



## JERSEY RAMSAR MANAGEMENT PLAN AND SITE STRATEGY 2025-2029

# Les Écréhous and Les Dirouilles

Ramsar site reference number 1455



Photo credit: Jersey Seafaris, 2024

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## 1. Purpose of the document

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The main purpose of this document is to describe the Ramsar five-year management strategy for Les Écréhous and Les Dirouilles and define the management objectives of the Jersey Ramsar strategy.

The previous management plan was published during 2012, so this document aims to reset our vision for the site and set out our management objectives for the period 2025-2029. Setting management principles for five years allows for adaptive management, alignment with policy and funding cycles, addressing emerging threats, stakeholder engagement and the maintenance and of ecological character.

## 2. Introduction and location of the site

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Les Écréhous is located to the north-east of the Channel Island of Jersey; Jersey is a Channel Island located in the “Golfe Normano-Breton” approximately 22km west of France and 136km south of the UK (see Figure 2.1).

The site consists of two reefs which form an extensive shoal area approximately 11km long and 4 km wide. The tidal range at this site can exceed 12 metres. At high tide only a group of rocky heads and an islet, Maître Île, remain exposed. In addition to Maître Île, four of the heads are large enough to support buildings: La Marmotière, La Blanche Île, La Grande Brecque and La Petite Brecque (see Figure 2.2). At low tide various habitats are exposed, including reefs, boulder fields, sandy beaches and shingle banks. As the tide falls an array of habitats are revealed, including reefs, boulder fields, pools, sandy shores, and shingle banks. The area is fed clean, well-oxygenated water and this, together with the range of habitats, make it suitable to a great diversity marine species, many at the northern or southern limit of their range.

There is documented evidence of occupation on Les Écréhous as far back as the Palaeolithic period at which time both Les Écréhous and Les Dirouilles reefs would have been attached to mainland Europe. The first recorded settlement was in 1203 when a chapel was built with occupation of the chapel ending in 1413. The remains of other structures indicate that much of the stone from the chapel was used to build fishermen’s shelters and the remains of all these structures can still be seen today.

Les Écréhous provide multiple ecosystem services. It supports an important commercial fishery for various mixed shellfish and wet fish species, is a popular tourist and recreational location, and is used for recreational fishing, kayaking and wildlife watching. It also helps to store and regulate sediments, nutrients and carbon, and plays an important role in offering environment resilience to the wider region.

