

# Mousa to Boddam

Marine Protected Area

Sandeels © Paul Kay

A sandeel recruitment area

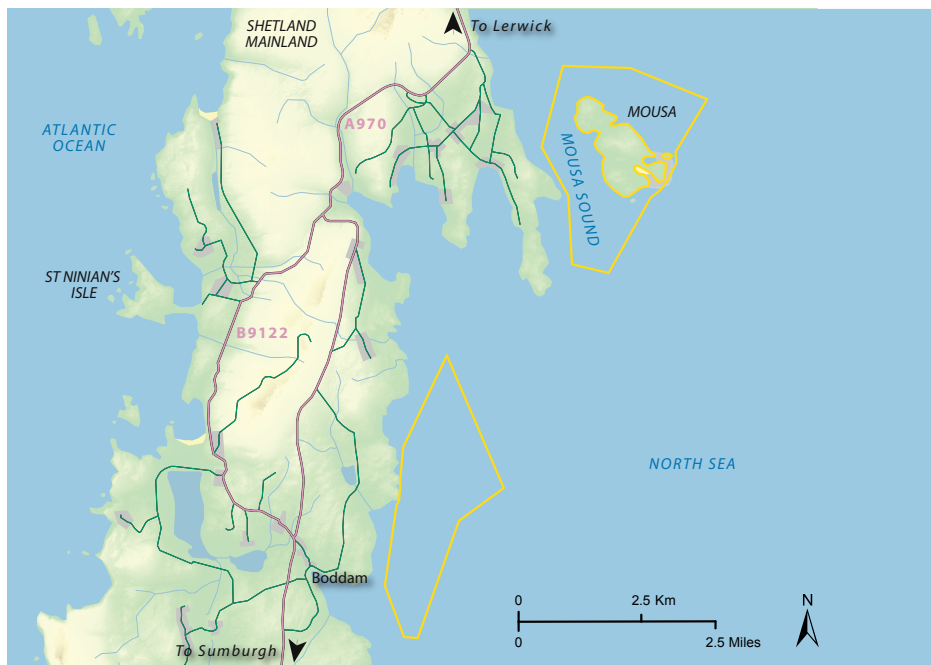
# Mousa to Boddam

## Marine Protected Area

The Marine Protected Area (MPA) encompasses sandeel grounds around the island of Mousa and off the coast at Boddam in south-east Shetland. These are considered the most consistent and reliable sandeel recruitment areas around Shetland. The sandeel populations (and fishery) here are dependent upon an influx of young fish (less than one year old) from a large spawning area situated to the west and north of Orkney.



Sandeels are small eel-like fish which can grow up to 30 cm in length and can often be found in vast shoals. As well as being abundant, sandeels are highly nutritious and so are the preferred prey item for many other species of fish, seabirds, seals, whales and dolphins. In fact sandeels are a key component in the marine food web here, and it is no coincidence that the waters around Mousa are among the best in Shetland to see whales and dolphins.



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Mousa location: 59° 59.933' N 001° 10.722' W Combined area: 13 km<sup>2</sup>  
Boddam location: 59° 56.175' N 001° 14.669' W



## A sandeel in a sandy sea bed

### Protected Features & Conservation Objectives

Biodiversity: sandeels.

Geodiversity: Marine Geomorphology of the Scottish Shelf Seabed.

The aim is to **conserve these features** in order to make a long lasting contribution to the MPA network.

Sandeels have a close association with the sandy substrates into which they bury to protect themselves from predators. In fact, they rarely emerge from the sea bed between September and March, except to spawn. The Mousa to Boddam grounds represent critical habitat for sandeels and are considered to offer the best opportunity for introducing meaningful spatial protection measures to contribute to the conservation of this important species around Shetland.

The MPA also lies within an internationally important carbonate production area. The subtidal banks of well flushed sands preferred by the sandeels are high in calcium carbonate because they are made of the eroded shells and skeletons of animals that lived on or in the sea bed. These sediments supply the sandy beaches of Shetland.

The northern part of the MPA overlaps the existing Mousa Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated for reefs, sea caves and harbour seals. Mousa has also been designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) for aggregations of breeding storm petrels and Arctic terns.

# Further Information

Further information on Nature Conservation MPAs, the wider network and protected areas management is available at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork)

For Nature Conservation MPA site documents and more on the fascinating range of marine life to be found in Scotland's seas, please visit

[www.snh.gov.uk/mpas](http://www.snh.gov.uk/mpas) - for territorial waters

[www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/scottishmpas](http://www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/scottishmpas) - for offshore waters



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 **JNCC**  
Joint Nature Conservation Committee

## Broch of Mousa



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