



Wheatear | Mountain Hare David Gifford

Enjoy a day wildlife watching

Much of the coastline in Nesting, Lunnasting and Delting offers a natural gallery for observing wildlife.

Look out for common and grey seals along the rocky shores. Common seal pups born in June can swim within a few days, unlike the grey seal pups born in October who stay on the beach for a month before entering the sea.

Lochs and streams provide fresh water, essential for coastal otters to wash the salt from their fur. Soft peat banks conceal their holts where otters rest, shelter and breed.

The birdwatching is superb - Gannets, Guillemots, Kittiwakes, Fulmars and Puffins can be seen along the coastline - while migrant birds such as Pied Wagtails, Waxwings, Redwings and various geese alight here in spring and autumn.

Local breeding birds include Red-throated Divers, Arctic Terns, Arctic Skuas, Red-breasted Mergansers, Golden Plovers, Oystercatchers, Rock Pipits, Wheatears and Skylarks.

The high moorland is home to small coveys of Red Grouse and the Mountain Hare, which changes its colour in winter.

Useful information

Bus services

See the North Mainland timetable on the ZetTrans website zettrans.org.uk

Museum and visitor information point

The Cabin Museum, Vidlin

Public toilets

Vidlin | Laxo | Voe | Toft

Post offices

South Nesting | Brae | Mossbank

Shops

South Nesting | Vidlin | Voe | Brae

Fuel

South Nesting | Vidlin | Voe | Brae

Leisure centre and swimming pool

Brae | +44 (0)1595 807710

Health centre

Brae | +44 (0)1806 522543

Police

Brae | 101

2024 | Disclaimer

All details believed to be accurate at the time of going to print.



SHETLAND
ISLANDS COUNCIL



shetland.org/nesting-lunnasting-delting




















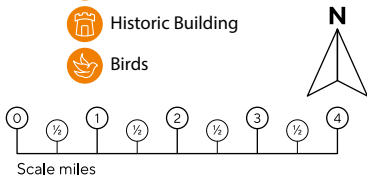
Nesting, Lunnasting and Delting

An area of contrasts



Shetland
Islands of Opportunity

-  Main Roads
-  Minor Roads
-  Ferry Routes
-  Cliffs
-  Beach
-  Loch
-  Trout Fishing
-  Otters
-  Seals
-  Whales & Dolphins
-  Toilets
-  Leisure Centre
-  Viewpoint
-  Site of Interest
-  Museum
-  Historic Building
-  Birds



