

What is a Ramsar site?

The Ramsar Convention was signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. It is an international treaty that provides the framework for conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention defines the wise use of wetlands as, “the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development”. Wise use can thus be seen as the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and all the services they provide, for the benefit of people and nature. Through this convention Ramsar sites are designated, of which there are now over 2,300 worldwide. A Ramsar site is a wetland area considered to be of international importance. The Channel Islands are now home to eight of these.

Why are they important?

Wetland areas are amongst the most productive of the world's ecosystems, supporting rich biodiversity. They are also a source of great economic, cultural, scientific and recreational value. Unfortunately, wetlands continue to be amongst the world's most threatened ecosystems.

Designation as a Ramsar site provides a tool which supports the preservation of these sensitive wetland habitats and their species. In the Channel Islands this is realised through education, sustainable tourism and environmental initiatives which, in turn, contribute to the long-term conservation and wise use of that particular site.

What is the Channel Islands Ramsar initiative?

With eight Ramsar sites situated within 50 miles of each other and the growing mobility of visitors travelling by private boat or commercial tour operator to the various sites, the islands have agreed that there is a need for a universal code of practice to ensure that these special areas are enjoyed responsibly without disturbing or harming the wildlife and habitats for which they are significant.

The bodies formed to provide advisory support for managing Ramsar sites in Alderney, Guernsey, Jersey and Sark have collaborated to produce an overarching code of conduct that applies to all sites. In addition, detailed site-specific guides will inform visitors about the special features of each site, improving awareness and adding to their enjoyment.

Where are the Ramsar sites in the Channel Islands?

Alderney - West Coast and the Burhou Islands	Jersey - Les Pierres de Lecq
Guernsey - Herm, Jethou and The Humps	Jersey - Les Écréhous & Les Dirouilles
Guernsey - Lihou Island and l'Erée Headland	Jersey - South East Coast
Sark - Gouliot Caves and Headland	Jersey - Les Minquiers

How to visit the Ramsar sites

While several of the main island sites can be accessed via public transport, others can only be reached by boat, and visitors will need to either book a place on an organised trip, charter a boat or have their own vessel to reach the sites. Several boat operators are signed up to a code of conduct for commercial operators that supports the Ramsar principles and conservation objectives for each site. The ‘Commercial Code’ has also been agreed by many companies offering excursions into the main island sites by foot, kayak or other means. All of these companies are listed on the recommended operators’ page of the Channel Islands Ramsar website and can be searched for by location, destination or activity type.

It should be noted that some sites may at times be inaccessible, and can be subject to strong currents and complex tides. It is hoped that the information provided here, in addition to other important local information sources such as tide tables, can be used to ensure both wise, and safe, use of these sites.

ON THE COAST

Wildlife. All wildlife and their habitats are sensitive to disturbance and need to be treated with respect and understanding. A wide variety of seabirds rely on the coastlines of the Channel Islands to feed, rest and nest, and an array of marine life is exposed at low tide. It is therefore recommended that, before visiting a site, visitors gain an understanding of the wildlife they may encounter, be aware of ways in which to avoid disturbance, and understand any legal restrictions that may apply. Disturbance can range significantly across different species, sites, activities, seasons etc. **For detailed advice see the Species Specific Codes of Conduct section.**

Rockpools. Do not trample through rockpools, and if you turn over rocks, return them to their original position to preserve the environment beneath. Studies show it can take 5 to 10 years for the species hosted on the rock to recover if left upturned. Try to refrain from handling the marine life you find – it can be sensitive to rough handling. If you do, handle them with care and put them back where you found them.

Coastal paths. Stay on coastal paths and nature trails where possible, taking care not to needlessly damage, collect, or move plants, animals, or stones. Deviating from cliff paths can cause structural damage to the cliffs, as well as possible disturbance to wildlife. Remember that some cliff paths may cross private property.

Vehicles. Each island has its own rules and regulations relating to driving and parking vehicles on the beach, and riding horses and bikes (including push bikes, electric bikes, and motorbikes). Please refer either to the site-specific codes, or contact local authorities for details. For the purposes of this code amphibious vehicles, such as “SeaLegs” vessels, are also to be considered as ‘vehicles’ in relation to driving and parking on beaches.

Dogs and horses. Each island has its own regulations as to when and where dogs and horses can be exercised. Owners should always prevent their animal from chasing wildlife as this can cause significant disturbance and is likely to be a breach of the law. Please pick up after your dog and dispose of the waste in a public bin, or take it home with you. Please don't leave dog mess in a plastic bag at the side of the path or hanging on trees or fences; this is a littering offence.

Litter & beach cleans. Bring bags for dog mess, a portable ash tray for cigarette butts, and take all litter home. Beach cleans and litter picking are encouraged around the shorelines of the Channel Islands. However, care should be taken not to inadvertently disturb wildlife such as ground and shore nesting birds.

Barbecues. Ensure you check whether barbecues are permitted in the area that you are visiting as in some areas, such as Guernsey's coastal grasslands, they are not permitted. If they are allowed, ensure you take appropriate equipment and always ensure you leave the site as you found it.

Photography. *‘Take only photographs, leave only footprints’.* Photograph things you want to later identify, avoiding disturbance through use of a telephoto lens to avoid getting too close to your subject, and by not using flash photography. Photograph wild flowers rather than picking them.

Drones. For the prevention of disturbance to wildlife, drone users should be particularly cautious when operating in coastal areas as birds and hauled out seals may be easily disturbed by a drone flying nearby. Drones should be landed at the first sign of disturbance. Some sites, for examples Les Ecrehous and Les Minquiers, have specific exclusion dates and areas that visitors should be aware of, principally a ban during the nesting season (April to August). Please see the site-specific codes for details. Aviation

legislation and local Drone Codes of Conduct must be adhered to at all times, particularly in relation to proximity to privately owned property.

Safety & Respect. Respect the peace and quiet of the natural habitats and avoid disturbing residents and other visitors. Follow a common sense approach, observing official area-specific signage and act with caution. The Channel Islands have a large rise and fall of tide, meaning the sea level can rise very quickly. Ensure you are aware of the time of high and low water to avoid becoming stranded.

