



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

# Les Minquiers

Ramsar site reference number 1456



Photo credit: Ramsar, 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 Minquiers 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 of ecological character.

## 2. Introduction and location of the site

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The Minquiers is an extensive shoal, approximately 16km long and 11km wide, found 20km south of Jersey. It is an offshore part of the parish of Grouville in the Bailiwick 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 tidal range in the Minquiers can exceed 13 metres. At high tide only a few rocky heads and two small islands, ‘La Maîtresse Île’, on which are some small dwellings, and ‘Les Maisons’ (meaning the houses) remain exposed. 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 (see Figure 2.2).

Archaeological excavations have shown that 2000 years ago, and earlier, the site was used to hunt seals. Fishermen, both Jersey and French, have harvested the bounty of the reef for centuries. In the 18th and 19th centuries fishermen from La Rocque in Jersey used Maîtresse Île as a base during the week, before sailing back to Jersey for market with conger, ormer, lobster and various other fish species. The earliest huts on the reef also date from this time. It is thought that the name ‘Les Minquiers’ is derived from the old French word ‘minkier’ meaning a fish wholesaler and relates to the abundance of fish found in these waters (Wikipedia, 2024).

The Minquiers Ramsar Site is the pink hatched area in the south of Jersey’s territorial waters in Figure 1 (below). There is also an aerial photo of the reef. Figure 2.1 also shows the South East Coast site (hatched red) and to the north east the Écréhous (hatched green) and lastly to the north, Les Pierres de Lecq (hatched blue).

