

**DRAFT- Alderney West Coast and Burhou Islands Ramsar Site Strategy**

**2017 - 2021**

**Alderney Ramsar Strategy 3 (ARS3)**

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## 1. Introduction

This document is the third Alderney West Coast and Burhou Islands Ramsar Site Management Strategy (ARS3). It is the third five year strategy for the Site.

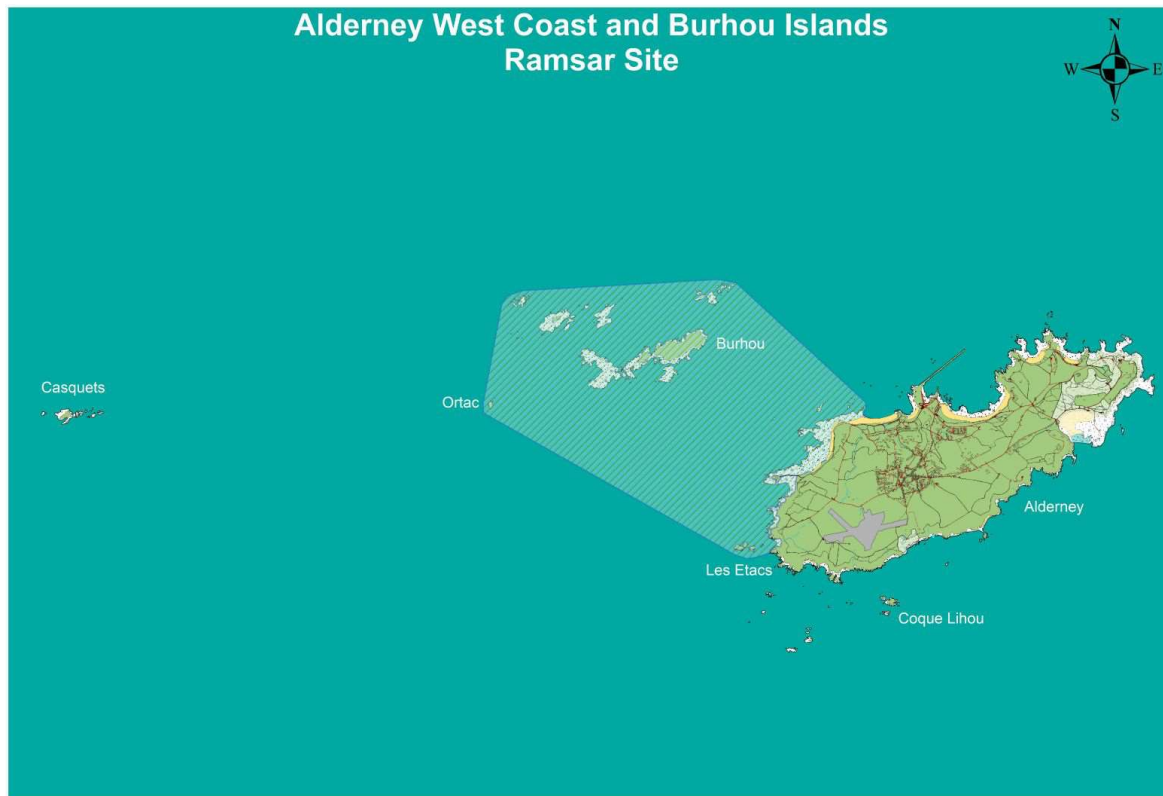


Figure 1. Shows the Ramsar Site boundary in relation to Alderney and all other surrounding islets.

On 25<sup>th</sup> August 2005 the Alderney West Coast and Burhou Islands Ramsar Site was designated and gained global recognition as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. The Ramsar Convention requires the '*national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources*'.

In 2006 on behalf of the States of Alderney (SoA), the General Services Committee (GSC) requested the support of the Alderney Wildlife Trust (AWT) in the preparation of a management strategy. This is required under the commitments of the Ramsar Convention.

The Strategic Goals of ARS1 were;

- To maintain and enhance species populations and marine habitats of the Ramsar Site.
- To achieve the sustainable use of the Ramsar Site and surrounding waters to protect the Site for current and future generations.
- To develop environmental legislation in the form of an Alderney Wildlife Act which will allow for the creation of marine and terrestrial protected areas.

The Strategic Aims of ARS2 were;

- To facilitate a greater understanding of the ecological status of the Ramsar Site by establishing an environmental baseline for both the marine and terrestrial environments within the site.