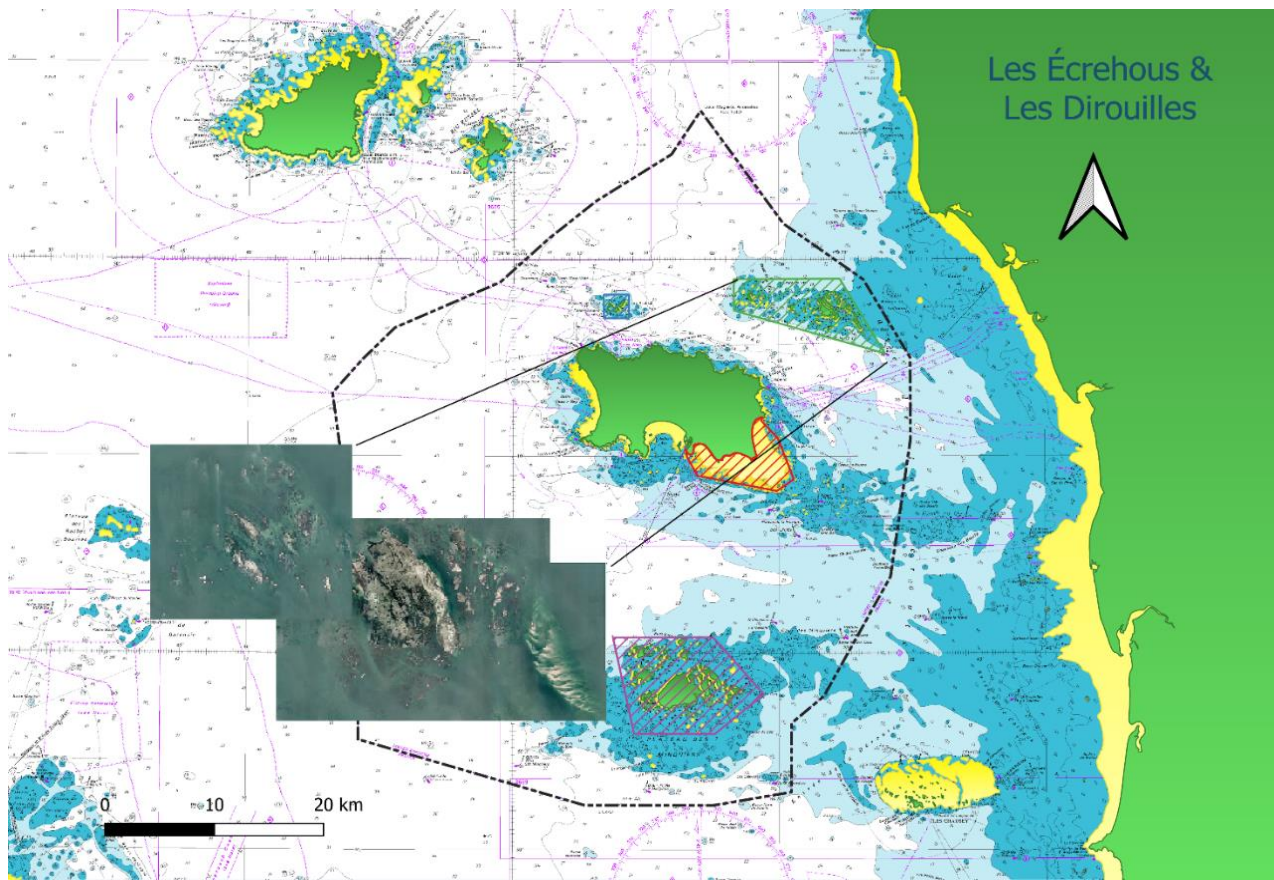


Figure 2.1. Location and extent of the Les Écrehous and Les Dirouilles Ramsar site