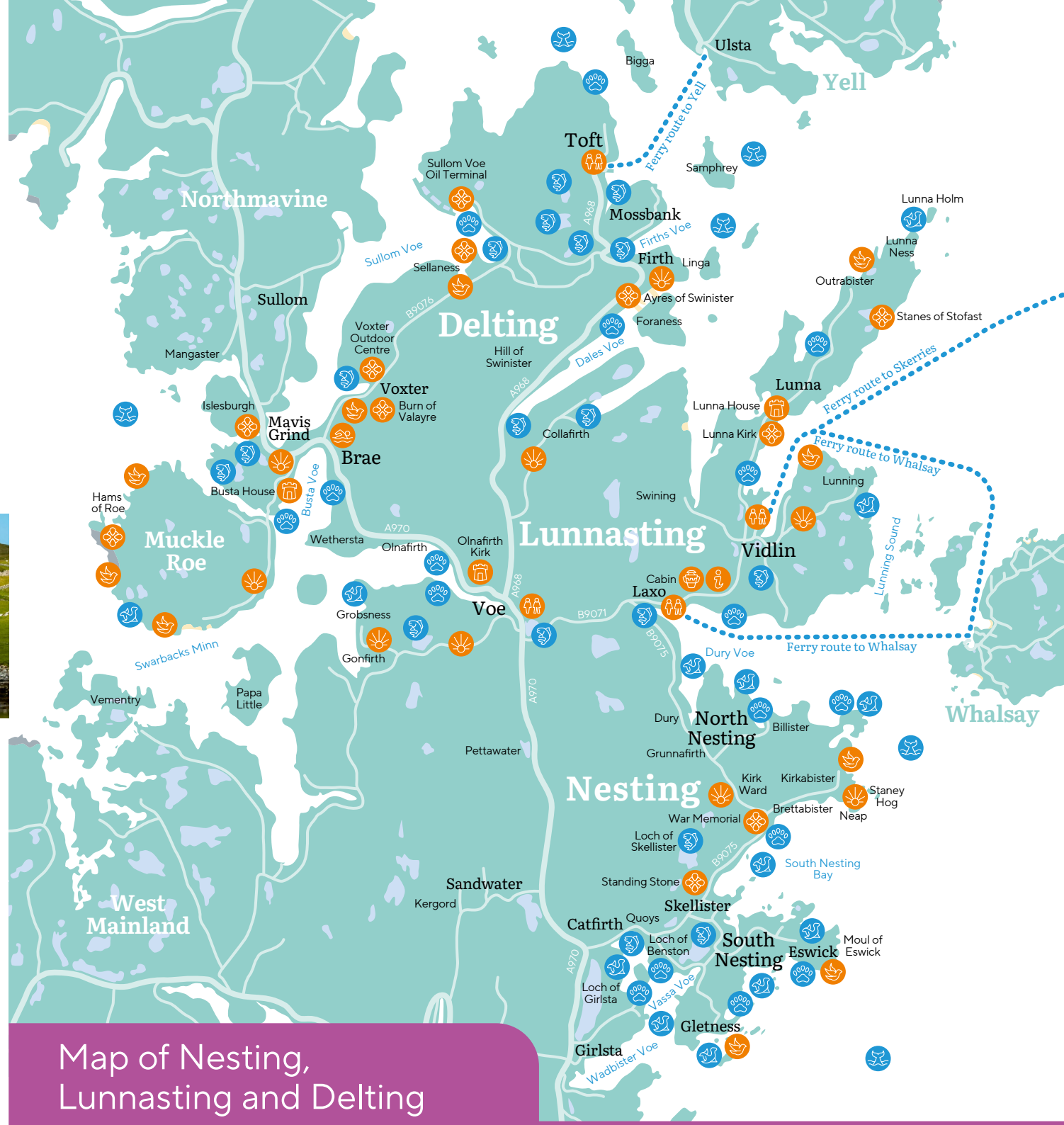
↑ Lunna House VisitScotland / Paul Tomkins

Lunnasting

A couple of miles north of Dury, the crofting township of **Laxo** (from Old Norse lax meaning salmon) lies on either side of the Laxo Burn, a famous beat for sea trout. From Laxo the ferry sails for Whalsay. In strong south-easterly winds it berths at the village of **Vidlin**, which is the terminal for the Skerries ferry.

On your left as you drive towards Vidlin you should visit **The Cabin Museum** at the Wirlie. This museum and visitor information point (open May until September) is full of mementoes, artefacts, photographs and curios from Shetland's long maritime past. The collection also includes a great deal of war memorabilia.

Vidlin lies on the sheltered **Vidlin Voe** with a marina for local boats at its head. This settlement has an Iron Age broch buried beside the present Methodist kirk.



Map of Nesting, Lunnasting and Delting

In the days when most cargo and passengers travelled by sea, vessels sailing to Lerwick from the North Isles and the Westside would call at the natural harbour of **West Lunna Voe**, overlooked by **Lunna House**, the 17th-century mansion of the Hunter family. Nearby is a watchtower built by the lairds to spy on tenants fishing offshore – and also to watch out for the Customs. The Hunters, like most Shetland landowners, were smugglers.

Lunna Kirk was built in 1753 on the site of an earlier mausoleum. It was sold by the Church of Scotland to a community group in 2023. Two inscribed slabs from the Hunters of Lunna's tomb are built into the porch of the church.

