JERSEY RAMSAR ADVISORY GROUP

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

SUMMARY

This is the first report of the newly constituted Jersey Ramsar Advisory Group (JRAG). The purpose of this report (the first of what will be annual reports) is to inform the public of the work undertaken by JRAG during 2025.

Notable achievements included appointing an administrator, holding regular JRAG Executive Committee meetings and two full JRAG membership meetings, and supporting the Jersey Ramsar Management Authority (JRMA) with the publication of Management Plans for Jersey's four Ramsar sites and with the publication of the JRMA's first annual scientific report. The outcomes have been improved working relationships with Government of Jersey (GoJ) departments, valuable collaborations in the collection of scientific data to help manage Ramsar sites, and raised awareness of Ramsar sites in the Island.

BACKGROUND

Jersey's obligations under the Ramsar Convention

Under the Ramsar Convention, a Management Authority needs to be established by each Contracting Party to implement the process. In Jersey, the Management Authority is GoJ, represented by the Minister for the Environment, who is in turn represented by the Department for the Natural Environment (DNE). DNE has established a specific group internally to act as the Jersey Ramsar Management Authority (JRMA).

GoJ has an obligation under the Convention to prepare a Management Plan for each of the Ramsar sites, with the support of stakeholders. The Management Plans primarily identify the five-year objectives for the sites and set out the management measures required.

The JRMA worked closely with JRAG and Ports of Jersey on the preparation of the Management Plans, published in January 2025. Now the JRMA, with JRAG's support, is working to fulfil the strategic aims and management objectives of the plans. For example, JRAG and JRMA are working together to help monitor the state of Ramsar sites, combining the efforts of DNE with those of voluntary organisations focused on the marine environment.

The role of JRAG

The role of JRAG is to support JRMA, to hold it accountable against its obligations under the Ramsar Convention and to advise on, and make recommendations about, the Management Plans. In essence, its purpose is to act as a 'critical friend', liaising with GoJ through JRMA.

JRAG in its current form evolved from a panel of stakeholders and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (including Société Jersiaise, National Trust for Jersey, Ports of Jersey, Jersey Marine Conservation, Maîtresse Île and Écréhous Residents Associations and Jersey National Park) which was set up at the invitation of the Director of the Environment, on behalf of GoJ.

This panel was initially led by the Chairman of the Société Jersiaise Marine Biology section, and subsequently by representatives from Marine Resources (DNE) and the Écréhous Residents Association. Under their guidance, the panel carried out a detailed review of the existing status and legal framework of Jersey's Ramsar sites. From this extensive work, with

the support of Marine Resources and Ports of Jersey, the Management Plans were produced.

An updated Terms of Reference for JRAG was finalised in 2024, ensuring its independence from GoJ. Through a restructured membership and Executive Committee, a balanced representation of stakeholders was ensured, safeguarding a constructive approach that reflects the Ramsar objectives.

An Executive Committee, drawn from the wider JRAG membership, meets regularly to discuss policy issues and liaise with representatives of JRMA. The full JRAG membership meets twice yearly to receive updates from JRMA and other relevant bodies, discuss relevant matters and to ratify Executive Committee proposals.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR

JRAG worked this year to support the work of JRMA and raise awareness of Jersey's Ramsar sites and the efforts by local organisations, including GoJ, in protecting and managing human use of the Island's Ramsar sites. Below is a summary of our key activities.

Appointment of JRAG Administrator

Funding has been provided by DNE to allow the engagement of an administrator (albeit currently only for 66 hours p.a.), which has been a big assistance to the Chairman in the smooth running of the group. It would, however, be useful to obtain a bit more funding to be able to use our administrator for tasks in addition to the basic administration of meetings, such as expanding the Jersey section of the ci-ramsar.com website.

Completion, approval and publication of Management Plans

The Management Plans (the groundwork for which was carried out by JRAG members) have been finalised, approved by the Environment Minister, and were published by JRMA in January 2025. JRAG contributed to the development of an overall Framework document covering all of the local Ramsar sites, in addition to individual Management Plans for each site. Each of these documents can be found at www.ci-ramsar.com/jrag.