- To maintain and where appropriate enhance species populations and marine habitats of the Ramsar Site.
- Develop environmental legislation for Alderney which can be used to help ensure the sustainable use of the Ramsar Site and surrounding waters and protect the site for current and future generations.

The Ramsar Site five-year management strategy and annual action plans are prepared by the AWT on behalf of the SoA. The strategy and plans are approved by the Ramsar Steering Group (see section 4.?) before being approved by the GSC on behalf of the SoA.

In the past Alderney has suffered a large seabird wreck and a PIB spill; these two disasters naturally necessitated a reallocation of resource. It is important to note that unforeseen events could well affect priorities and work programs are flexible to account for this.

## 2. Strategic Aims

- For the majority of the island population to view the Ramsar Site designation as facilitating the positive management of the islands resources.
- To work with the other Ramsar sites to develop a steering group in order to unify the Channel Islands through development of a Channel Islands Ramsar Group.
- To maintain long term datasets relating to the biodiversity of the Ramsar Site.

## 3. Strategic Objectives

### Communications and outreach

#### 3.1.1 Public awareness

Through a public outreach programme the Ramsar Site will be seen as the valuable resource that it is, rather than as an area managed solely for the benefit of wildlife. Strategic communications and events will spread understanding of and passion for, the natural resources of the Site.

*\*In light of the proposed marine study by Steve Fletcher liaison and integration between the two projects will ensure streamlined and focused outreach opportunities. It is likely that the AWT Ramsar communication work will be extensions to the works done by Steve Fletcher in 2017 with a more focused campaign in 2018.*

Measure: online and street survey aimed at residents and visitors in 2017, replicated in 2021 to gain understanding of public opinion.

#### 3.1.2 Channel Islands Ramsar Group

All five of the inhabited Channel Islands have at least one Ramsar Site; development of a Channel Islands Ramsar Group, through each of the Islands steering groups, will help to unify the Channel Islands. Though this cannot be recognised formally by the Ramsar Convention due to issues of scale, there is still much to be gained in terms of sharing data and best practice as well as strengthening our geographical ties and protecting our shared species.

Measure: annual meeting and newsletter established by 2019.

### 3.2 Education and LIVE

#### 3.2.1 Wider audience

Use LIVE to communicate with a wider audience, particularly other marine users; consider streaming the webcams in the Harbour Office, Sailing Club and Alderney Angling. Investigate options for hosting Puffin Cam on the Visit Alderney website during the peak breeding season.

Measure: to have a minimum of two screens in major public spaces, in place and streaming LIVE cameras during the season and stock footage out of season, by 2019.

### *3.2.2 St Anne's School*

Focus work at St Anne's School with regular contact, above and beyond the core education program of LIVE. The AWT's People and Wildlife Officer will ideally make a weekly visit, with a minimum of four visits per term. The People and Wildlife Officer should lead outdoor activities and classroom sessions in the junior school.

Measure: database compiling annual school visits/activities, with a trend of growth through the first two years and maintained effort thereafter.

### *3.2.3 Channel Island curriculum*

Phase out outreach to UK schools due to increased access to similar, free resources within their local area and a change to the Channel Islands curriculum; as we are a Channel Island it is appropriate that our education programme be tailored to Channel Island schools and we do not have the resource or the interest from the UK to warrant two separate programmes.

Measure: have the LIVE programme approved by the headmaster of St Anne's School and Guernsey Board of Education by 2018.

### *3.2.4 Guernsey schools*

Focus LIVE efforts within the Bailiwick of Guernsey, investigate links with La Société Guernesiaise.

Measure: achieve sign-ups from 75% of Guernsey schools by 2019, with maintained contact thereafter.

### *3.2.5 Jersey schools*

Investigate similar links with Jersey. Liaise with Jersey as there may well be similar education programmes already in place, run by the National Trust.

Measure: develop contacts with the relevant Jersey bodies, ideally through the mechanism of the Channel Islands Ramsar Group (3.2.1), with regular annual cross island working achieved.

## **3.3 Advisory and legislative**

### *3.3.1 Alderney Conservation Act*

The Alderney Conservation Law (ACL), through which the SoA will be able to enact any protections they deem necessary for the maintenance of the Island's Ramsar site, will ideally be written under ARS3. It will have an emphasis on Alderney's territorial waters and the appropriate use thereof, but will also cover the island's terrestrial habitats and offshore islets. This process will begin in 2018, *after* Steve Fletcher's marine study is completed; his findings will have a significant bearing on the ACA.