Lunna is famous as a secret Second World War base for the little fishing boats that smuggled spies, saboteurs, radios, ammunition and explosives into German-occupied Norway and brought back refugees from the Gestapo. The story of these heroic and terrifying voyages, in midwinter darkness, storms and often under enemy fire, is told in *The Shetland Bus* by David Howarth, the British naval officer who ran the operation from Lunna House. There's also a display telling the story of the Shetland Bus at the Scalloway Museum.

Lunna Ness is wonderful walking country, studded with the ruins of croft houses from the Clearances in the 19th century. The area teems with wildlife: in summer there is a constant stream of seabirds passing the headland – while migrant birds alight here in spring and autumn. A thriving but elusive otter population has made part of Lunna Ness a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Much easier to see are common and grey seals hauled out at colonies on the skerries between Lunna Ness and **Lunna Holm** and at the **Skerry of Lunning**.

Not far away are the atmospheric **Stanes of Stofast** – a 2,000-tonne 'glacial erratic' boulder split in two by frost. Like the nearby Lunning peninsula, this is a heavily glaciated landscape with eerily shaped rocks associated with the trows (mischievous spirits) of Shetland folklore.

Delting

The B9071 road from Vidlin rejoins the main A970 at the village of **Voe**, its trees and bushes sheltered among hills at the head of **Olnafirth**. At the pier the attractive cluster of old buildings grew up around the 19th-century merchant firm of T.M. Adie & Sons, involved in fishing, hosiery and tweed. The firm was famous for providing the woollen sweater worn by Edmund Hillary when he summited Everest in 1953. On the north side of Olnafirth, the ruined **Olnafirth Kirk** is the burial place of the Adies, lairds of Voe, and the Gifford lairds of Busta.



↑ Busta VisitScotland / Paul Tomkins

The parish of Delting has changed greatly since the discovery of oil off Shetland, but the district still has many unspoiled and beautiful places. The road from Voe to the large, modern village of **Brae** follows Olnafirth past shellfish farms and an old whaling station from the 1920s. Brae, on the shores of **Busta Voe**, has good social facilities, including the North Mainland Leisure Centre.

Across the water, the 17th-century **Busta House** is forever associated with the tragedy of 1748, when the laird Thomas Gifford's four sons were drowned while rowing back from Wethersta. Today it operates as one of Shetland's most popular hotels.