ON THE SEA

Wildlife. All wildlife and their habitats are sensitive to disturbance and need to be treated with respect and understanding. A wide variety of marine mammals, fish, and seabirds rely on the coastlines of the Channel Islands to feed, rest, and nest. It is therefore recommended that, before visiting a site, visitors gain an understanding of the wildlife they may encounter, be aware of ways in which to avoid disturbance, and understand any legal restrictions that may apply. Disturbance can range significantly across different species, sites, activities, seasons etc. **For detailed advice see the Species Specific Codes of Conduct section.**

Boating. There are a number of considerations for boat users within Channel Island waters, from anchoring away from sensitive areas such as seagrass beds, to maintaining a good look out both for other people and the wildlife with which we share these waters. In-depth boating guidelines and advice can be found within materials such as Cruising Guides and tide table booklets.

Fishing - Regulations. When fishing within the Channel Islands please adhere to local fishing regulations. These cover matters such as closed seasons, bag limits, minimum landing sizes, and gear restrictions. Catch for personal consumption, not for sale or financial gain. Details can be found on local government websites, and within materials such as Cruising Guides and tide table booklets.

Fishing – Best Practice. Return all catch you do not intend to use alive to the sea to help conserve stocks. Place discarded tackle and other rubbish in bins or take it home for disposal. For some species circle hooks can reduce the incidence of deep hooking, so consider using them as a conservation measure. Advise local authorities of any activity that appears to contravene the regulations.

Respect. Respect the rights of others to also enjoy the Channel Islands' marine and coastal environment. Avoid conflict with other marine and coastal users by adhering to the relevant Fisheries and Harbours' regulations and relevant codes of conduct.

Waste. Any litter you take out to sea with you should be brought back to shore and disposed of appropriately. It is an offence to dump any waste - liquid or solid - into the sea. All waste should be retained and disposed of in the appropriate facilities on shore.

Guided Tours. When exploring the marine environment, it is often advisable to go with an accredited and experienced guide who knows the local area well. A list of WiSe (Wildlife Safe) accredited guides and companies from across the Channel Islands can be found on the Tour Operators page and the Channel Island Ramsar website (www.ci-ramsar.com).

Sports. Ensure you follow safety codes of conduct for your specific sport. Get in touch with local clubs, who may have useful locally based codes for you to follow – for example the Jersey Canoe Club, the Jersey Rock Climbing Club, the Jersey Kite Surfing Club, Alderney Sailing Club or their equivalents in the other Channel Islands.

IN THE SEA

Wildlife. All wildlife and their habitats are sensitive to disturbance and need to be treated with respect and understanding. It is therefore recommended that, before visiting a site, visitors gain an understanding of the wildlife they may encounter, be aware of ways in which to avoid disturbance, and understand any other legal restrictions that may apply. Disturbance can range significantly across different species, sites, activities, seasons etc. **For detailed advice see the Species Specific Codes of Conduct section.**

Swimming and diving around the Channel Islands with its abundant marine life can be a very rewarding experience both offshore and in the more sheltered bays. The privilege afforded to snorkelers and divers of exploring otherwise inaccessible places comes with a particular responsibility to avoid disturbance.

Swimming. Swimmers should remain aware of and enjoy the marine life around them, and follow the parts of this Code where possible and appropriate. It is not advisable to swim with large marine animals. However, if you find yourself in the water near one, stay at least 4 metres away, be wary of the tail and refrain from touching or feeding them.

Diving. If diving, ensure you can control your movements and buoyancy and that your gauges, octopus regulators, torches and other equipment are secure. This will help to avoid damaging wildlife and plants attached to the seabed or smothering them in clouds of sand or mud. Take care not to cause damage with your fins. The Ramsar sites in the Channel Islands are home to species such as cold-water corals, which are particularly vulnerable to physical damage.

Wait until you have become a competent diver with precise control of your movements and buoyancy before taking underwater pictures. A flash is usually required, so avoid taking multiple pictures of the same animal. If using a torch, be careful not to dazzle and disturb wildlife. Use the edge of a beam rather than shining it directly at any wildlife.

ALDERNEY - WEST COAST AND THE BURHOU ISLANDS

Area: 15,629 hectares

Designation Date: 24.08.2005

Location: 49°43'N 02°15'W

Why was this area designated as a Ramsar site?

The most northerly of the Channel Island Ramsar sites comprises the western coast of Alderney and nearby shallow waters and islets. This strongly tidal, high-energy area includes a diverse array of marine ecosystems, from sandy beaches with pebble and shingle banks, to rocky marine shores with intertidal pools, and coastal cliffs.

The rocky islands are an important breeding sites for birds. A large nesting population of northern gannets are established on the Garden Rocks and Ortac with about with about 8,737 pairs. They also provide an ideal habitat for grey seals to haul out, such as at the seal colony to the north of Burhou Island, and for fish and shellfish species such as lobsters, bass and plaice. In addition to the wild animals the site hosts about 100 species of seaweeds, which play a very important role in supporting all the marine wildlife.

There is a visitor center which provides both information and educational materials for children and the general public. Common visitor activities are birdwatching, walking and rockpooling over the summer months.

Code of Conduct:

1. **Puffins.** Avoid walking in areas marked out as puffin breeding sites. If visiting Burhou by private boat, avoid disturbing the rafting puffins (sitting on the water) by approaching slowly and keeping a good distance away from them. Take binoculars if you would like a closer view. A 'Puffin Friendly Zone' off the south-east coast of Burhou is in place between March and August. Marine users are requested not to enter this zone, to reduce their speed to below 10 knots and minimise noise when nearby. Please do not force the puffins to fly.
2. **Stones.** Do not remove any pebbles from the beaches or stones from the walls of Burhou.
3. **Research.** Do not remove any marker pegs or wooden stakes from the ground as these are part of ongoing research. Please don not interfere with any other research equipment such as cameras and traps; these will often be marked.
4. **Litter.** Please take all litter home with you. It is illegal to litter.
5. **Fire.** Fires, barbecues and fireworks are not permitted at this site without the prior approval of the Harbour Office.
6. **Staying on Burhou.** Burhou is closed to visitors between 15th March and 1st August in order to protect breeding birds. If you wish to stay on Burhou during the open season you can book the hut for a small charge at the Harbour Office. Please leave the huts clean, tidy and locked on your departure. Avoid walking in sensitive areas as outlined by the map within the hut.