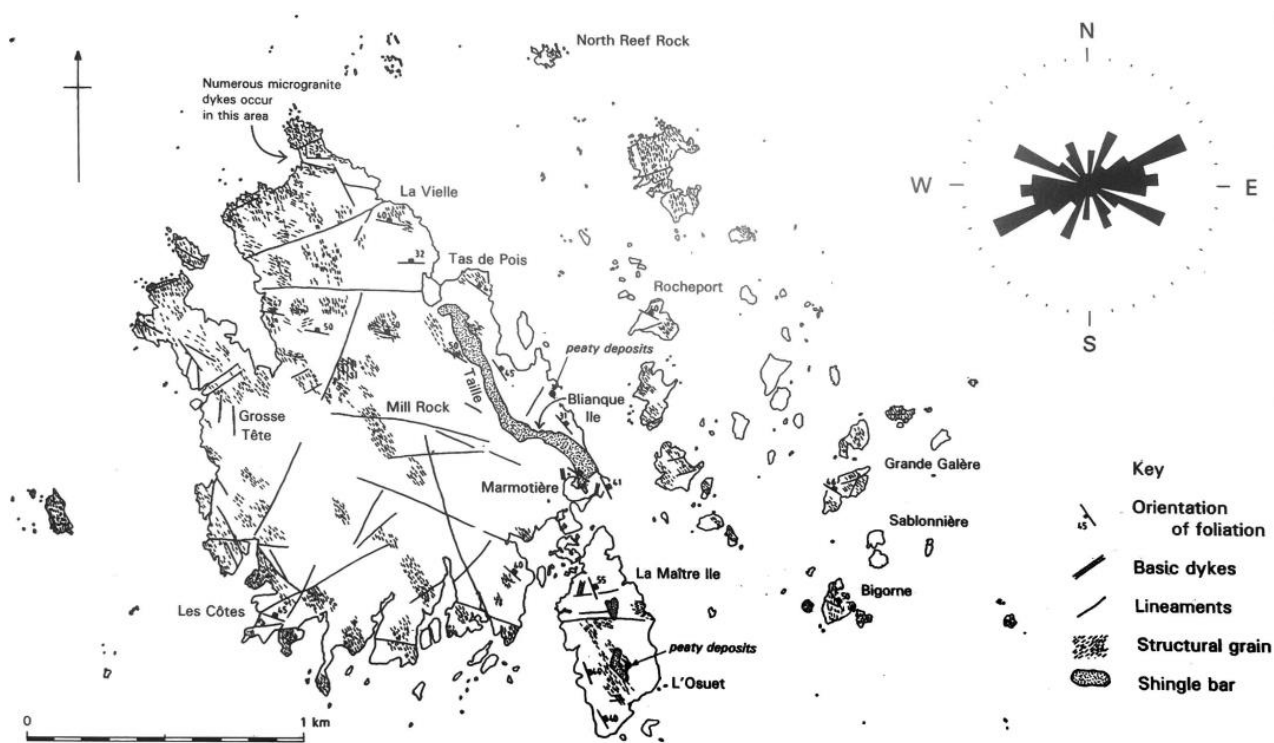


Figure 2.2. Photogeological interpretation of Les Écrehous reef (Rodwell, W. (1996) *Les Écrehous, Jersey: History and Archaeology of a Channel Island Archipelago*. Jersey: Société Jersiaise)

### 3. Biodiversity within the site

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The site is rich in biodiversity. It supports a wide range of subtidal, tidal and coastal habitats, and has 454 recorded marine species, over 90 recorded bird species, and at least 70 species of terrestrial plants, lichens, algae and invertebrates, some of which are transitory (Ramsar, 2024)

There are extensive areas of shallow water habitat and intertidal pools, which provide habitat and act as a nursery area to a wide range of fish and invertebrate species, including commercial species such as crabs and lobsters. The cold-water reefs host a high diversity of life and provide an edge of range habitat, where many southern and northern European marine species find their outer limit of tolerance. Thus, species such as the Green ormer, which are associated with warmer southern European waters and are rare or absent from British coasts, coexist with those normally associated with colder northern waters, such as the Beadlet anemone. A small number of species are listed as vulnerable under IUCN criteria or are regionally scarce, including the Pink sea-fan and Five shilling shell.

The site and surrounding area support a small but mobile population of breeding Grey seal. One of the largest populations of Bottlenose dolphins in the British Isles regularly uses the area. Other cetaceans observed in the site include Common dolphin and occasionally the Harbour porpoise.

The site is also important for various bird species. It provides feeding and roosting locations for various passage and wintering wader and wildfowl species. Birds that contribute to nationally significant populations of birds on the island of Jersey include Common tern, Roseate tern, Eurasian oystercatcher, Ringed plover, and Great cormorant. Seabirds have been in decline across western Europe in recent decades and this pattern is also seen on the reefs around Jersey. The need to safeguard these communities before they merit listing as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List is as important as protecting the few species already in this state.

The site contains large areas of key habitat associated with the life stages of many species of fish and shellfish. Notable subtidal habitats include maerl beds, kelp forests, seagrass beds, Sandmason worm beds and other vegetated shallow marine areas. European seabass is noted to use the area across the spawning and nursery stages of their life cycle, and it is likely that many other species typical of the regional waters utilise the site, such as Allis shad, Twaite shad, Giant goby, Short-snouted seahorse, Common goby, and Sand goby. Commercial invertebrates, such as King scallop, lobster, cuttlefish and various crab species, are also known to breed in the area.