Measure: ACA drafted by 2020.

### *3.3.2 Bird Protection Law*

As agreed with the GSC in 2014 the Bird Protection Law (BPL) must be reviewed to include legal implications for disturbance to breeding sites. This work will be carried out through close liaison with the Alderney Bird Observatory (ABO) and its steering group as well as the Conservation Officer.

Measure: BPL in place by 2019.

### *3.3.3 Closed season signage*

Closed season signage, which has over time fallen out of use, is to be installed through liaison with the SoA at the main landing points on Burhou in the winter of 2016/17. The AWT will work with the States Works Department (SWD) to permanently install signs stating that no one may land on Burhou between 15th March and 31st July and that anyone landing during the open season must make themselves aware of the State Code of Conduct.

Measure: signs in place by 20th February 2017, checked annually and replaced/maintained as necessary.

### *3.3.4 Ramsar Site Stakeholder Group*

A Ramsar Site Stakeholder Group will be formed to recognise and liaise with other Site users. This will include the Harbour Office, Alderney Shipping, fishermen, boat users and representatives from other user groups and the resident population (dog-walkers using Clonque Bay etc.) *\*other stakeholders may be suggested by the SoA or Steve Fletcher*

- In 2018 there will be a public consultation inviting members of the public concerned with the Ramsar Site management to air their views relating to the Site and have their questions answered by the Ramsar Officer, the Trust Manager, the Marine Ecologist and other relevant parties (these will ideally include representatives from the SoA, Harbour Office, Alderney Shipping, Guernsey Sea Fisheries).
- Following this consultation the Ramsar Steering Group will highlight key stakeholders and approach them, inviting them to form the Ramsar Site Stakeholder Group, to represent other islanders in responding to changes in management strategy etc.

Measure: annual Ramsar Site Stakeholder Group meeting.

## **3.4 Marine**

### *3.4.1 Annual review of baseline data*

Baseline marine data should be reviewed annually to ensure work streams are relevant and up to date, in line with Alderney's Living Seas Programme.

Measure: Ramsar section to feature in Alderney Living Seas' annual action plans.

## **3.5 Shorebirds**

### *3.5.1 WeBS volunteers*

Establish a key group of local volunteers working through the AWT to undertake monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts for the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), providing training where necessary. These could be the same individuals as the Tern Protection Officer(s) (see 3.6.4 below).

Measure: monthly WeBS figures submitted to the BTO and to the AWT's Ramsar databases.

### *3.5.2 Beach signage*

Signage relating to breeding waders on Alderney's beaches will be installed each year, along with exclusion zones as and where necessary. The content of the signs will be reviewed annually and updated if appropriate. Regular radio interviews and short articles in the Journal and Alderney Press will further communicate those areas which are important for breeding waders.

Measure: signs erected each spring and ≥three radio slots and press articles published each season.

### 3.5.3 Ringed plover

Ringed plover is classified as vulnerable in France, and limited monitoring has been carried out on Alderney to date. Investigate working with French stakeholders for a focused monitoring effort, potentially hosting French ornithologists for the monitoring season. This will help to build connections with experts in France (see 3.8 below) while also building a better picture of our population.

Measure: review possibility of collaborative project in 2019.

## 3.6 Seabirds

### 3.6.1 Population monitoring

All Alderney's seabird populations (excepting the Atlantic puffin) shall be monitored on a five year rotation to make best use of available resources while maintaining datasets.

Measure: AWT to review seabird data annually.

### 3.6.2 Houmet de Pies

Trail camera(s) to be installed *before the terns return* on Houmet de Pies to greater understand the Common tern colony. Small mammal monitoring (using Longworth traps) will be carried out to understand presence/absence. If appropriate an eradication programme should be considered through liaison with the SWD.

Measure: camera footage to be reviewed and mall mammal presence/absence to be determined in winter 2017.

### 3.6.3 Drone monitoring

Investigate the use of drone photography on Burhou to minimise disturbance to the seabird colonies and to combat access issues to its surrounding islets (Renonquet/Nannals/Little Burhou). This will be done in accordance with the guidelines published by Guernsey Airport and the Director of Civil Aviation (DCA).

Measure: review possibilities in spring 2017.

### 3.6.4 Tern Protection Officers

Recruit local volunteer Tern Protection Officer(s) to engage with the wider public on disturbance issues. These could be the same as the WeBS surveyors (see 3.5.1 above).