7. **Rockpools.** Do not trample through rockpools, and if you turn over rocks, return them to their original position to preserve the environment beneath. Studies show it can take 5 to 10 years for the species hosted on the rock to recover if left upturned. Try to refrain from handling the marine life you find – it can be sensitive to rough handling. If you do, handle them with care and put them back where you found them.
8. **Wildlife.** Leave animals and plants as you find them – take photos, use your binoculars or take some paper and a pencil to draw them instead. If you do touch any wildlife take care when touching those with soft bodies – they are very delicate. It is an offence to disturb breeding birds or to handle birds of any type unless licenced – please refer to government regulations.
9. **Nesting Birds.** Please be aware of beach nesting birds as these are often difficult to see and subject to trampling or disturbance by dogs. Signs are in place during the breeding season to remind visitors; please be cautious when you see these.
10. **Drones.** Drone use is not permitted over any islets immediately North West of Burhou to avoid disturbance to the seal population. In other sites, prior permission must be sought from the Alderney Harbour Master, with consideration of the Alderney Airport 'Drone Code' prior to flying

GUERNSEY - HERM, JETHOU AND THE HUMPS

Area: 1,802.9 hectares

Designation Date: 19.10.2015

Location: 49°29'N 02°27'W

Why was this area designated as a Ramsar site?

This site consists of two small islands (Herm and Jethou), nine rocky islets (including Grande Fauconnière, Crevichon and Brehon Tower), six sandbanks (The Humps) and surrounding shallow tidal waters. The site is of economic and cultural importance to the population of Guernsey, and there are significant archaeological and historical features.

The location of Guernsey to the west of the site creates and supports a diverse range of habitats, including seagrass (*Zostera spp.*), maerl beds, shallow reef systems and seven sunken shipwreck reefs, which provide spawning grounds for fish such as sea bass and black sea bream. The meeting of cold and warm water currents also supports an array of species from rich plankton communities to marine mammals such as bottlenose dolphins and Atlantic grey seals.

The site has an exceptionally large tidal range of up to ten metres, creating important intertidal habitats for juvenile fish and shellfish, whilst the surrounding water supports seabirds, basking sharks, sun fish, Atlantic grey seal and four species of marine mammals. The coastlines provide breeding sites for nine species of seabird and the Atlantic grey seal.

Code of Conduct:

1. **Boats.** A speed limit of 6 knots must be adhered to within the bays and nearshore areas. Additional care should be taken in Puffin Bay in Herm. Buoys are in place here in order to highlight the likely presence of rafting puffins.
2. **Birds.** Herm is a particularly important site for bird life, and is home to almost 100 different species, including puffins. Yellow marker buoys are in place to the south east of Herm to signify areas where puffins raft (sit on the water). Puffins arrive in spring – their number are declining so care must be taken not to disturb them by approaching slowly if at all necessary and keeping a good distance away from them. Take binoculars if you would like a closer view. In winter Brent geese can be found overwintering from Siberia. Many other species can be found here year-round, such as curlews, oystercatchers, and cormorants. **For detailed advice see the Species Specific Codes of Conduct section.**
3. **Access to The Humps.** Boat owners, including kayaks and other water craft should not land on the Humps between 1st January and 31st July inclusive in order to protect the important breeding seabird colonies.
4. **Brehon Tower.** Boat owners are asked not to land at Brehon Tower at any time of year. Brehon Tower is also home to breeding seabird colonies and the interior of the Tower is not structurally sound, therefore the public and asked to stay away for safety reasons.
5. **Getting around.** The island is connected through a network of footpaths and dirt tracks. Care should be taken to stay on these paths where possible, taking care not to needlessly damage,

collect, or move plants, animals, or stones. Deviating from paths may cause structural damage, as well as possible disturbance to wildlife.

6. **Drones.** Care must be taken when flying drones within this Ramsar site to prevent disturbance to wildlife. This is especially important during bird breeding season or when seals are hauled out or pupping.

GUERNSEY - LIHOU ISLAND AND L'ERÉE HEADLAND

Area: 427 hectares

Designation Date: 01.03.2006

Location: 49°28'N 02°40'W

Why was this area designated as a Ramsar site?

This site comprises of several coastal areas on the west coast of the island of Guernsey, including the shingle bank Les Anguillieres and the western end of L'Erée Headland, as well as the small northwestern Lihou Island and surrounding coastal areas.

Within this relatively small area there is an amazing variety of interesting habitat types including rocky and sandy shoreline, coastal grassland, saltmarsh, reedbed and saltwater lagoon, together with seagrass (*Zostera spp.*) beds, all supporting a rich diversity of wildlife such as 214 different species of seaweed on the tiny shore around Lihou Island.

The area also has a rich cultural heritage, with many important archaeological and historical remains, as well as popular areas for rockpooling and bird watching, which is supported by three bird hides at the wetlands inshore of L'Erée Headland. This site is also designated as a Site of Special Significance (SSS).

Code of Conduct:

1. **Birds.** The bird nesting sites on Lissroy and Lihoumel are breeding areas for species such as Gulls, Cormorants and Oystercatchers. The public are asked to avoid these sites, which are clearly marked with signs and roped off areas. The public are also asked to avoid walking on l'Erée shingle bank during bird breeding season, as this is an important site for breeding oystercatchers. **For detailed advice see the Species Specific Codes of Conduct section.**
2. **Dogs.** Dogs are not allowed on Lihou Island or the causeway in order to protect the birds there. They are allowed on L'Erée beach only between 30 September and 1 May. Dog owners should always prevent their dog from chasing or disturbing wildlife, especially birds. Birds are particularly vulnerable during the breeding season, namely February to July, and when overwintering on the beaches. Please pick up after your dog and dispose of the waste in a public bin, or take it home with you. Please don't leave dog mess in a plastic bag at the side of the path or hanging on trees or fences; this is a littering offence
3. **Safety.** The causeway opening times and important information must be consulted before crossing the causeway.
4. **Drones.** Care must be taken when flying drones within this Ramsar site to prevent disturbance to wildlife. This is especially important during bird breeding season or when seals are hauled out or pupping.

