

Hi [redacted],

These may help if I don't make it tomorrow....

My personal mobile number is [redacted] in case you need it, although think [redacted] has it.

Slide 5:

NatureScot have been carrying out additional work to support assessments and formal advice for a permanent designation consultation.

Commissioned British Geological Society (with funding help from MS) to carry out further processing and analysis of acoustic bathymetry data. This allowed more detailed seabed habitat mapping which helped guide the field work.

BGS analysis and data interpretation also identified geodiversity interests ([glacial landforms part of Quaternary of Scotland](#)) across the urgent MPA and wider.

Drop Down Video and Remotely Operated Vehicle survey work took place in July/august and September respectively and further numerous egg records were found within the urgent MPA but also to the north and north west. The eggs were found on cobble/boulder habitat from single records to clusters of numerous eggs, with multiple clusters sometimes occurring within a few meters of each other.

Slide 6. - Map

Graduated green blobs show the number of eggs recorded across the area.

Other survey locations with null records are shown in red line/small blobs (2021 survey work) and blue lines/small blobs (previous survey work)

Yellow line is the 60m contour, dashed line is the 40m contour

Field work focussed on habitat types known to support flapper skate eggs at this site, so predominantly 25-40m/coble boulder habitat, although some surveys did go into deeper water (but found no eggs).

Further null records were found to the south of the Crowlins (not shown on map) but we didn't get to the north end of the Crowlins.

There is good survey coverage across the area, however the footprint of the survey work is relatively modest - so do expect further eggs to be found.

The map includes further citizen science records shared (seasearch dives) that were done in 2021 too [if asked - we also did further survey work on PMFs in the Inner Sound to plug gaps – a field report will be published in due course]

Slide 7

There are boundary setting principles set out within the MPA selection guidelines

Eg. Straight lines when away from the coast, drawing boundary around features, and ensuring activities occurring near sites do not compromise features - using appropriate distance from site boundary if necessary.

For mobile gear, the warp length:water depth ratio is used to take account of gear location wrt vessel position (JNCC guidance).

A 40m depth contour - is deemed appropriate in this instance - on account of evidence from all field work on egg presence in this location

[if asked - highlight all [multiple](#) records are within the extended boundary, note some areas of mud in the northwest corner excluded and further null records there too, although possible more eggs would be found with further survey work]

[redacted] | [redacted]

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[nature.scot](#) | [@nature_scot](#) | [Scotland's Nature Agency](#) | *Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba*

Note - I am currently working from home with access to emails, my telephone number is diverted to my mobile.

From: [redacted]
Sent: 25 November 2021 16:12
To: [redacted] **Subject:** Stakeholder meeting tomorrow

Hi [redacted],

Do you want to send me your presentation notes if any, just in case you aren't able to access teams tomorrow?

Cheers,



[redacted]
[redacted]
Marine Scotland - Planning & Policy
Email: [redacted]
Web: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/marine-environment/>