Measure: liaise with Tern Protection Officers as to the successes and shortcomings of their operations and review as necessary in winter 2017.

### 3.6.5 T.A.G

Continuation of T.A.G (Track a Gannet) to gain further understanding of the gannets foraging areas so as to be able to protect those areas from development. Investigate further fundraising and outreach opportunities in line with 3.1.1.

Measure: AWT to review T.A.G data annually.

## 3.7 Terrestrial

### 3.7.1 Small mammal monitoring

Annual small mammal monitoring is to be carried out on Burhou (and Houmet de Pies, see above) to minimise possible impacts on Alderney's seabird populations. This will be done using Longworth traps, trail cameras and chew sticks.

Measure: AWT to review small mammal presence/absence annually and review the effort after the 2019 season.

#### *3.7.2 Footpath construction*

Consider footpath construction (subject to planning permission from the GSC) on Burhou to minimise disturbance to seabird colonies, particularly European Storm-petrel which are late breeders and may very well be nesting in the shingle beaches. This should only be done through collaboration with the SWD and must be done in the winter. Investigate using a roller to flatten paths without causing further impacts.

Measure: path network to be created and subsequently maintained allowing access from landing points to hut and main fishing locations.

#### *3.7.3 Habitat Management*

Trips to Burhou for habitat management, inclusive of bracken and bramble control in areas adjacent to nesting colonies (work to be carried out before and after breeding season).

Ensuring existing pathways are maintained.

Pre and post season checks for invasive species, such as Hottentot Fig. , and should invasive species be identified their subsequent control

Measure: minimum of 2 annual check visits. Where controls are deemed necessary confirmation that the measures identified in the annual action plans have been delivered.

### **3.8 French connections**

#### *3.8.1 Groupe Ornithologique Normand*

The Ramsar Site's relationship with the Groupe Ornithologique Normand (GONm) should be formalised. The possible Ringed plover study (3.5.3) could help to orchestrate this.

Measure: AWT to review contact with GONm annually.

#### *3.8.2 Chausey*

Twin Alderney's Ramsar Site with Iles de Chausey, an internationally recognised site in Normandy.

Measure: twinning to succeed by 2020.

#### *3.8.3 Agence des Aires Marines Protégées*

Continue building relations with Agence des Aires Marines Protégées (AAMP) to further build on the relationship between France and Alderney.

Measure: AWT to review contact with AAMP annually.

### **3.9 Research**

#### *3.9.1 MSc projects*

Ongoing MSc research projects will be conducted relating to Alderney's seabirds and marine species.



Measure: AWT to review university links and to submit project proposals every two years.

### *3.9.2 PhD projects*

If adequate funding is secured a PhD (not an MSc) could be considered on a translocation programme for the Common tern colony. Detailed monitoring must be carried out prior to the move; a suitable new location must be found (consider Hanging Rock or an offshore islet) which is viewable for continued monitoring; the project may only go ahead if subsequent ongoing monitoring is feasible based on finances and man power.

If funding is secured a PhD (not an MSc) could be considered on an artificial burrow/nest box project for the Atlantic puffin colony. If the artificial burrows are used this would enable reliable (though biased) productivity data to be gathered for the colony. It would also open up opportunities for nest box web cams. Similar to the tern project, this must only be considered if adequate resource is secured for ongoing monitoring.

Measure: At least one PhD is to begin within ARS3.

## **4. Strategy use and application**

This strategy covers the five year period from 2017 to 2021 and has been prepared by the AWT on behalf of the SoA, to meet the requirements of the Ramsar Convention to which they became signatories in 2005. In undertaking the drafting and subsequent delivery of this strategy AWT is acting as an agent on behalf of the SoA, specifically its GSC.

A Public consultation will be run prior to the plan's publication and all relevant comments received from both stakeholders, and the general public, will be considered and integrated into the strategy. A clearly described comments section will be appended to the strategy so that the GSC can review the comments received from the public consultation and how they have been integrated into the final document.

After the public consultation the SoA, through the GSC will consider the final draft of the West Coast of Alderney and Burhou Island's Ramsar Site, Management Strategy 2017-21 for approval and implementation, prior to work commencing in 2017.

### **4.1. Methodologies**

This strategy recognises the different elements of research required by its objectives in appendix 5.1 and 5.2. Prior to commencement of any research a clearly defined methodology must have been completed and approved by the Ramsar Steering Group and appended to this strategy to prevent project drift (refer to appendix 5.3).