The site provides support for the critical life stages of many organisms. Its situation in the Normano Breton Gulf means it experiences huge diurnal movements of relatively warm, closed waters moved by a residual inshore anticlockwise current around Jersey. This enhances local recruitment of many species of planktonic larvae, especially Crustacea. The large rocky platforms within the site are important to many invertebrate and vertebrate organisms, providing shelter, protection and food for both larval and adult stages. Likewise, the rich infaunal communities of the mud and sand flats are important for their range of mollusc and worm species. In turn, these areas form important nursery zones for shore birds and shallow sublittoral fish communities. Wide shallow gullies dividing the rocky platforms also provide critical habitat for many other forms and stages of marine life, as do the extensive and diverse algal assemblages.

A full and detailed account of all animals, plants and ecological communities whose presence relates to the international importance of this site can be found on the Ramsar Information Sheet (Ramsar (2024) *Ramsar Information Sheet: Les Écréhous and Les Dirouilles Reefs, Jersey*. Available at: <https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris/1455>)

### 4. Strategic aims in the context of Ramsar

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The strategic aims are designed to meet the Ramsar obligations set out in Section 1.7 of the Jersey Ramsar Management Framework.

The main strategic aims for this 5-year cycle for the Jersey Ramsar Management Authority are:

**Strategic aim 1:** to monitor and improve the ecological health of the four Ramsar sites

**Strategic aim 2:** to support and encourage Marine Resources in the delivery of the recommendations set out in the Jersey Marine Spatial Plan, in so far as those recommendations are relevant and deliver positive outcome for the Ramsar sites. The Jersey Marine Spatial Plan is a once in a generation piece of policy being delivered by the Marine Resources Team within Natural Environment and will bring significant benefits in terms of site protection to the Marine Environment, and very specifically to the Ramsar sites [Jersey Marine Spatial Plan – Priorities and Actions Plan \(gov.je\)](#)

**Strategic aim 3:** to encourage research, education and data exchange both within Jersey and the other Channel Islands relevant to Ramsar sites and their management.

## 5. Management objectives

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To meet our Ramsar obligations, the following specific management objectives and actions have been set for this site, which will give direction to the management of the four sites and inform the annual action plans.

The management objectives for all four of Jersey's Ramsar sites will be the same at the outset but it is envisaged that, as the monitoring programme develops, and as more data become available, tailored management within each site will be refined over time.

### **Strategic aim 1 – to monitor and improve the ecological health of the four Ramsar sites**

#### **Management objectives to meet this strategic aim:**

- **Objective 1** - to conduct a threat/risk assessment of each site through stakeholder engagement with the Jersey Ramsar Advisory Group (JRAG). See section 6 for an overview of the risk assessment framework.
- **Objective 2** - to use the status outcomes of the assessment to establish the monitoring priorities for the sites.
- **Objective 3** - to baseline and maintain datasets relating to the biodiversity of the Ramsar site, in accordance with scientifically accepted best practice.
- **Objective 4** - to work in partnership with NGOs, professional bodies and organisations where they can assist in supporting or delivering monitoring activities to a scientifically accepted standard.
- **Objective 5** - to produce a short annual report on the monitoring progress each year for 5 years to be delivered at the end of March in the following year. The report at the end of year 5 (March 2030) will be more in depth and comment on the ecological condition of the site, with a discussion topic around the limits of acceptable change and potential for reviewing tolerance limits in the future.

It is important to note that the monitoring programme for each site is tailored according to the site-specific risks, as identified during the stakeholder workshops held as a part of preparing the Management Plans.

### **Strategic aim 2 - to support and encourage Marine Resources in the delivery of the recommendations set out in the Jersey Marine Spatial Plan, in so far as those recommendations that are relevant and deliver positive outcome for the Ramsar sites**

#### **Management objectives to meet this strategic aim:**

- **Objective 1** - to facilitate the implementation of policy recommendations from the Marine Spatial Plan with respect to the Ramsar sites

### **Strategic aim 3 - to encourage research, education and data exchange both within Jersey and the other Channel Islands relevant to Ramsar sites and their management**

#### **Management objectives to meet this strategic aim:**

- **Objective 1** - to improve public knowledge about Ramsar site designation, facilitating the positive management and wise use of the Ramsar sites.
- **Objective 2** - to encourage information sharing between user groups of the sites.