SITE SPECIFIC CODES OF CONDUCT

JERSEY -. LES PIERRES DE LECQ

Area: 512 hectares

Designation Date: 02.02.2005

Location: 49°18'N 02°12'W

Why was this area designated as a Ramsar site?

Lying off the northwest coast of Jersey, only four heads are exposed at high tide, whilst at low tide an extensive reef is uncovered. Due to the wide range of rock types and wave exposure the site has a diverse range of habitats, communities, and species, whilst the overlap between the south-of-range and north-of-range species promotes increased species richness.

The water circulation and physical features of the site provide favorable conditions for settlement of species in their planktonic life stages, and the large number of intertidal rocky platforms and diverse range of seaweeds are important to many invertebrate and vertebrate animals, providing shelter, protection and food, as well as an important nursery zone for fish communities.

Code of Conduct:

This site is largely inaccessible to the general public. If you are in the surrounding area onboard a private vessel, please take note of the General Codes, particularly in reference to boating, fishing, and interacting with wildlife.

SITE SPECIFIC CODES OF CONDUCT

JERSEY -. LES ÉCRÉHOUS & LES DIROUILLES

Area: 5,459 hectares

Designation Date: 02.02.2005

Location: 49°18'N 01°58'W

Why was this area designated as a Ramsar site?

This site consists of two reefs which form an extensive shoal area to the east of Jersey. At high tide only a group of rocky heads and an islet, Maître Île, are uncovered. At low tide various habitats are exposed, including reefs, boulder fields, sandy shores and shingle banks. The tidal range can exceed 12 metres.

The area is fed clean well-oxygenated water, and this factor, together with the range of habitats and the site's geographical position, supports a wide range of rich and diverse habitats and some unusual species assemblages. The plant and animal life is characterized by limit-of-range species at the northern and southern extremes of their distributions.

These areas are important nursery zones for shore and shallow water fish communities. A growing population of grey seals and one of the largest breeding populations of bottlenose dolphins in the British Isles are commonly sighted in the area. The site is also an area of great importance for the common terns and other seabirds. Under the water there are extensive maerl beds and diverse sponges.

Code of Conduct:

1. **Wildlife.** Respect should be shown at all times to the local flora and fauna. Plants provide a valuable food resource for animals and must not be destroyed or uprooted, whilst wild animals should not be fed, touched, or approached. The reefs are home to a variety of wildlife, from dolphins and seals to seabirds. Visitors should be aware of the Specific Specific Codes of Conduct relating to these species.
2. **Seabird Zones.** Throughout the year a diversity of birds nest on the reef and many migrating species land to rest. Please keep any disturbance to a minimum and stay well clear of nesting sites. Access is excluded to traditional nesting sites during the nesting season (April to August). In all other areas, please keep noise and other disturbance to a minimum.
3. **Residents' Privacy – huts and moorings.** Huts are all privately owned. Please respect the privacy of residents and their property. With the exception of one mooring marked 'States (Impôts) Visitors' Mooring', all moorings at the Écréhous are privately owned. They are laid and maintained with different size vessels in mind. Visitors should avoid using them as far as possible. If you use a mooring you should move off it quickly and courteously as soon as the owner arrives. Moorings should not be used by more than one boat at a time except with the owner's permission.
4. **Safety.** Tidal currents around Les Écréhous are very strong. Care should be taken at all times when swimming, diving, and when landing from and re-boarding your boat, and particularly when the shingle bank between Marmotière and Blianq Île is covered. Please beware of the dangers of the rising tide and ensure you do not get cut off on an isolated rock. Divers should be equipped with visual and audible markers.

5. **Speed.** Speed restrictions are set out in Jersey Harbours' General Direction No. 2. Mariners are asked to show consideration when passing other boats within the mooring area. Slow speeds are recommended at all times within the reef, where safe to do so.
6. **Fishing.** When fishing at Les Écréhous & Les Dirouilles please adhere to all Jersey fishing regulations. These cover matters such as closed seasons, bag limits, minimum landing sizes, and gear restrictions. Details can be found at www.gov.je. Harbour Regulations also apply, for example not using floating rope to set pots in the approaches (Jersey Harbours' General Direction No 8).
7. **Toilet facilities.** There are no public toilet facilities on Les Écréhous. If nature calls, please choose a discreet location below the half tide mark. If you plan to stay for a while, you should bring appropriate equipment, or follow a 'pack in pack out' approach. If you are visiting on a private vessel, holding tanks should not be emptied whilst at the reef.
8. **Litter and barbecues.** Please ensure that you take all of your litter home with you, including disposable barbecues. If a barbecue is removed whilst still hot, the area upon which it was sitting should be doused with cold water or covered with cold stones to safeguard people with bare feet.
9. **Dogs.** Owing to Jersey's rabies regulations no dogs from France may be landed on Les Écréhous. The taking of dogs from Jersey to these reefs is discouraged to avoid any possible disturbance to wildlife.
10. **Drones.** Drone use is not permitted during the nesting season (April – August), as a result of the disturbance caused to wildlife. Outside of these months Maître Île remains an exclusion zone due to the prevalence of migratory birds, but drone use is permitted across the wider area. Aviation legislation must be adhered to at all times, particularly in relation to proximity to privately owned property. Please read the Ports of Jersey 'Drone Code' prior to using a drone.

JERSEY - SOUTH EAST COAST

Area: 3,210 hectares

Designation Date: 10.11.2000

Location: 49°09'N 02°02'W

Why was this area designated as a Ramsar site?