The aims and objectives of the strategy will be reviewed annually by the AWT staff and specific ANNUAL ACTION PLANS prepared for consideration and approval by the GSC. These action plans will describe:

- The aims and objectives to be met from those described in ARS3
- The annual programme of works
- The methodologies in use, ensuring they match those that have been appended to ARS3, and where new areas of research are to be undertaken ensure that methodologies have been approved by the Ramsar Steering Group
- The resources required

The annual plans will be reviewed towards the end of each year and the results of the work for that year presented to GSC in an annual review, alongside the following year's annual plan.

In the final year of the 5-year cycle the work of the previous 5 years as a whole will be reviewed and the results presented to the GSC, alongside outline proposals for the new 5 year management plan for the reserve.

#### **4.3 Ramsar Steering Group (RSG)**

The RSG was established in 2006 to support the AWT and SoA in the effort to create ARS1. This group is made up of both interested parties (staff of the AWT and ABO), and independent experts (i.e. RSPB). The RSG have been involved in developing and reviewing ARS3 as well as meeting annual to review each years work against both the ARS and the annual Action Plan, as well as contributing to the drafting of the subsequent years action plan. During year 1 of ARS3 the RSG will be asked to draft a terms of reference for approval by GSC which will be incorporated into all future ARS.

#### **4.4 Resources**

*The AWT is committed support the SoA in its designation and management of the Alderney West Coast and Burhou Island's Ramsar site. However, as a charity with limited income and staffed largely by volunteers, and with the SoA's Ramsar Budget being limited to costs of materials and limited services, it is important to recognise that much of the delivery of ARS3 is dependent on project-by-project fundraising, or the AWT's limited capital reserves.*

*Therefore AWT and the SoA recognise that the delivery of ARS3 is subject to these constraints and that subsequently certain objectives contained with ARS3 may not be achievable. Further they recognise that the AWT has the authority to use the approved SoA resources as it feels appropriate to best meet these limitations whilst endeavouring to meet the objectives of this strategy.*

## 5. Appendices

### 5.1 Seabird work plan

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Annual</b>	<b>Gannet</b> productivity	<b>Gannet</b> productivity	<b>Gannet</b> productivity	<b>Gannet</b> productivity	<b>Gannet</b> productivity
<b>Annual</b>	<b>Gannet</b> ringing	<b>Gannet</b> ringing	<b>Gannet</b> ringing	<b>Gannet</b> ringing	<b>Gannet</b> ringing
<b>Annual</b>	<b>Fulmar</b> productivity	<b>Fulmar</b> productivity	<b>Fulmar</b> productivity	<b>Fulmar</b> productivity	<b>Fulmar</b> productivity
<b>Annual</b>	<b>Puffin</b> raft counts (2)	<b>Puffin</b> raft counts (2)	<b>Puffin</b> raft counts (2)	<b>Puffin</b> raft counts (2)	<b>Puffin</b> raft counts (2)
<b>Annual</b>	<b>Puffin</b> burrow check	<b>Puffin</b> burrow check	<b>Puffin</b> burrow check	<b>Puffin</b> burrow check	<b>Puffin</b> burrow check
<b>Annual</b>	<b>Puffin</b> ringing	<b>Puffin</b> ringing	<b>Puffin</b> ringing	<b>Puffin</b> ringing	<b>Puffin</b> ringing
<b>Annual</b>	<b>Gull</b> ringing	<b>Gull</b> ringing	<b>Gull</b> ringing	<b>Gull</b> ringing	<b>Gull</b> ringing
<b>Annual</b>	<b>Storm-Petrel</b> ringing	<b>Storm-Petrel</b> ringing	<b>Storm-Petrel</b> ringing	<b>Storm-Petrel</b> ringing	<b>Storm-Petrel</b> ringing
<b>Rotational</b>	<b>Coque Lihou</b> population count	<b>South cliffs</b> boat survey	<b>Burhou islets</b> boat survey	<b>Gannet</b> population count	<b>Gull</b> population count