- **Objective 3** - to promote knowledge-sharing and scientific best practice for monitoring activities between the Channel Islands Ramsar stakeholder groups, holding quarterly meetings where possible.
- **Objective 4** - to promote Ramsar research topics for students locally, through appropriate channels such as the Jersey Community Foundation.
- **Objective 5** - to encourage community involvement in data collection, through data collection and the use of citizen science applications.
- **Objective 6** - to develop a Channel Islands Ramsar network, and thus work with other site managers to unify the approach to the management of the Ramsar sites.

## 6. Risk Assessment framework

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A risk-based approach to management is a beneficial tool to apply to Ramsar sites because it enables managers to identify and prioritise the most significant risks and threats to the site's ecological character and functions. It involves assessing the likelihood and potential impact of these threats and conflicts and helps to determine which are the most significant. By prioritising the most significant risks and threats, it ensures that resources are used efficiently and that the most pressing issues are identified, monitored, understood and addressed first.

The risk assessment matrix (see Matrix 6.1) formed the basis of discussion during a series of JRAG stakeholder engagement workshops in 2023, where each of the Ramsar sites main conflicts and threats were assessed and scored accordingly by the membership of JRAG. The outcome of the risk assessments can be found in Appendix 1.

The risk assessments were approved by JRAG in January 2024.

		IMPACT/SEVERITY					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LIKELIHOOD		Not relevant	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>E</b> Very Likely/ Almost Certain	Could happen or has happened in 1 month	NO IMPACT	1E RMA	2E GoJ NE	3E UK	4E Ramsar	5E Ramsar
<b>D</b> Likely	Could happen or has happened between 1 & 6 months	NO IMPACT	1D RMA	2D GoJ NE	3D UK	4D Ramsar	5D Ramsar
<b>C</b> Possible	Could happen or has happened between 6 months & 1yr	NO IMPACT	1C RMA	2C GoJ NE	3C UK	4C UK	5C Ramsar
<b>B</b> Unlikely	Could happen or has happened between 1yr & 10yrs	NO IMPACT	1B RMA	2B RMA	3B GoJ NE	4B UK	5B UK
<b>A</b> Rare	Could happen or has happened beyond 10yrs	NO IMPACT	1A RMA	2A RMA	3A RMA	4A GoJ NE	5A UK

Ref	Significance	Description
1A,2A,3A, 1B,2B 1C,1D,1E	Accept	The risk is acceptable, RMA sign off
2C,2D,2E 3B,4A	Tolerable	Consideration should be given to further reducing the risk. If the risk remains AMBER, it may be accepted by the GoJ Natural Environment Department.
3C,3D,3E 4B,4C,5A,5B	Undesirable	The risk is high and immediate action may be required. Further control measures to reduce the likelihood/severity of the risk should be introduced. If the risk remains RED, it may only be accepted following a review and approval by UK.
4D,4E 5C,5D,5E	Highly Undesirable	The risk is high and immediate action or cessation of the activity may be required. Further control measures to reduce the likelihood/severity of the risk should be introduced. If the risk remains PURPLE, it may only be accepted following a review and approval by Ramsar Secretariat.

**Matrix 6.1.** A risk assessment framework for assessing risk or threat levels within the Ramsar sites.

## 7. Monitoring

The Jersey Ramsar Management Authority will maintain an up-to-date monitoring schedule, detailing the monitoring being undertaken, the frequency, who is completing the monitoring and who is responsible for reporting on that activity. The document is a living and dynamic document and will be updated as and when appropriate.