The Framework document sets out the overall framework under which the Management Plans sit, whilst the individual site plans summarise the risks faced by each site and what is being done to address them, focussing particularly on high-risk issues. An environmental risk matrix has been developed applying to all the Ramsar sites. Supporting all of this is an extensive monitoring programme (which is in full swing) to gather baseline data, so changes over time can be assessed. This work is mainly being carried out by GoJ, supported by various NGOs. Some of the data were already in existence but needed to be collated, whilst other data have just started being collected.

Contributions to JRMA Annual Report 2024

The JRMA has produced the first of what will be annual reports giving the findings of the monitoring for the year. This report was published on 10th December 2025 and is available at www.gov.je/Environment/SeaCoast/pages/ramsar.aspx. It details baseline data for Jersey's four Ramsar sites and will be a crucial tool for the ongoing monitoring and management of the sites.

The JRMA's report reflects a collaborative effort between DNE, which undertook the work to compile, analyse, and present the data, and external experts and partner organisations, including members of JRAG, academic institutions, and local NGOs, who provided crucial contributions and datasets. In particular, we'd like to highlight the contributions made by JRAG members Jersey Marine Conservation, Ports of Jersey, Société Jersiaise, Aspiring Jersey Island Geopark, and also Bob Tompkins (who provided data on archaeological finds

in the intertidal zone of the South East Coast and around the reefs, including standing stones, a possible portal dolmen, and other signs of habitation).

Public engagement
JRMA and JRAG continue to consider how to fulfil the Ramsar obligation of public engagement and education.

Signage is in the process of being updated by JRMA with input from JRAG, commencing with new signage for the South East Coast.

JRAG has launched a dedicated Jersey section of the Channel Islands Ramsar website (www.ci-ramsar.com). The long-term goal is to further enhance the information provided to include more detailed and engaging content in relation to each of Jersey's Ramsar sites.

Marine Mission Wetlands event: This is an annual event organised by JRAG member Jersey Marine Conservation to celebrate United Nations World Wetlands Day. The Chairman of JRAG spoke at the 2025 event and JRAG will also have a presence at the 2026 event, which is being held on 2nd February. Thanks to Radisson Blu for providing their facilities free of charge. This is always a well attended and interesting event.

JRAG biannual meetings
Two meetings for the full JRAG membership were held in 2025, in May and October. At these meetings, we were delighted to welcome the Connétables of Grouville and St Martin, as well as members from DNE and representatives of relevant user/residents groups and NGOs. Minutes of the meetings can be found at: www.ci-ramsar.com/jrag.

The meetings included discussions and presentations of great interest, including:

- Updates from JRMA, including details of their Annual Report 2024.
- A representative of Coastal Engineering provided an update on the Havre des Pas coastal flood alleviation scheme, on which more details are available at www.gov.je/Travel/CoastalDefences. The consensus was that these are sensible proposals offering long term solutions. There was also discussion about extending the South East Coast Ramsar site as a mitigation of the area being lost to the alleviation scheme, which will be explored further during 2026.
- The Water and Air team at DNE explained the findings of their water quality analysis, which show that, overall, our seas are in good shape. The team will continue monitoring around the town harbours as the Harbour Master Plan is put into action.
- A summary of the archaeological findings around the South East Coast from recent work carried out by a team from the University of Brest. The findings, which are not yet official, appear to indicate widespread settlement in the past, and the French team are planning to return in 2026 to carry out further investigations.
- Jersey National Park led a discussion about balancing dog walking and wildlife protection, and visitor management at conservation sites.
- Jersey Marine Conservation (JMC) gave a detailed summary of their seabed and grey seal survey work.

CONCLUSION

JRAG has had a constructive and interesting year. Now that the restructuring and the Management Plans are complete (for now, as they will be working documents that will be updated as required), JRAG looks forward to making further positive impact on our very precious coastal wetlands.

Andrew W. Mitchell
Chairman
January 2026