Amongst the largest intertidal reef sites in Europe, this area comprises various habitats from reefs, boulder fields, mud, sandy and shingle shores, to shallow tidal lagoons, seagrass beds and a large number of outlying reefs.

The maximum spring tide range of 12 metres exposes 17.5 square kilometres of wave cut rock platforms, extensive areas of reef, and a complex system of gullies and provides an important winter habitat for wading birds and wildfowl.

The flora and fauna are characterized by a number of limit-of-range species at both the northern and southern margins of their distributions, and because of the enormous exchanges of water and variability of substrate, a wide diversity of fish species at varying life history stages are present.

Code of Conduct:

1. **Safety.** Be aware of your environment. The sea rises very quickly in Jersey and on the South East coast the water will often fill gullies first, before rising to higher areas – always be aware of tidal movements to avoid becoming stranded. Check the weather before your trip and let someone know where you are going. Take care when climbing on rocks and on seaweed, it is easy to misplace your step or slip over.
2. **Rockpools.** Do not trample through rock pools. Take care where you step as you may not see creatures which are attached to the rocks and hiding under seaweed or on the sand. If you turn over rocks, return them to their original position to preserve the environment beneath. Studies show it can take 5-10 years to recover if left overturned.
3. **Shells & Stones.** Collection of souvenirs such as shells or pebbles should be kept to a minimum. Removal of larger stones should not be conducted without a prior discussion with a member of the Société Jersiaise Archaeological Society.
4. **Wildlife.** Look at, but refrain from touching, marine life. It can be sensitive to rough handling, which may result in injury or death. If you do touch or pick up small animals from rock pools, handle them with great care and put them back where you found them. Whilst activities such as litter picking are encouraged, care should be taken not to disturb birds nesting on the ground.
 - a. **Birds.** Birds nest in many locations throughout this Ramsar site, for example at Icho Tower and on the large surrounding rock, and to the south and west of Le Hocq Tower. They may attack you if you approach them so avoid climbing onto the towers and surrounding rocks during nesting season (April – August).
 - b. **Seals.** Seals are sometimes seen on La Conchiere Rocks and in the surrounding area. Boat users should maintain a good watch and follow the seal watching code.

5. **Dogs.** Do not allow your dog(s) to chase birds as they can cause great disturbance. Particular care should be taken in areas where birds feed at low water. Allowing your dog to chase through large flocks of feeding or resting birds can cause them to use valuable energy by flying away, and will stop them feeding. Please also be aware of Jersey's Policing of Beaches regulations regarding dates within which dogs must be kept on leads.
6. **Litter & Other Waste.** Bring bags for dog mess, a portable ash tray for cigarette butts, and take all litter home. Bins are available at the various slipways nearby. There are also public toilet facilities along the coastline that adjoins this site; however, if nature calls whilst you are out on the shore, please choose a discreet location below the half tide mark. If you are staying out at Seymour Tower, you should bring appropriate equipment.
7. **Vehicles.** To park on any beach in Jersey you must apply online at gov.je for a beach parking permit. The permit is only valid when you are using your vehicle to transport a vessel to and from the beach. To drive on the beach, you require written permission from the Minister for Economic Development. Remember, not only is unauthorised vehicle use against the law, it is unlikely your insurance covers you for off road driving.
8. **Low water fishing.** Please adhere to all Jersey fishing regulations. These cover matters such as closed seasons, bag limits, minimum landing sizes, and gear restrictions. Current regulations can be found online at www.gov.je.
9. **Groups.** Schools and large groups planning rockpool rambles should consider using a selection of locations, not just the well utilised area around La Rocque Harbour, to reduce the cumulative impact on this area close to shore. It is also good practice to avoid the risk of more than one group arriving in the same spot to undertake a rockpool exploration. The Société Jersiaise Marine Biology Section can give advice on good areas to explore, and may even be able to offer assistance so you get a great experience.
10. **Drones.** For the prevention of disturbance to wildlife, drone users should be particularly cautious when operating in this area as it is important for local and migratory birds who may be easily disturbed by a drone flying nearby. Drones should be landed at the first sign of disturbance, both for the safety of the birds, and for the drones – some species, such as oyster catchers, are known to be particularly defensive. Aviation legislation must be adhered to at all times, particularly in relation to proximity to privately owned property. Please read the Ports of Jersey 'Drone Code' prior to using a drone.

JERSEY - LES MINQUIERS

Area: 9,575 hectares

Designation Date: 02.02.2005

Location: 48°58'N 02°07'W

Why was this area designated as a Ramsar site?

Les Minquiers is an extensive shoal area lying 34 km due south from the Channel Island of Jersey. At high tide only rocky heads are exposed, whilst at low tide various habitats are uncovered, including reefs, boulder fields, sandy shores and shingle banks. The combination of geographic location, strong tidal streams, and a strong wave energy provide ideal conditions for the support of a wide diversity of organisms and enhance biodiversity.

The areas of shallow water and the large number of intertidal channels and pools within the site provide habitats for many species of fish, algae, and sponge communities. Likewise, the rich communities of small animals living within the mud and sand flats are important for the range of shellfish and worm species. Different locations within the site support a number of species of wintering and passage waders and wildfowl with feeding and roosting locations.

Code of Conduct:

- 1. Wildlife.** Respect should be shown at all times to the local flora and fauna. Plants provide a valuable food resource for wildlife and must not be destroyed or uprooted, whilst wild animals should not be fed, touched, or approached. The reefs are home to a variety of wildlife, from dolphins and seals to seabirds. Visitors should be aware of the Species Specific Codes of Conduct relating to these species.
- 2. Seabird Zones.** Throughout the year a diversity of birds nest on the reef and many migrating species land to rest. Please keep any disturbance to a minimum and stay well clear of nesting sites. Access is excluded to traditional nesting sites during the nesting season (April to August). In all other areas, please keep noise and other disturbance to a minimum.
- 3. Residents' Privacy – huts and moorings.** Huts are all privately owned. Please respect the privacy of the residents and their property. With the exception of one buoy marked 'States', all moorings are privately owned. They are laid and maintained with different size vessels in mind. If you use a private mooring you should move off it quickly and courteously as soon as the owner arrives. Moorings should not be used by more than one boat at a time except with the owner's permission. If at anchor at Maîtresse Île, you are advised to keep an anchor watch for two hours each side of high water.
- 4. Safety.** Tidal currents are very strong around Les Minquiers. Care should be taken at all times when swimming, diving, landing and boarding – all should be avoided above half tide if possible. Please beware of the dangers of the rising tide and ensure you do not get cut off on an isolated rock. Divers should be equipped with visual and audible markers.
- 5. Speed.** Speed restrictions are set out in Jersey Harbours' General Direction No. 2. Mariners are asked to show consideration when passing other boats within the mooring area. The limit of 5 knots applies within the designated area, but at all times slow speeds are recommended within the reef.