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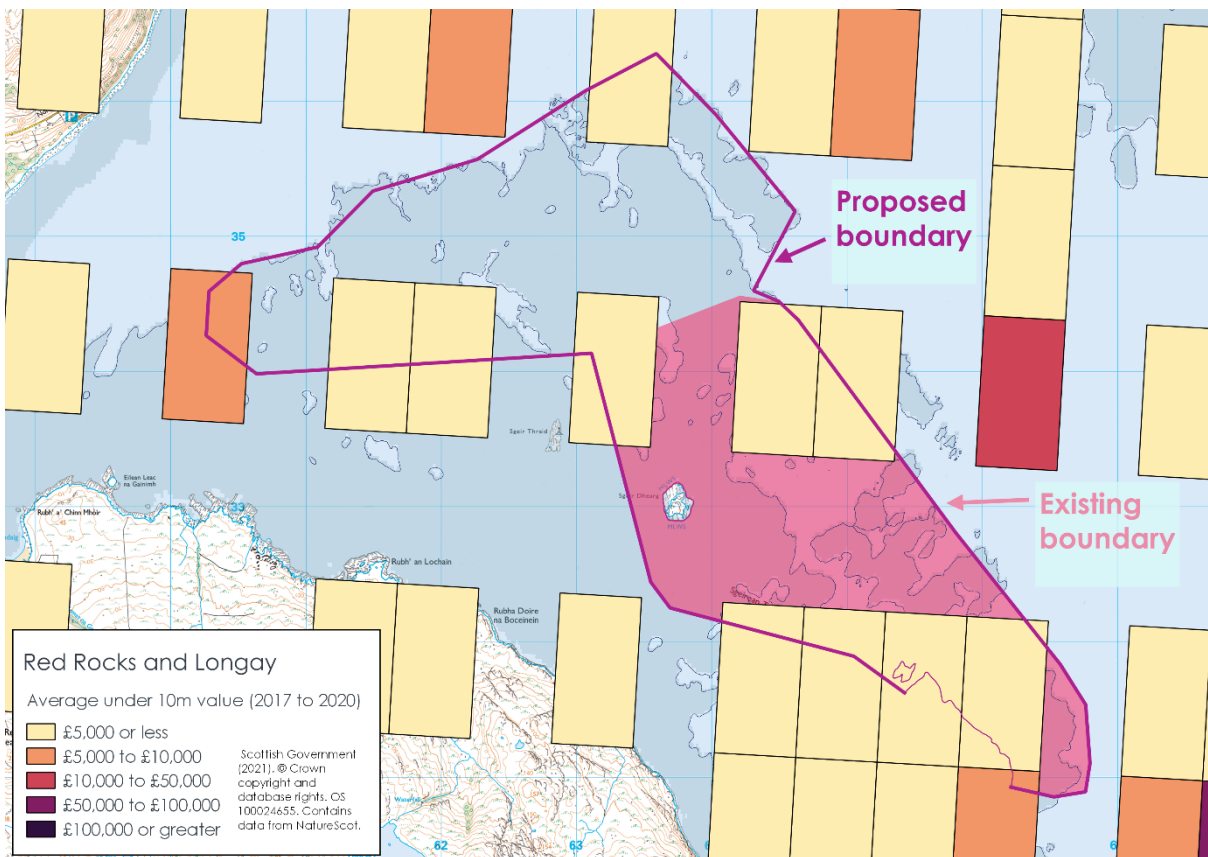
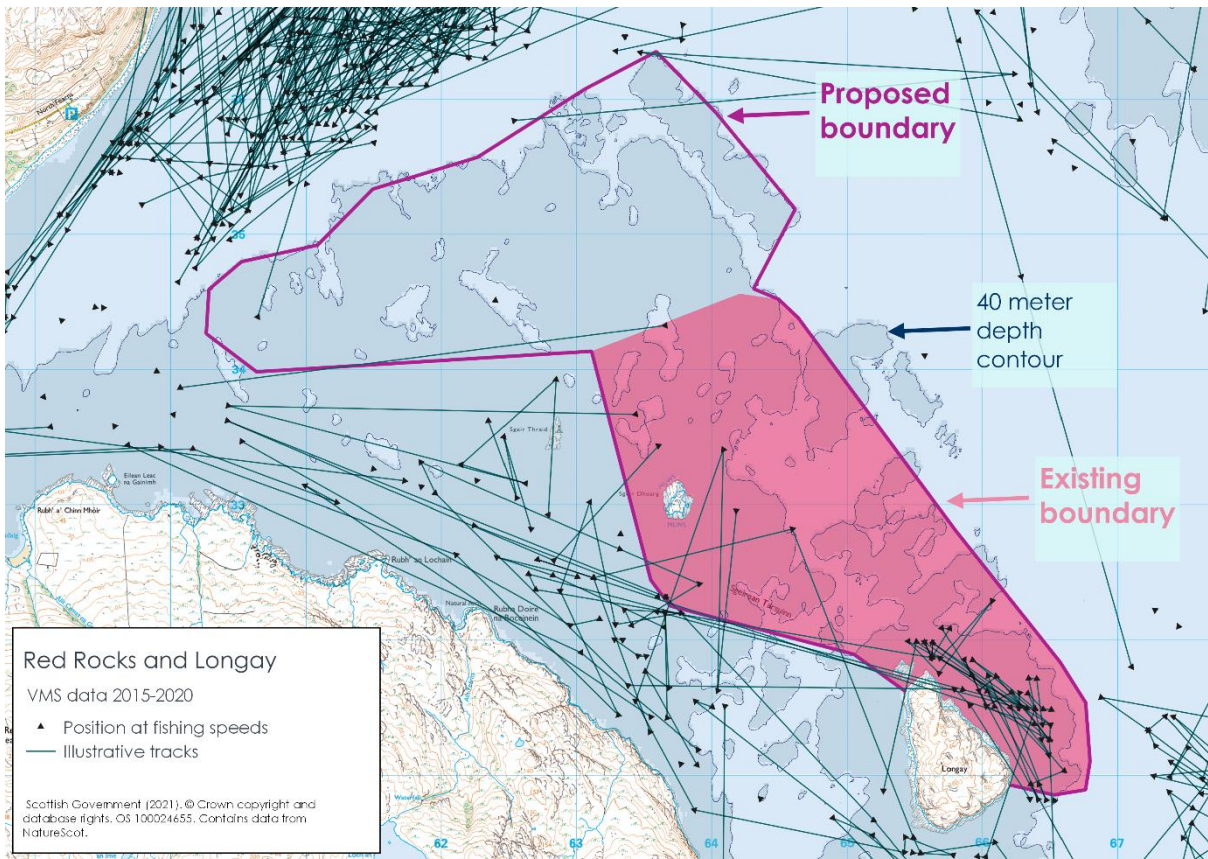
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