## 5.2 Marine work plan

Marine feature	Description	Method	Location	Year
<b>Intertidal</b>	a) Intertidal desk-based review	Review all intertidal survey methods, results and activities within the Ramsar Site	Entire Ramsar Site	2017, 2019, 2021
	b) Habitat mapping	Follows JNCC Procedural Guideline 1-1 Intertidal Resource Mapping using Aerial Photographs	Clonque Bay, Hannaine Bay, Burhou	2017, 2019, 2021
	c) Phase II species monitoring	Follows JNCC Procedural Guideline 3-11 Littoral Monitoring using Fixed Quadrat Photography	Clonque Bay, Hannaine Bay, Burhou	2017, 2018, 2020
	d) Strandline survey	Assess strandline presence, size and composition (dead, live and litter content)	Clonque Bay, Hannaine Bay, Burhou	Annual
	e) Green ormer ( <i>Haliotis tuberculata</i> ) population assessment	Assess ormer presence, shell size and quality in April and October, in conjunction with La Societe Guernesiaise.	Clonque Bay	Annual
	f) Capturing our Coast citizen science project (this project includes general quantitative information of intertidal species and invasive species).	Follows Capturing our Coast survey methods	Clonque Bay	Annual
<b>Benthic</b>	a) Benthic desk-based review	Review all benthic survey methods, results and activities within the Ramsar Site	Entire Ramsar Site	2018, 2020
	b) Support Seasearch surveys	Liaise with and support regional Seasearch group to conduct scuba diving ecological surveys	Entire Ramsar Site (as recommended within the Benthic desk-based review)	2017, 2019, 2021
	c) Eelgrass ( <i>Zostera marina</i> ) survey	Video habitat and species presence assessment of eelgrass (using snorkel and video techniques)	Selected sites within Ramsar Site (based on substrate type)	Annual
<b>Pelagic</b>	a) Pelagic desk-based review	Review all pelagic survey methods, results and activities within the Ramsar Site	Entire Ramsar Site	2018, 2020

	b) Water quality sampling	Monthly sampling of key seawater parameters from March – October (parameters TBC due to funding availability)	Platte Saline, Clonque Bay, Hannaine Bay	Annual
<b>Marine Mammals</b>	a) Marine mammal desk-based review	Review all marine mammal survey methods, results and activities within the Ramsar Site	Entire Ramsar Site	2017, 2019, 2021
	b) Grey seal population dynamics study	Follows JNCC grey seal survey methods. To be completed during grey seal breeding season: August – October	Offshore islets of known breeding locations	Annual
	c) Effort based land/boat surveys.	Follows SWF survey methods. To be completed April – October	Entire Ramsar Site	Annual
<b>Marine management activities</b>	Support marine management activities i.e. government or community led marine management plans within the territorial waters of Alderney	Support the community led marine management group and management plan, where required	Entire Ramsar Site	Annual
<b>Research</b>	Support and lead marine based academic projects within the Ramsar Site	Develop MSc projects with York University. Support other interested universities, where required	Entire Ramsar Site	Annual

### 5.3 Methodologies

**TO BE ADDED**

#### 5.4 Financial

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
<b>1. Advisory and legislative</b>						
Closed season signage (Burhou)	1000					
<b>2. Marine</b>						
University research	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	
<b>2.1. Benthic</b>						
Seasearch surveys (air tanks, boat access, health/safety, publication/engagement documents, travel costs etc.)	500		500		500	
Other benthic surveys (air tanks, boat access, health/safety, publication/engagement documents, travel costs etc.)	250	250	250	250	250	
Snorkel surveys (survey equipment, boat access, health/safety, publication/engagement documents etc.)	250	250	250	250	250	
<b>2.2. Pelagic</b>						
Physical parameter assessment (environmental sampling kit, 5-in-1 environment tester, salinity meter)	500	500	500	500	500	
<b>2.3. Marine mammals</b>						
Grey seal population counts	400	400	400	400	400	
Marine mammal leaflet	300					
<b>Education and LIVE</b>						
Cameras/streaming	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	
Computers/website	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	
School visits/resources	750	750	750	750	750	
<b>Shorebirds</b>						
Hosting French ornithologists for Ringed Plover monitoring	350	350	350	350	350	
Signage update for breeding beaches	100	100	100	100	100	
<b>Seabirds</b>						
Contribution towards use of a drone	200	200	200	200	200	
Common Terns (awareness/signage)	500	250	250	250	250	
Continuation of T.A.G	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	
University research	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	
Burhou footpath construction	500					
<b>Terrestrial</b>						
Longworth traps	500					
Trail camera (x2)	250					
<b>Other</b>						
Living expenses for Ramsar Officer and People and Wildlife Officer	4000	4000	4000	4000	4000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17350</b>	<b>14050</b>	<b>14550</b>	<b>14050</b>	<b>14550</b>	<b>74,550.00</b>