The monitoring programme consists of:

- monitoring that routinely occurs within the Government of Jersey's Natural Environment department through business as usual.
- additional monitoring activities that have been recommended or identified as necessary and relate specifically to Ramsar e.g. time lapse cameras at the Écréhous.
- additional monitoring in partnership with NGOs, professional bodies and organisations.
- monitoring that is conducted by other professional bodies but where we have access to the data set or reporting.

JRAG can request an up-to-date monitoring schedule at any time.



## 8. Resourcing

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The Government of Jersey will ensure sufficient resource to meet the management objectives on an ongoing basis.

## 9. Annual report production

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An interim verbal mid-year report will be given to JRAG, with a written report annually. The written report will highlight any issues that have arisen during the year and will provide any recommendations for the following year. The recommendations will form the basis of an annual action plan which will be appended to the annual report.

## 10. Record of Review and adaptive management

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It might be necessary to update the Ramsar Management Plans from time to time. Wetlands are dynamic ecosystems that can undergo significant changes over time due to natural processes, climate change, and human activities. A five-year review cycle allows managers to adapt strategies to these changes and ensure that management practices remain effective, but we may update the management plans on a more regular basis to ensure the plans stay relevant and responsive to each site's current ecological needs.

Any updates will be recorded in the below table.

Review Date	Reason for Review (Incident, Annual)	Risk reviewed / Comments Comments	Reviewers
27/08/2024	DRAFT	First draft available for review	Natural Environment
27/08/2024	DRAFT	Second draft available for review	Natural Environment
31/10/2024	DRAFT	Draft available for final review by JRAG	Natural Environment
04/11/2024	Approval	JRAG Executive committee (on behalf of JRAG) provide approval for document	JRAG
18/12/2024	Approval	Document approved and signed	Minister for the Environment

## Appendix 1 – Risk assessment outcomes

The following risk matrix was developed during a series of workshops conducted by the JRMA (now JRAG) in 2023. The risk ratings reflect consensus reached among approximately 20–25 stakeholders. While every effort was made to achieve balanced and representative outcomes, the agreed ratings may involve compromises and are inherently subjective. Users should consider these factors when interpreting the matrix and apply their professional judgement when using it as a decision-making tool.

### Risk Assessment outcome

Name of Assessor(s):	Natural Environment, Government of Jersey
Approved By:	Ramsar Management Authority (now JRAG)
Location:	Les Écréhous
Activity:	Ramsar Conservation, Wise Use
Review Date:	Annually or following an incident, complaint or change in legislation
Workshop Date:	10th January 2023
RMA Attendees	Refer to minutes published gov.je