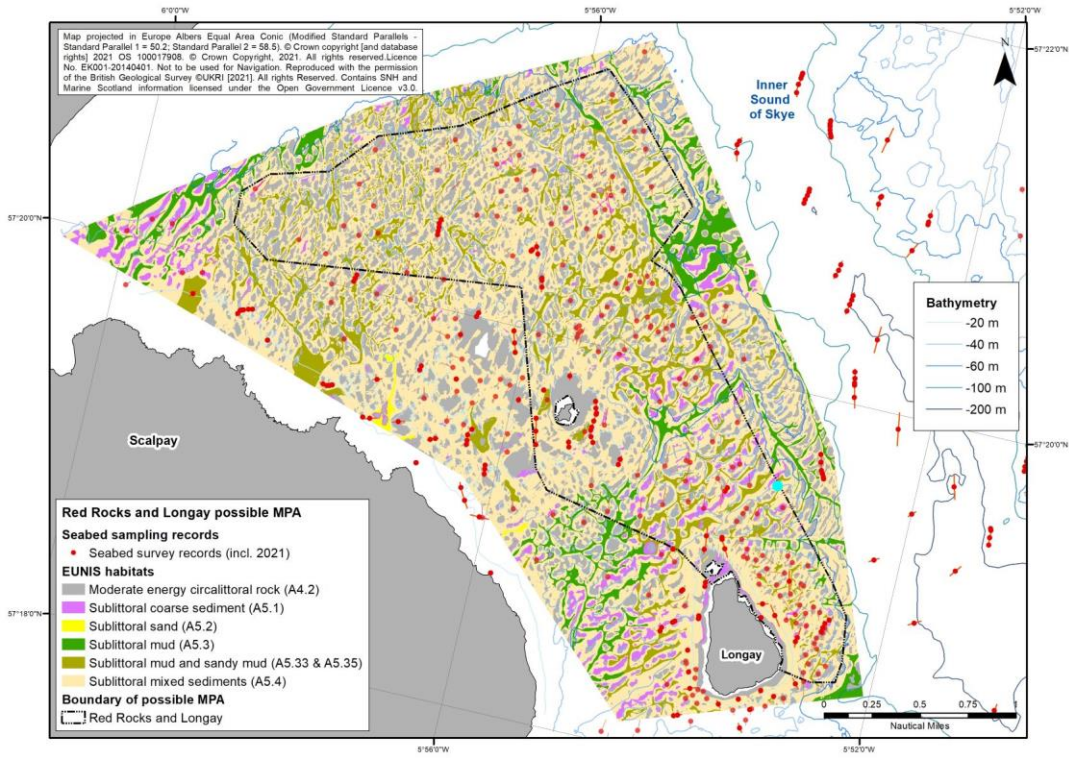
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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a-mach bho NatureScot.