6. **Fishing.** When fishing at Les Minquiers please adhere to all Jersey fishing regulations. These cover matters such as closed seasons, bag limits, minimum landing sizes, and gear restrictions. Details can be found at www.gov.je. Harbour Regulations also apply, for example not using floating rope to set pots in the approaches (Jersey Harbours' General Direction No 8).
7. **Toilet Facilities.** There is only one toilet facility on Les Minquiers which should preferably not be used during periods of neap tides because the odour is not carried away. If it is used, please refill the bucket available. Alternatively, choose a discreet location below the half tide mark. If you plan to stay for a while, you should bring appropriate equipment, or follow a 'pack in pack out' approach. If you are visiting on a private vessel, holding tanks should not be emptied whilst at the reef.
8. **Litter and Barbecues.** No litter, including disposable barbecues, should be left behind. If a barbecue is removed whilst still hot, the area should be doused with cold water or covered with cold stones to safeguard people with bare feet.
9. **Dogs.** Owing to Jersey's rabies regulations no dogs from France may be landed on Les Minquiers. The taking of dogs from Jersey to the reef is discouraged to avoid any possible disturbance to wildlife. It should be noted that Jersey's Policing of Beaches regulations, which cover matters such as keeping dogs on leads, are applicable also to the offshore reefs.
10. **Drones.** Drone use is not permitted during the nesting season (April – August), as a result of the disturbance caused to wildlife. Outside of these months drone use is permitted; however, attention should be paid to migratory birds who may be using the area during the winter. Aviation legislation must be adhered to at all times, particularly in relation to proximity to privately owned property. Please read the Ports of Jersey 'Drone Code' prior to using a drone.

SARK - GOULIOT CAVES AND HEADLAND

Area: 4 hectares

Designation Date: 09.04.2007

Location: 49°26'N 02°23'W

Why was this area designated as a Ramsar site?

This site consists of the Gouliot Headland on the west coast of Sark, and La Moie de Gouliot, a large stack connected to the headland at low water. It also includes Gouliot Caves, which cross the Headland three times from north to south, with other openings to the west.

The cliffs and headland support many rare species of plants, insects and lichens, and are a breeding site for sea birds including gulls, oystercatchers and fulmars. The caves below are notable for the remarkable variety of invertebrate life, especially sponges, sea-anemones and sea squirts that can be found on their walls, which are accessible by foot at low spring tide or by diving.

This wealth of species is a consequence of the caves having several entrances with inter-connecting passageways, leading to strong currents developing through the caves at high water and bringing plenty of food to the mainly filter-feeding organisms on the cave walls.

Before the invention of the aqualung this was one of the few places where sub-marine life could be examined *in situ* and so it played an important part in the development of marine zoology. This is a result of the tide being able to flow through the Gouliot caves for around eight hours out of every twelve hour tidal cycle.

Code of Conduct:

1. **Access to the caves.** The route down to the caves requires quite a clamber over rocks which may be loose and/or slippery, and a good knowledge of the tides is essential. The path goes close to the cliff edge, and it is recommended that someone with a good understanding of the tides goes with you. The tide needs to be very low in order to access the caves (under 1 metre; the lowest spring tides).
2. **Livestock.** The headland is grazed by livestock so visitors should be aware to close gates when walking in the area. For this reason, dogs must be kept on a lead.
3. **Drones.** Drones are not permitted anywhere in Sark. This applies all year round.
4. **Flora.** Wildflowers flourish on the Gouliot Headland throughout the year, from sand crocuses as early as March, followed by primroses and bluebells by May, to bright yellow gorse as summer approaches. Respect should be shown throughout the year to the local flora.
5. **Seabirds.** All resident gull species – herring, lesser, and greater back-backed gulls – breed on the Gouliot Headland. It is also a heavily utilised site for other seabirds such as oystercatchers, pipits, and fulmars. Even predatory species such as kestrels, buzzards, and peregrine falcons can be seen in the area. Care should be taken not to disturb the natural activities of these birds, with particular care to be taken during nesting season (April – August).

6. **Marine Life.** The caves are host to a great variety of marine life, from anemones, to sea squirts and sponges. Due to the nature of the caves much of this wildlife would normally only be found below the water, therefore extreme care must be taken not to damage the sensitive marine life found on the walls of the cave.
7. **Litter.** No litter should be left behind.
8. **Diving.** The caves are best dived on neap tides when there is slack water 2.5 hour after high. Enter on the north side through the Sponge Cave and arrange to have your boat meet you in Havre Gosselin where you will be pushed out as the tide starts to run. A torch is required.

GENERAL WILDLIFE GUIDANCE

Observing. If you are lucky enough to spot wildlife, try not to stay too long, particularly if your observation is attracting other watchers. Disturbance is likely to increase as the number of people watching increases. Aim to spend no more than 15 minutes in their presence, and if the area starts to become over crowded with other users you should move away. Avoid especially sensitive areas which are known for nesting, breeding, resting and feeding. The site-specific codes contain details of special areas within each of the Ramsar sites.

Distance. The distance at which many marine mammals and seabirds show signs of disturbance varies tremendously, depending on the location, time of day, whether they are feeding, resting, the type of approach, whether the animals are used to being watched and whether they have young with them. Be responsive to their behaviour and be prepared modify your route and plans. If in doubt- move away. As a general guide, keep a distance of 100 metres from a marine animal, unless it approaches you- they can be very curious when not stressed.

