what they are reflections of?



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WALK 2 - Bruray, Skerries

From the Skerries ferry begin your walk along the road towards the airstrip. From here turn off following the signs up alongside the reservoir. Look out for some amazing views and wildlife.

- Length: 3.6 km/2.25 mile circular walk.
- Est time: 1 hour.
- Look out for: coastal scenery, excellent variety of wildflowers, wheatears, wrens and pipits inland and seabirds offshore. You may spot otters along the shore.
- Terrain: off-road, grassy uneven terrain, stiles.
- Potential Hazards: this route takes you by the cliffs and crosses the end of the airstrip, so take care.



Nature connection prompt: Feel the ground with bare hands or bare feet. What does it feel like?



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WALK 3 - Lower Voe, Voe

From the marina carpark opposite the Pier Head Inn head towards Lower Voe and along the lower track hugging the coastline round towards the Church as seen in the route above.

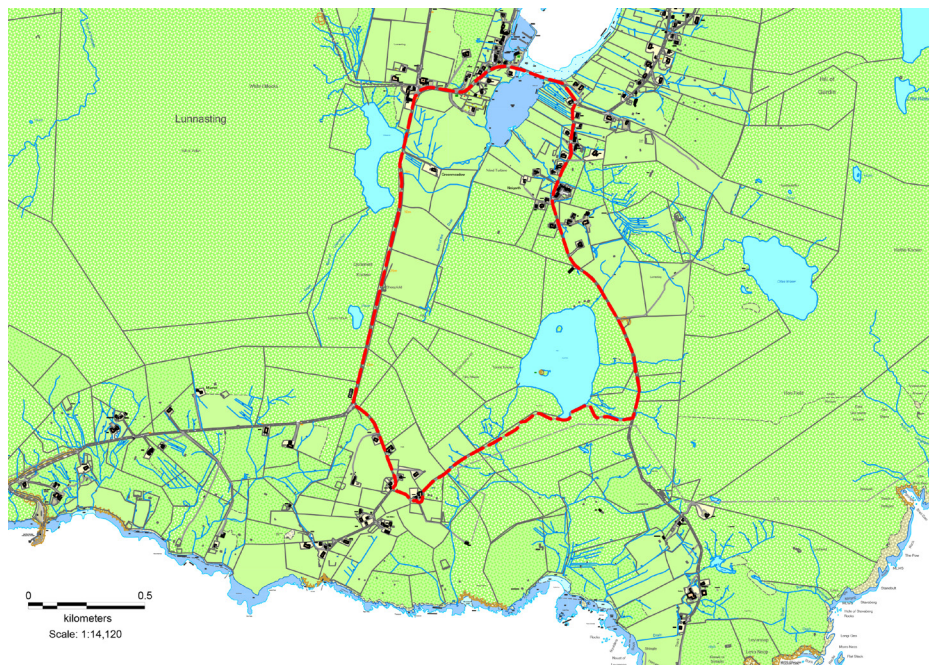
- Length: 1.8 km return walk.
- Est time: 30 minutes.
- Look out for: tysties and shags in the voe and coastal wildflowers.
- Terrain: road, track and grass.
- Potential Hazards: this route takes you alongside the coast with some uneven terrain near the church.



Nature connection prompt: Find a natural object that is mostly round. Are there any other shapes you can see on it too?



Nature connection prompt: Lie in the grass and lower your eyes to see what the world looks like to a minibeast.



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WALK 5 - Vidlin Circular, Vidlin

This is a walk for the more advanced, make sure you are feeling fit and able for the longer distance. Begin your walk at the Vidlin Hall following the road down until you reach the bottom of the Burga Water. Cut along the grass until you reach Skellberry and back onto the main road until you get back to the hall.

- Length: 4km return walk
- Est time: 1 hour 30 minutes
- Look out for: wildflowers and wildfowl on Burga water. You may see curlews and oystercatchers in the fields and along the shoreline.
- Terrain: road, grassy and uneven terrain.
- Potential Hazards: the road in to Vidlin can be busy at times so keep an eye out for traffic.



Nature connection prompt: Find a natural object and observe it for 30 seconds. What did you notice about the object that you might not have usually noticed if you were rushing past it?

TAKING CARE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Shetland is famed for its natural beauty and wildlife. By following the guidelines outlined in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code you will respect the needs of those who rely on the countryside for their living, whilst preserving the natural environment.

1. Use stiles and gates to cross fences and walls. Fasten all gates that you have opened.
2. Do not walk through fields of cultivated grass as this is a very important crop in Shetland.
3. If you have to cross cultivated land, do so by the edge of the field.
4. Avoid livestock and do not disturb them, especially during lambing time (mid-April until late-June).
5. Whilst you may walk a dog, you should keep it on a short lead in the countryside, avoid livestock and be a responsible dog owner and pick up after your dog. Obey any notice forbidding dogs.
6. Do not leave litter or start fires.
7. Do not disturb nesting birds, especially those which nest on the ground.
8. Respect wildlife and refrain from picking wild flowers.
9. When parking on country roads do not obstruct access roads or access to fields. Park further away if need be.
10. Take care when walking near cliff tops as the edges can be crumbly and dangerous.

OTHER THINGS TO NOTE



All the walks in these leaflets have been safety assessed by Shetland Islands Council, however, as they are all based outside in the countryside there are factors to watch out for that may not be noted. This include potential livestock (including Bulls), cliffs, swooping birds (during mating and hatching season), animal faeces and walks taking you close to the sea. These are factors that neither NHS nor SIC can predict due to the nature of the land that these walks take place on, so take extra care looking out for potential hazards.

PEERIE WANDER WALK DIARY

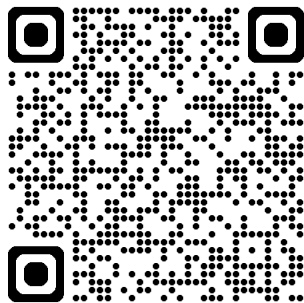
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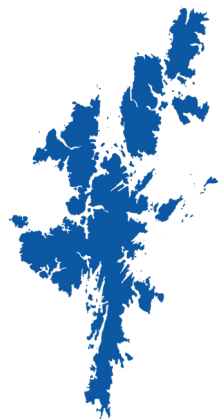
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FOR A HAPPIER,
HEALTHIER SCOTLAND



Shetland Amenity Trust
Caring for Shetland's heritage