NatureScot advice - Protection of flapper skate - Mapping addendum

Following discussions with Marine Scotland on 22 January, NatureScot has revisited the mapping options presented in our 18 December advice to facilitate discussions regarding interim spatial management for flapper skate egg-laying habitat off Scalpay and Longay in the Inner Sound.

Two options are provided in accordance with our original advice (see Figure 1 - overleaf). A 'boundary-free' map (Figure 2) is also provided showing the distribution of flapper skate egg cases and adjacent records of sensitive Priority Marine Features (PMFs).

The following bullets provide the rationale for the two spatial management options and the buffer applied to records-

- **Option A** - this option encompasses the flapper skate egg records plus adjacent records of sensitive seabed habitat PMFs within a single polygon (rather than generating a series of small, discrete polygons around individual records / groups of records). Unsurveyed areas with comparable bathymetry and topography are included with an outer, eastern boundary delineated using the 50 m bathymetric contour. Egg case records have only been found down to 35 m at this location to date but they have been found to 50 m elsewhere in Scotland. Existing seabed habitat survey data guided the boundary-setting to the west.
- **Option B** - this option includes additional areas to the north and west which may also support egg-laying habitat (on the basis of bathymetric and complex topography). We have no records/survey information for the more precautionary areas to the north or west in Option B. This option strikes a balance between unknowns and a precautionary approach for an interim measure, prior to survey work filling knowledge gaps.
- **A 100 m buffer** has been drawn around all of the skate egg and sensitive PMF records. This broadly aligns with existing UK guidance re: defining MPA boundaries¹. Skate eggs have been recorded at depths of 25-34 m in this location with maerl and flame shell bed habitats in similar depths. The guidance, which accounts for the warp length of towed fishing gears, specifies a ratio of 3x actual depth be applied in waters between 25-200 m and 4x depth for shallow waters <25 m. The boundaries have not been drawn tightly around the 100 m buffers because of the low sampling intensity to date (the UK guidance envisages detailed habitat mapping prior to the application of a protective warp length: depth ratio buffer).

Since our last meeting, it has been drawn to our attention that the positioning of the flapper skate egg record in the middle of the map (close to the flame shell beds) is of lower precision than the other records. This was the original record provided by scallop divers and the exact position where the skate egg case was observed may be further to the NE (the flame shell bed records are amongst rocky outcrops here). Follow-up survey work in 2021 can investigate habitat availability and use in more detail.

We have also been advised of a small number of additional flapper skate egg records from citizen science sources. We are currently awaiting further details and will keep you updated.

NatureScot - 27 January, 2021

¹ UK guidance on defining boundaries for marine SACs for Annex I habitat sites fully detached from the coast – JNCC Marine Natura 2000 - <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/25233dda-37cb-4abe-b85b-14f743c45f37/SACHabBoundaryGuidance-2012Update.pdf>

