

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 (including La Marmotière, Le Blianque Île and La Grande Brecque) and an islet, Le Maître Île (which lies to the south of La Marmotière), 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 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 Codes of Conduct relating to these species.
- 2. Seal colonies.** Visits to the seal colonies at the edge of the reefs should be kept to a minimum. Vessels should approach slowly, not get too close, and keep their passengers as quiet as possible to avoid disturbing the seals any more than necessary.
- 3. 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 as marked on the map below. 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.
- 4. 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.
- 5. 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 La Marmotière and Le Blianque 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.

6. **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.
7. **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).
8. **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.
9. **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.
10. **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.
11. **Drones.** Drone use is not permitted during the nesting season (April – August inclusive), 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.

COMMON TERN BREEDING AREAS ON LES ÉCRÉHOUS

The star on the magnified map below shows the location of the flagpole on La Marmotière.

