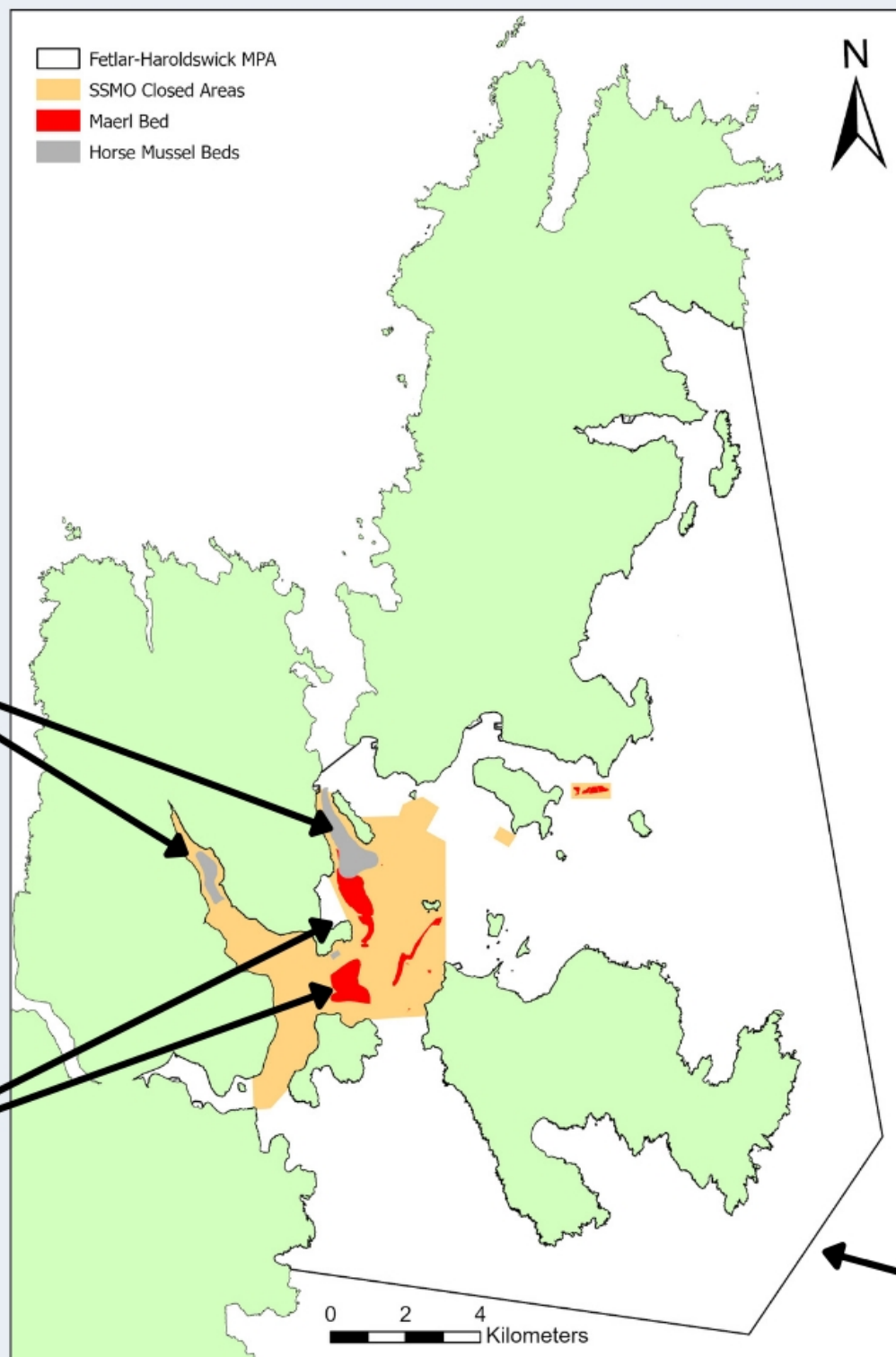


# Yell's Blue Carbon Habitats

The Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO) protects blue carbon habitats through a series of marine protected areas which prevent scallop dredging where there are sensitive seabed habitats. These include areas of seagrass, maerl, and horse mussel beds. These closed areas were developed in conjunction with fishermen and protect biodiversity and blue carbon around Shetland. UHI Shetland surveys of the closed areas have helped map these important habitats.



## Seagrass

There are two types of seagrass found in Shetland. There are records of the smaller estuarine tasselweed or widgeon grass in Yell near Gutcher. The larger marine eelgrass can form large subtidal meadows, but there are no records from Yell. While eelgrass used to be found more widely around Shetland, it is currently only found within Whiteness Voe on the Shetland mainland.

## Kelp

Shetland has large amounts of kelp forest around much of the coastline down to 30m. However, around Yell records of these are limited to point records. This does not provide any information on the size of any kelp forests. This is the current data gap that we are asking your help to fill.

Fetlar-Haroldswick MPA was designated to protect three blue carbon habitats (horse mussel beds, maerl and kelp communities)

## Biogenic Reefs

Horse mussel beds have been mapped in Yell's waters and are currently protected by the SSMO voluntary closed areas.

Brittle star beds are commonly found occurring on top of horse mussel and maerl beds around Yell.

## Maerl

Several maerl beds have been mapped in Yell's waters north of Hascosay. These beds are currently protected by the SSMO voluntary closed areas.