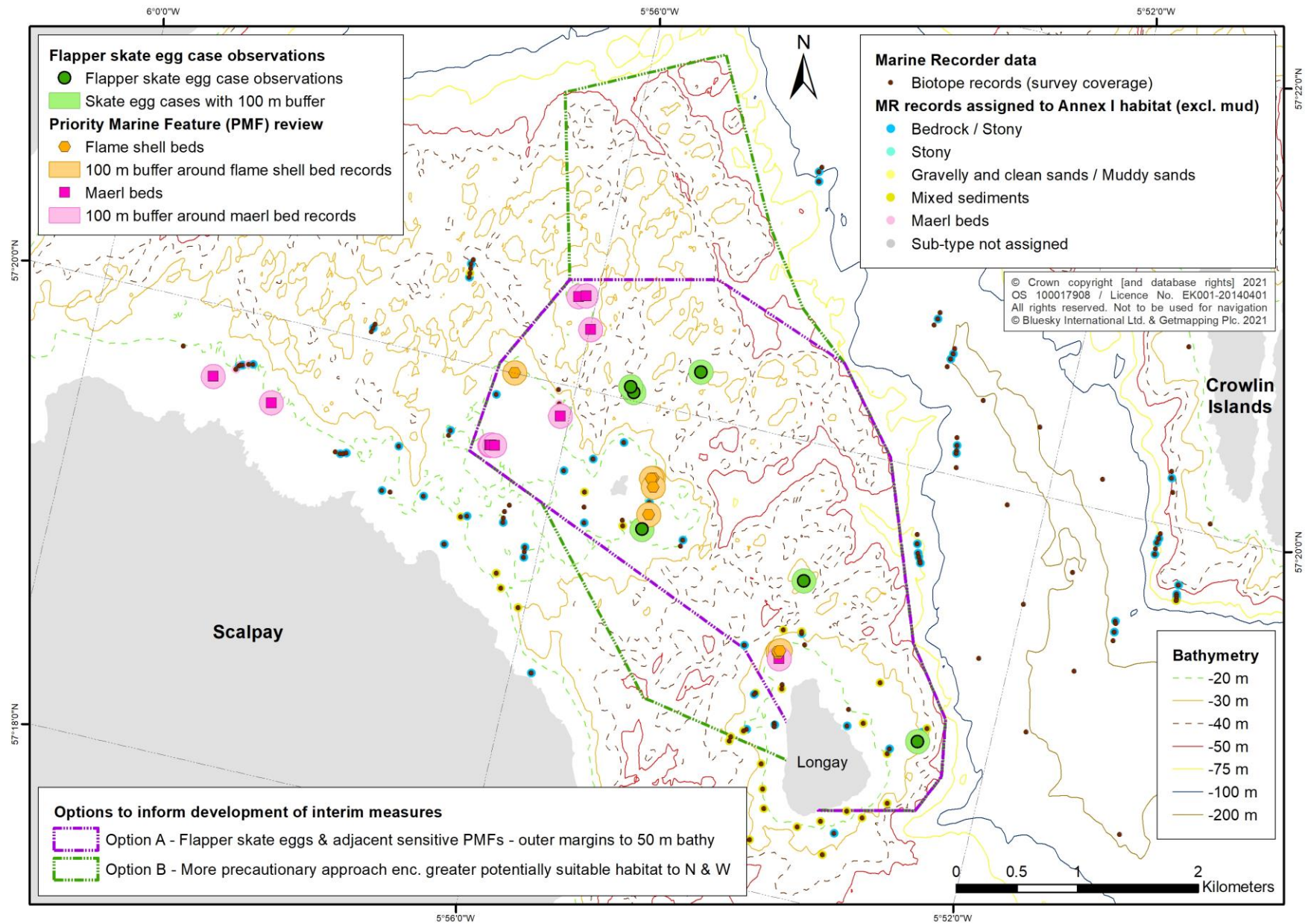


Figure 1. Two options to facilitate discussions on the development of interim spatial measures to provide protection for flapper skate egg-laying habitat in the Inner Sound.