Threats	Inherent Risk Rating	Current mitigations (legislation, processes, studies etc)	Current Risk Rating	Potential future mitigations (suggested in workshops)
<b>1. CONFLICT OF USE (Human)</b>				
a) Commercial fisheries and tourism	3E	Infrastructure and Environment Planning Application Process Sea Fisheries regulations and licence conditions Recreational fishing regulations Aquatic Resources regulations Food and Environmental Protection Act (1985) and pebble law Wildlife Law 2021 (+ Areas of Special Protection) Ports of Jersey charter code of conduct General harbour regulations Policing of beaches (parishes) – vehicles and dogs on leads etc Collision Regulations	1D	CI Ramsar website and future collaboration (high priority) Jersey's Marine Spatial Plan (JMSP) 2024 Areas of Special Protection (ASP) for seals in Wildlife Law Extension of No Mobile Gear Zone (NMGZ) to Ramsar boundary Recreational permit scheme (future) Requirement for improved information on website for visitors/tourists Commission study to assess tourism on the site - an environmental and societal impact assessment Develop communications strategy Review regulations for Moorings outside harbour limits. Examination of law governing commercial charter access/process
b) Commercial fisheries and recreational fisheries	1E		1E	
c) Recreational fisheries and visitors	3E		1B	
d) Residents and visitors	3D		3D	
e) Residents and fisheries	1D		1D	
<b>2. CONFLICT OF USE (Wildlife)</b>				
a) Fisheries	4D	Infrastructure and Environment Planning Application Process Sea Fisheries regulations Commercial Fishing Licence conditions Recreational Fishing regulations (bag limits) Aquatic resources regulations Food and Environmental Protection Act (1985) and pebble law Wildlife Law and Areas of Special Protection (ASPs) Ports of Jersey charter code of conduct General Harbour regulations Policing of beaches (vehicles and dogs on leads etc) Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) (Signage / Codes of Conduct) Customs and immigration regulations WiSe courses	1D	CI Ramsar website and future collaboration (high priority) Jersey's Marine Spatial Plan (JMSP) 2024 Areas of Special Protection (ASP) for seals in Wildlife Law Extension of No Mobile Gear Zone (NMGZ) to Ramsar boundary Recreational permit scheme Requirement for improved information on website for visitors/tourists Develop communications strategy Review regulations for Moorings outside harbour limits Examination of law governing commercial charter access/process
b) Visitors	3E		2E	
c) Residents	3D		1D	
d) Recreational fishing activity	3E		1E	
<b>3. INVASIVE SPECIES</b>				
	2B	Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2021 covers invasive species	2B	Implement marine monitoring plan and hirozon scanning using recent Natural Environment (Biosecurity) reports 1) Non-native marine species in the Channel Islands (2017) 2) Rapid Risk Assessment for Marine Non-native Invasive Species in Channel Islands (2023) 3) Horizon scanning of new non-native species in Guernsey (2022)
<b>4. CLIMATE DRIVEN MARINE CHANGE</b>				
a) sea level rise	4C	Shoreline Management Plan 2020 (feeds into Island Plan) Voluntary Carbon offsetting by site users Ongoing environmental monitoring eg Marine Resources sea surface temperature monitoring Carbon neutral roadmap (2022)	4C	Jersey's Marine Spatial Plan (JMSP) 2024 Commission study and Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) of climate change on bird nesting sites (reproductive behaviour) Undertake habitat mapping granite/soft sediment (erosion) Écréhous Residents Association (ERA) to collect data on storm damage
b) sea temperature rise	4C		4C	
c) Storm impact (coastal erosion/ Suspended sediment)	4C		4C	

<b>5. WATER QUALITY</b>				
a) Nutrient inputs (runoff and sewage)	1E	Monitoring toxic algae and biotoxins (Public health) Heavy metal monitoring Agricultural regulations Pollution regulations	1E	Review of pollution control measures Monitor seabird contamination of water supply Monitor disposal of human waste
b) Pollution events	5B		5B	
<b>6. KNOWLEDGE LIMITATIONS</b>				
a) Carbon stores within sites and their value	3C	Blue Carbon report (2022) Sea Search data (JNCC) Société Jersiaise Ornithology Section data	2C	Expansion of Sea Search data Jersey's Marine Spatial Plan (JMSP) delivery 2024 Blue Carbon PhD (ongoing)
b) Abundance, distribution, composition, condition of the priority species, species	3B		2B	
c) Sea bird breeding success	2B		2B	
d) Understanding use of the site (% composition usage)	3C		2C	
<b>7. COMMERCIAL SHIPPING</b>				
	A0	Vessel Traffic Organisation service Harbour Regulations	A0	Update lead line surveys to map uncharted rocks (commercial shipping) New bathymetry surveys Exclusion zones for large vessels Further research to understand impact of noise pollution on marine life (hydrophones)
<b>8. NEW RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>				
	3B	No drone zone (under Wildlife Law 2021) Dogs are not allowed within the Area of Special Protection (ASPs) at the specified times/ Wildlife Law 2021 (unless special permission granted from the Minister) Permission required from Parish for any large group activities	2B	Highlight any new activities at regular JRMA meetings
<b>9. ARCHAEOLOGICAL, GEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL ARTEFACTS (Non biological)</b>				
	4B	Infrastructure and Environment Planning Application Process	3B	Create inventory and map location of artefacts, bones, geology, shipwrecks, burial sites or other cultural sites/features