***Heads up all avid seabird, larophiles and other Shetland bird enthusiasts.***

***Expedition SIMMER DIM 2019 to the Shetlands in June this year in support of the JNCC’s Seabirds Count is starting to take shape. As briefed at the AGM, the local Shetlands coordinator would like us to survey the western and north-western peninsulas of Mainland Shetland (see attached map) looking again for target species of breeding skuas, gulls, terns and other seabird species.  SNH, SOTEAG, RSPB and local birdwatchers have covered the main SPAs, SSSIs, and nature reserves already, so like last year JNCC would like us to help cover the relatively untrampled (and watched) areas.  Last year on Orkney this threw up some fabulous sightings – summering long-tailed duck, snowy owl, nesting hen harrier and so on, as well as hundreds of breeding seabirds and other species.  On Shetland we can expect similar treats…..breeding whimbrel, red-throated diver, greenshank, black-tailed godwit, red-necked phalarope & merlin all possible.***

***Timings tentatively planned for the period Monday 17th – Saturday 29th June (with 19 hrs of daylight and 5 hours of Simmer Dim available for census work daily!). Depending upon numbers, we may have a couple of teams (one peninsula each?) and folk may be able to dip in and out as required. All still to be finalised when I have thought about it a bit more and done some further research / digging.***

***Deployment and recovery is likely to be on the overnight ferry to and from Lerwick from Aberdeen following our standard, rolling, minibus pick-up schedule from north to south up the UK.  Accommodation in 2 well-appointed 2 hostels on Mainland Shetland has been provisionally booked for the period.  I envisage the standard 'drive-walk in-survey' routine as the peninsulas have relatively good road networks, but a bit of yomping will be required for some kilometre squares off the beaten tracks.  No 'boating' is envisaged as we have no off-shore islets to survey this time.***

***Much more to come reference refined timings, accommodation details, travel plots, costings and so on. And on the latter, I will be again be applying to JNCC for a grant to help defray costs, and to any other funding avenues I can think of.***

***Will need assistance too with the usual stuff - overall Seabirds Count coordinator and peninsula survey recorders, treasurer, drivers, photographers, ringing coordinator, Facebook & Twitter coordinator and so on.  All volunteers gratefully accepted.***

***Initial expressions of interest and availability/preferred dates direct to me please here on Facebook or at*** ***keith.cowieson@btopenworld.com*** ***by 21st January please.***