Sightings. Record wildlife sightings via the 'Dolphin Watch' app hosted on Epicollect 5 (see 'Dolphins' section).

Approaching Wildlife. Whilst it is advisable not to approach any wildlife, if you choose to do so, stop and assess what the animals are doing, where they are going, and what you can do to avoid disturbing them. Then follow these basic guidelines:

- Reduce speed to the minimum consistent with safety in order to approach slowly and cautiously;
- Make sure that your movements are steady and predictable;
- Do not approach from a direct angle (i.e. from directly in front or directly behind). This can be perceived as a threat;
- Make sure that animals are not surrounded or boxed in within enclosed bays.

Wildlife Approaching You. If any wildlife decides to approach you, for example to bow ride, maintain a steady speed and course where possible. Try not to present propellers to approaching animals, let them decide how close they want you to be, and move away if any wildlife appears to become distressed. Do not chase wildlife - if they move away, let them.

Interacting with Wildlife. For your safety and the health of the wildlife, never attempt to swim, touch or feed wild animals. They can cause personal injury and there is the potential for contracting diseases and passing on human diseases to them. If you are rock pooling, try to avoid touching or picking up small animals. If you do, handle them with care and put them back where you found them.

Photography. Photographing wildlife can be a very rewarding experience. To minimise disturbance, try to keep your distance by using a telephoto lens and avoid using flash photography. Binoculars are also useful to view wildlife in preference to a close approach.

Reporting Disturbance. If you see anyone recklessly disturbing or harassing wildlife please report it to the relevant authorities. Photographic evidence may be of assistance, where appropriate. Contact details can be found within this site.

Rescues. Do not attempt to rescue wildlife that appears abandoned or injured. If you see a stranded or deceased animal, please note the location, species type (eg seal, dolphin), approximate size, and call the relevant authority (below). To avoid the transmission of disease we advise you not to touch the animal and keep dogs on leads and away from the area.

<p>Alderney: Wildlife Trust Office – 01481 822935 Marine Ecologist Dr Broadhurst-Allen – 07781 453976 Alderney Animal Welfare Centre - 01481 822610</p>	<p>Jersey: Jersey Animal Shelter - 01534 724331 / 07797 720331 (24 hour emergency number)</p>
<p>Guernsey: GSPCA - 01481 257261</p>	<p>Sark: The Constable of Sark - 07781 101908</p>

SEABIRDS

The Channel Islands' coastlines and offshore reefs and islets have nationally and internationally important populations of seabirds. Birds may feel threatened by human presence, causing them to display behaviours that may result in stress and physical injury. When observing wild birds ensure that you do not alter their natural behaviour.

This can be achieved by:

- Keeping noise to a minimum
- Approaching birds no closer than 100 metres
- Observing birds' behaviour from a distance using binoculars and/or telephoto lenses.

Particular care should be taken in areas where they feed, rest, and nest.

FEEDING. If birds are startled whilst feeding, they may take flight and/or regurgitate food meant for their young.

RESTING. Birds will often congregate both on land and on the water simply to rest. On the water, alter your route to avoid causing disturbance to rafting birds (birds sitting on the water). Be sensitive to wind direction and engine fumes if your vessel is under motor. On the land, ensure a safe distance of more than 100m is maintained whenever possible to ensure the birds do not fly away. The following behaviours indicate preparedness to fly. If you observe any of these behaviours move away and allow the birds to settle:

- Head craning and turning
- Head bobbing
- Wing flapping in situ.

NESTING. Areas where birds nest include shingle banks, enclosed bays, gullies and cliffs. April to August is a particularly sensitive time as birds come ashore to nest, so it is recommended that visitors are especially aware of disturbance during these times. Never walk through a nesting site as this may have a devastating effect on the birds and may cause irreversible damage to nests or nesting birds. For example, some species such as guillemots and razorbills incubate eggs on their feet; if they fly off ledges in a panic, their eggs can be dislodged and destroyed. Some other signs of disturbance are most often displayed within breeding areas. If you observe any of these signs move away immediately:

- Swooping and dive-bombing observers
- Making loud calling noises
- Appearing aggressive and agitated.

You should also be aware of any site-specific restrictions and/or regulations within the area you are visiting.

SEALS

We are very fortunate to share our waters with Atlantic grey seals. They are protected by law and so, given their sensitivity to disturbance, care should be taken when observing them so as not to cause unnecessary harm.

FEEDING. Seals will often be found feeding in shallow waters, particularly around offshore reefs. When in shallow water be aware of submerged seals. If you do come across a seal in the water, ensure it can move away from you easily – never box them into a gully or pool.

RESTING. Seals will regularly haul out onto rocks to rest and digest. If they feel threatened, they can panic dive into the sea, often causing serious physical damage. Broken claws can become infected, and expectant mothers can risk harming their unborn pups. To avoid disturbing them during this time the following is advised:

- Observe seals from a distance of 100 metres using binoculars.
- Avoid staring or pointing at seals, as they find this behaviour intimidating.
- Seals should be approached slowly and from a sideways angle to reduce stress. By approaching from directly in front you may be perceived as a predator.
- Care should be taken when using non-motorised vessels. Vessels with low or no engine noise are less likely to be heard, which may result in seals being startled or even in collision.

BREEDING. Seals haul out to have their pups on just a few locations around the Channel Islands, usually from August to the end of November. Mothers will be additionally sensitive to disturbance during this time, so extra care is advised. Specifically;

- Never place yourself between a mother and pup, particularly young pups left on beaches. Adult females generally rest underwater 10-30 metres from the shore.
- Landing or mooring close to young pups may distress nearby parents and prevent them feeding or approaching their young.

If a seal shows signs of distress immediately move away slowly. The first signs are called the 'tripwire moment', which include:

- Head erect and whiskers bristling
- Nervous movement
- Shuffling or milling if on rock/beach.

Signs of major disturbance include:

- Rapid swimming to and fro
- Sudden panic diving if in the sea
- Stampede into the sea if disturbed whilst on land

You should also be aware of any site-specific restriction and/or regulations within the area you are visiting.

