



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Technology Extends Shetland's Coastline**

We've always known Shetland's coastline was unique because it is so intricate and complex, but for the first time the length of it has been accurately calculated - with a very surprising result.

While gathering information for spatial planning purposes, Lorraine Gray, Scottish Sustainable Marine Environment Initiative (SSMEI) project officer at NAFC Marine Centre discovered that the accurate length of Shetland's coastline is 1,697 miles (2,702 km), not 900 miles as previously thought.

*Lorraine said: "I based the calculation on the Mean High Water Mark at spring tide from Ordnance Survey maps using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) software. At first I was obviously concerned I'd made a mistake in the calculation because the difference between my figure and the original estimate is so huge, almost double. So I contacted other GIS users at the council who couldn't argue with my figures."*

Martin Holmes, Coastal Zone Manager at NAFC said: *"This equates to 16% of Scotland's coastline, which is a lot and could justify the need for more resources, for example in emergency response or management of the coastal environment."*



---

**NOTE:** The coastline figure of 900 miles (*Shetland in Statistics*) was based on an estimate calculated in 1975 by Professor D Flinn. The accurate length of coastline is 1,697 miles (2,702 km) calculated by Dr Lorraine Gray. The calculation was based on the Mean High Water Spring from Ordnance Survey using GIS software. Lorraine then combined the 'polylines' into one and calculated the length of the line using the statistics tools in the software.

The statistic 16% of Scotland's coastline is calculated based on the 10,246 mile figure in Wikipedia.

For further editorial information please contact Christena Irvine, Tel: 01595 772207.  
E-mail: [christena.irvine@nafc.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:christena.irvine@nafc.uhi.ac.uk)

**NOTE TO EDITORS:**

In view of the increasing range and scope of the work being undertaken by NAFC, the decision was taken in September 2005 to change the institute's name from the North Atlantic Fisheries College to the NAFC Marine Centre.

Please note our correct title is now 'NAFC Marine Centre'. The 'NAFC' in our title identifies us with, and provides continuity from, our previous name – North Atlantic Fisheries College. In conversation 'NAFC' should be spelt out as 'N-A-F-C'. Similarly, we are no longer just a 'college', but a marine centre - providing education, research and commercial services to the marine sector.