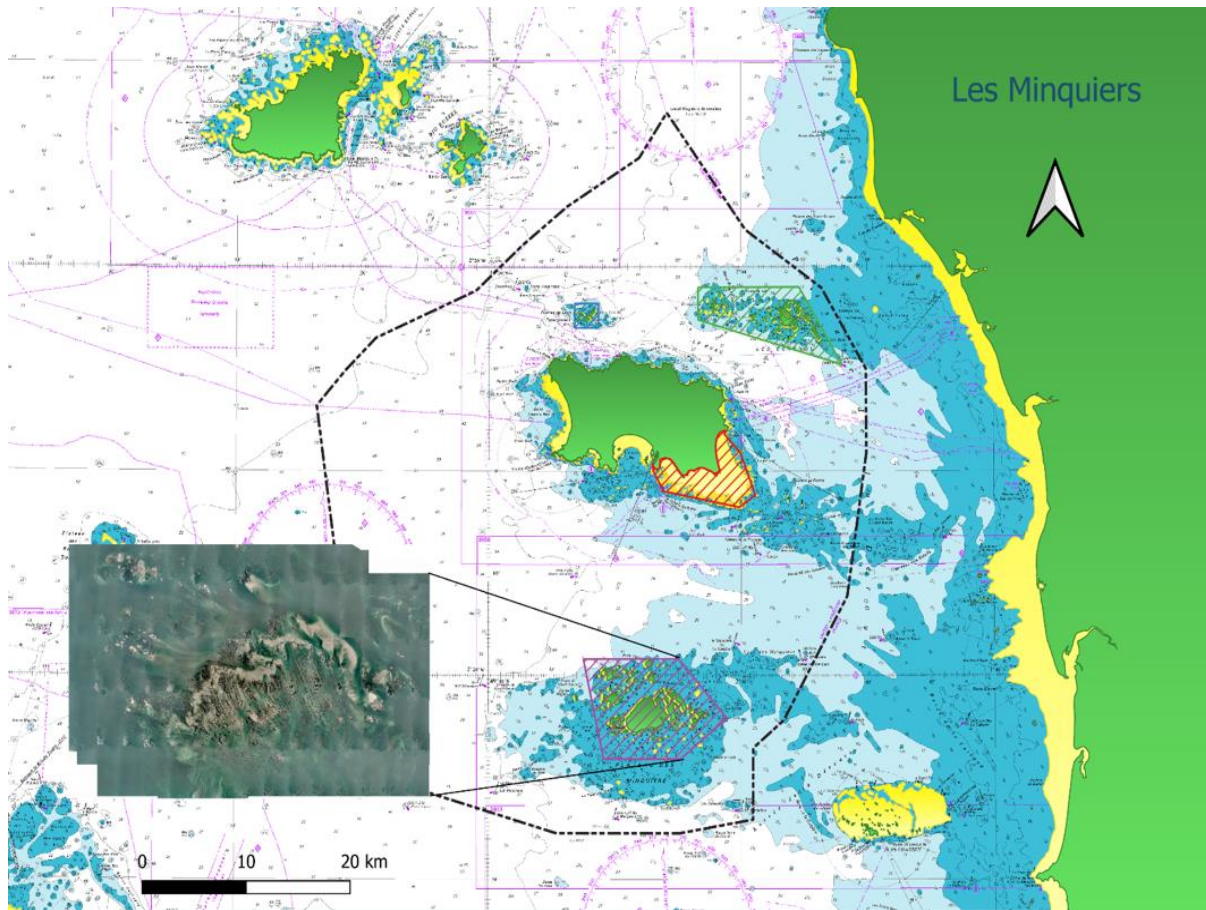


Figure 2.1. Extent of the Les Minquiers Ramsar site

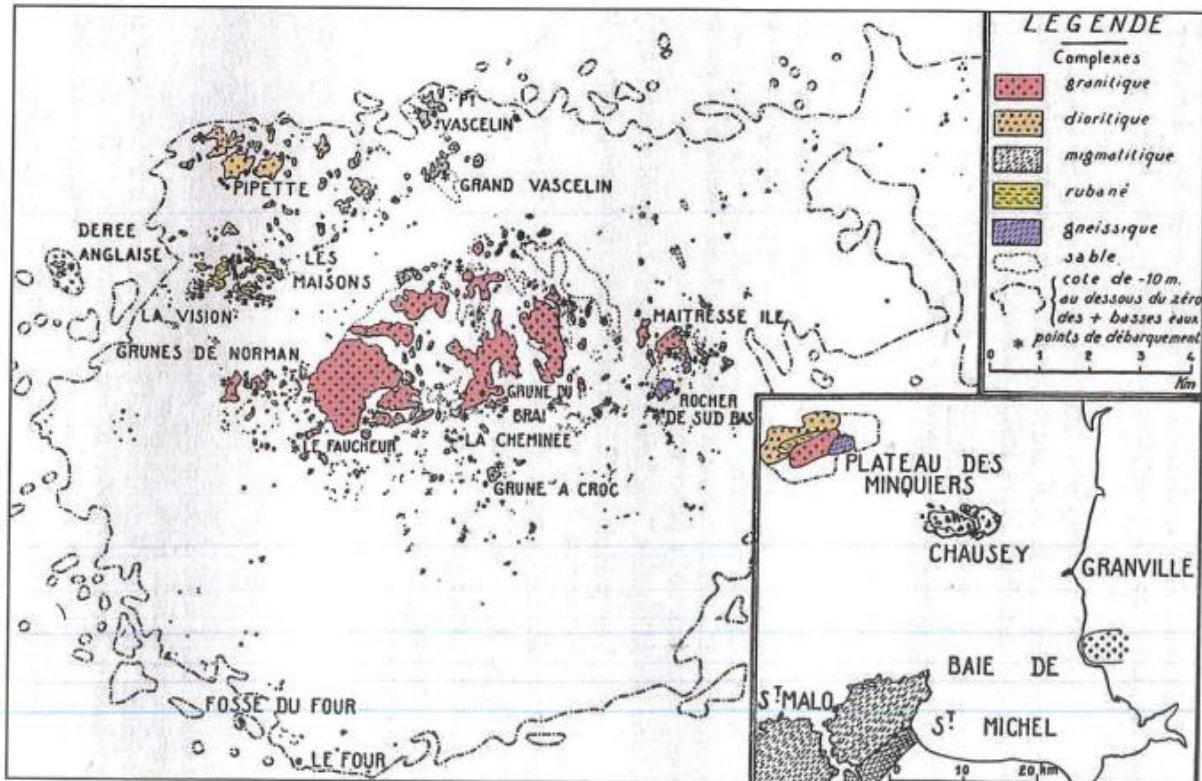


Figure 2.2 The first Geological Map of the Minquiers (Chambers, P. et al (2016) Les Minquiers: A Natural History. Jersey: Charonia Media)

### 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 613 recorded marine species (including 171 marine macro algae), 92 recorded bird species, and around 102 species of terrestrial plants, lichens, algae and invertebrates (some of which are transitory).

Some species are regionally scarce and/or listed as vulnerable by the IUCN, including the Green ormer, 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. It also provides feeding and roosting locations for various passage and wintering wader and wildfowl species. Notable nesting bird species include Common tern, Eurasian oystercatcher, European shag, Great cormorant and Ringed plover.

The Minquiers provides 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.

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/1456>

### 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 Minquiers
Activity:	Ramsar Conservation, Wise Use
Review Date:	Annually or following an incident, complaint or change in legislation
Workshop Date:	24th October 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 Planning (JMSP) 2024 Extension of No Mobile Gear Zone (NMGZ) to Ramsar boundary Requirement for improved information on website for visitors/tourists Commission study to assess tourism on the reef – an environmental and societal impact assessment
b) Commercial (fisheries) and recreational (fisheries)	1E		1E	
c) Recreational (fisheries) and visitors	1D		1C	
d) Residents and visitors	3C		3C	
e) Residents and fisheries	2D		1D	
f) Commercial traffic and residents	3A		3A	
<b>2. CONFLICT OF USE (Wildlife)</b>				
a) Commercial (fisheries)	4D	Infrastructure and Environment Planning Application Process Aquatic Resources regulations Sea Fisheries regulations Licence conditions Recreational fishing regulations FEPA and pebble law Wildlife Law (and Areas of Special Protection ASPs) Ports charter code of conduct General harbour regulations Policing of beaches (parishes) – 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 CI collaboration (high priority) Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) – delivery 2024 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 communication strategy Regulations for Moorings outside harbour limits
b) Visitors	3D		2C	
c) Residents	3D		1D	
d) Recreational fishing activity	3E		1D	
<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) Echrehous 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) Société Jersiaise ornithology department Sea Search data (JNCC) Seagrass monitoring through aerial imagery	2C	Expansion of Sea Search data Jersey's Marine Spatial Plan (JMSP) 2024 Blue Carbon PhD (ongoing)
b) Abundance, distribution, composition, condition of the priority species, species interactions, ecological communities and habitats	3B		2B	
c) Sea bird breeding success	2B		2B	
d) Understanding use of the site (% composition usage)	3C		2C	
<b>7. COMMERCIAL SHIPPING</b>				
	3A	Vessel Traffic Organisation service Harbour Regulations	3A	Update lead line surveys to map uncharted rocks (commercial shipping) New bathymetry survey needed 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