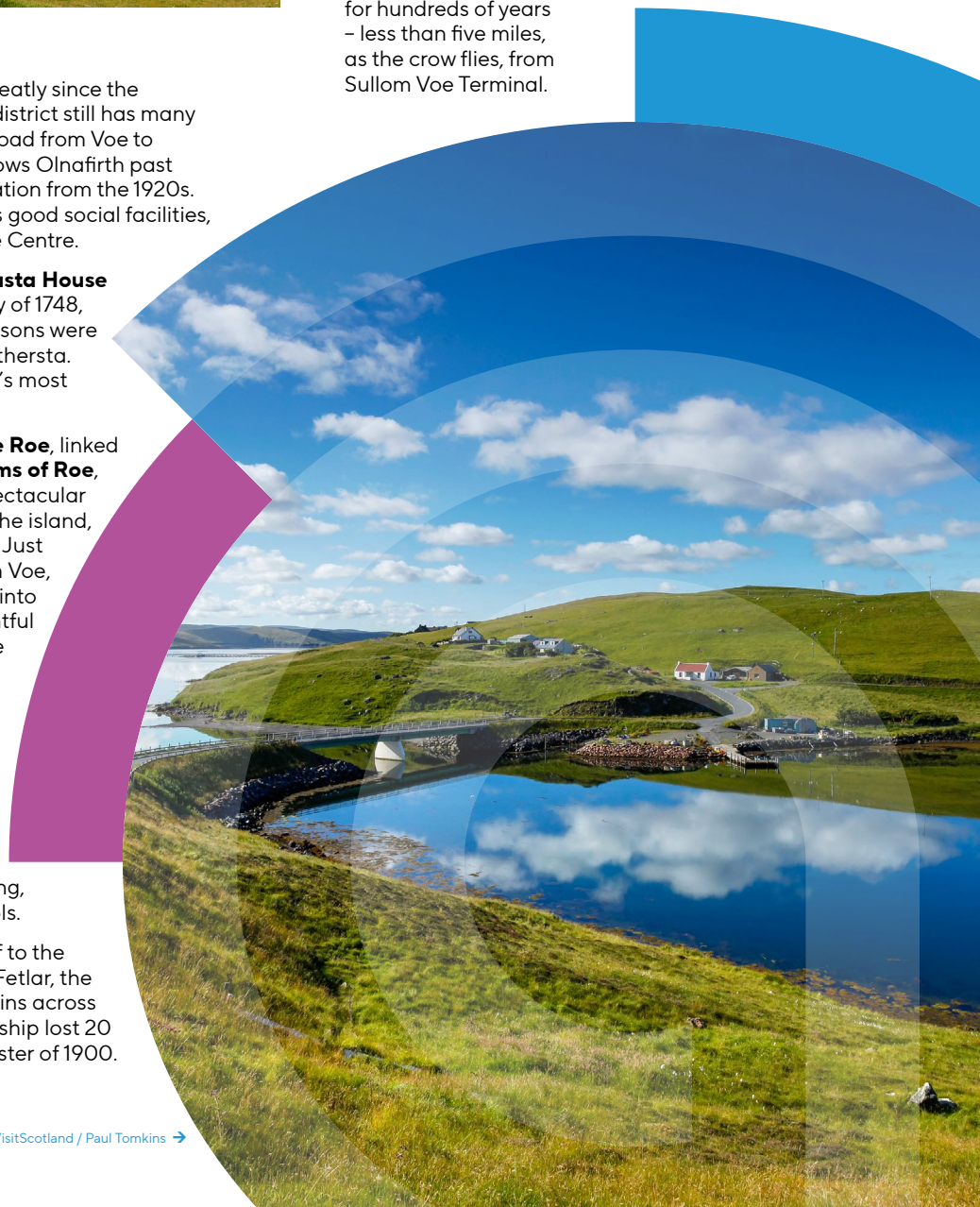
Beyond Busta is the island of **Muckle Roe**, linked to the mainland by a bridge. The **Hams of Roe**, a deserted settlement set among spectacular red granite cliffs at the north end of the island, is a favourite destination for walkers. Just outside Brae, on the B9076 to Sullom Voe, a former manse has been converted into the **Voxter Outdoor Centre**. A delightful walk up the **Burn of Valayre** from the **Voxter Quarry** reveals a hidden valley where native trees form part of a Millennium Forest for Scotland project.

Sullom Voe is the longest and most sheltered voe in the islands. Perhaps best known as the site of a nationally-important oil terminal, it is a wonderful place for birdwatching, thanks to strict environmental controls.

At **Firth**, where the road branches off to the **Toft** ferry terminal for Yell, Unst and Fetlar, the oil boom housing estates overlook ruins across **Firths Voe**. This former crofting township lost 20 local men in the Delting Fishing Disaster of 1900.

Heading south back to Voe, the A968 climbs the **Hill of Swinister** to reveal a superb view. The headland of **Foraness** is connected to Swinister by a triple ayre – enclosing a lagoon, the **Houb**, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, where the tree remnants and pollen found in the submerged peat indicates that large areas of Shetland were once covered by a layer of thick scrub.

There is one more side road before Voe – a steep climb over the **Easter Hill of Dale** brings you to the secluded hamlet of **Collafirth** and a landscape little changed for hundreds of years – less than five miles, as the crow flies, from Sullom Voe Terminal.



Muckle Roe VisitScotland / Paul Tomkins →