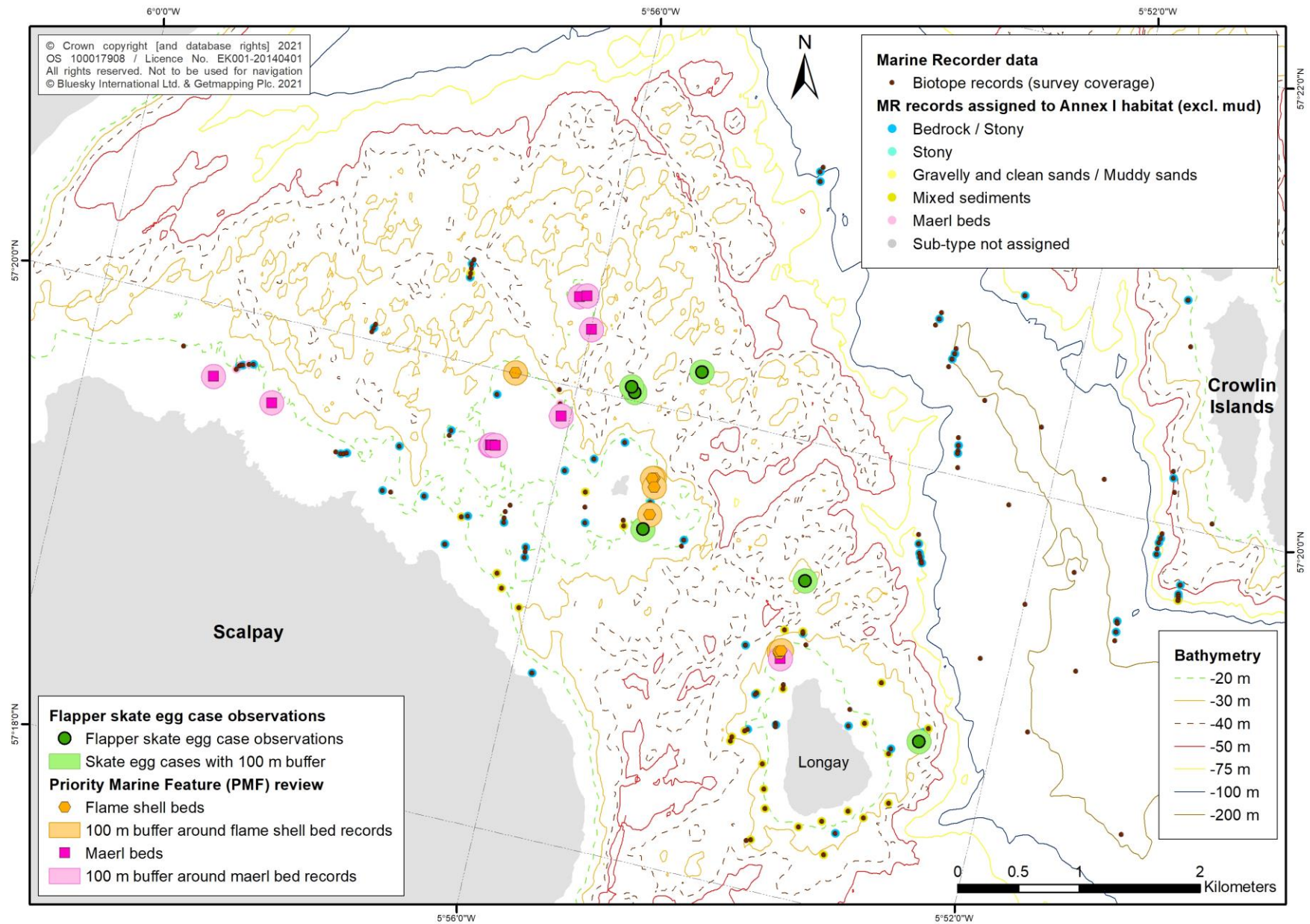


Figure 2. The distribution of flapper skate egg records and sensitive seabed habitat PMFs (flame shell beds and maerl beds) to the north-east of Scalpay and around Longay in the Inner Sound.