DOLPHINS

This code refers primarily to dolphins, as these are the most common cetacean found within Channel Island waters; however, it should be noted that the following points are applicable to any cetaceans you may encounter.

Dolphins, porpoises, whales and other cetaceans share these waters with you. They are sensitive to disturbance and are protected by law. Our actions can disturb their daily activities and even cause injury. The following general advice can minimise stress to cetaceans when encountered at sea. The advice can also benefit your encounters.

- On sighting dolphins, vessels should gradually slow down to a speed no greater than 5 knots, keeping a distance of 100 metres.
- If they choose to approach you, for example to bow-ride, maintain your intended course, avoiding any unpredictable or erratic movements.
- Move away slowly if you notice signs of disturbance, such as:
 - o Hasty dives
 - o Attempts to leave the area or move away from the vessel
 - o Erratic changes in speed and direction
 - o Lengthy periods underwater
 - o Aggressive behaviours, such as tail slaps and trumpet blows
- Avoid driving between groups of dolphins, and specifically between a mother and her calf.
- Always allow cetaceans an escape route, and avoid boxing them into a smaller area.
- If safe, switch off all sonar equipment when near dolphins as this can affect their communication and navigation.
- If you discover a solitary dolphin, try to avoid interacting with it by maintaining a steady speed and direction. If you are followed into a harbour or marina by a dolphin contact the Harbour authorities (see Contacts list).
- For your health and safety and for that of the cetaceans do not seek to swim with, touch or feed them.

You should also be aware of any site-specific restriction and/or regulations within the area you are visiting.

'Dolphin Watch' App:

Jersey's Environment Department, in conjunction with the Société Jersiaise & Société Guernsaise Marine Biology Sections, has several different projects which aim to document and better understand the nature of marine mammals in the Channel Islands. All marine mammal sightings are recorded through 'Dolphin Watch' which is a smartphone app, hosted on Epicollect5. The app is open to the public and is used in the field while the encounter is happening. Accordingly, it is aimed primarily at boat owners. All records submitted are then publicly accessible via the Epicollect5 and Société Jersiaise websites.

Since it's launch in April 2017, hundreds of dolphin sightings have been made via the app each year. This dataset is already providing a much greater understanding on the abundance and distribution of our dolphin, porpoise and seal species. Below is a link to a map showing the location of all marine mammal sightings using Epicollect app.

Available online at: <http://www.jerseycoast.co.uk/dolphins.html>

Channel Island Ramsar/WiSe Accredited Operators

WiSe accredited tour operators have undergone appropriate training and are recommended by the Channel Islands’ Ramsar Authorities. The WiSe (Wildlife Safe) scheme offers nationally recognised training and accreditation to charter operators wishing to become involved in sustainable marine ecotourism. The course sets out the best code of practise when interacting with wildlife including specific information about wildlife in the local area, which can be used to educate customers. Using local operators familiar with the area for your wildlife expeditions should increase the value of your experience, minimise disturbance and ensure that no offences are committed. A full list of locally accredited businesses can be found below.

<p>Jersey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absolute Adventures - Bouley Bay Dive Centre - Island RIB Voyages - Jersey Kayak Adventures - Jersey Little Ships - Jersey Marine Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jersey Seafaris - Jersey Walk Adventures - Le Mourier Swim Sea Save - Société Jersiaise Marine Biology Section - Wetwheels
<p>Guernsey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - States of Guernsey 	
<p>Alderney:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alderney Wildlife Trust 	
<p>Sark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adventure Sark 	

POINTS OF CONTACT

ALDERNEY

Alderney Wildlife Trust (site managers)	+44 (0) 1481 822935	admin@alderneywildlife.org
Ramsar Officer	+44 (0) 7781 423635	ramsar@alderneywildlife.org
Alderney Bird Observatory Warden	+44 (0) 7781 166290	ABOWarden@alderneywildlife.org
Living Seas Coordinator	+44 (0) 7781 453976	marine@alderneywildlife.org
States of Alderney Natural Environment	+44 (0) 1481 822811	info@alderney.gov.gg
Alderney Harbour Office	+44 (0) 1481 820070	harbour@alderney.gov.gg

GUERNSEY

Société Guernesiale	+44 (0) 1481 725093	societe@cwgsy.net
Société Guernesiale (Marine Biology)	+44 (0) 7839 250558	marinebiology@societe.org.gg
RSPB Guernsey		info@rspbguernsey.co.uk
States of Guernsey (Agriculture, Countryside and Land Management Services)	+44 (0) 1481 234567	aclms@gov.gg
States of Guernsey (Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation)	+44 (0) 1481 711161	envhealth@gov.gg

JERSEY

Jersey's Ramsar Management Authority	+44 (0) 1534 758314	gareth.jeffreys@societe-jersiaise.org
The National Trust for Jersey	+44 (0) 1534 483193	enquiries@nationaltrust.je
Société Jersiaise Marine Biology Section	+44 (0) 1534 758314	gareth.jeffreys@societe-jersiaise.org
States of Jersey (Environment)	+44 (0) 1534 441600	environmentenquiries@gov.je
Ports of Jersey	+44 (0) 1534 446000	ask@ports.je
Jersey Marine Conservation	+44 (0) 1534 859839	kevin@jerseymarineconservation.org.je

SARK

Sark Tourism Office	+44 (0) 1481 832345	office@sark.co.uk
The Constable of Sark	+44 (0) 7781 101908	

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Species Names

Please note, the species listed below are those mentioned by common name within this document. It is not a complete list of all the species found in the Channel Islands Ramsar Sites.

Common Name	Latin / Scientific Name
Atlantic grey seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>
Basking shark	<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>
Black sea bream	<i>Spondyliosoma cantharus</i>
Bottlenose dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>
Brent geese	<i>Branta bernicla</i>
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Fulmars	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>
Greater black-backed gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Grey seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>
Herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Lesser black-backed gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
Northern gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
Peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>
Seagrass	<i>Zostera species</i>
Sun fish	<i>Mola mola</i>