



## Media Release from Alderney Wildlife Trust

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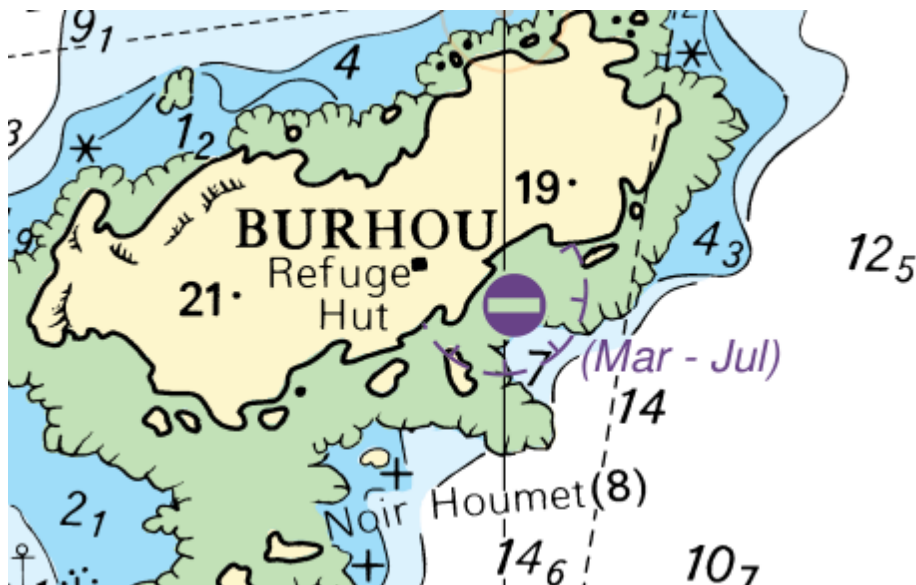
### Alderney's 'Puffin Friendly Zone' is formally recognised by the Admiralty.

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Alderney's Puffin Friendly Zone, which gives protection to the Puffins breeding in Alderney's Ramsar Site, will be added to the official Admiralty Marine Charts in 2024. The SoA's General Services Committee approved plans developed by the Alderney Harbour Office with assistance from Alderney Ramsar Secretariat and the Alderney Wildlife Trust in early 2024.

The zone (which has been a local designation since 2018) will now be officially recognised by the UK Hydrographic Office and will be included in Admiralty Charts published this year.

This official recognition will help to improve awareness of the zone, especially with visiting mariners who may not be aware of local regulations and customs. In turn, this will hopefully give Alderney's puffins better protection, and boost their chances of raising chicks 'AKA pufflings' this year!



*The Puffin Friendly Zone as marked on charts.*

#### [Background on the Puffin Friendly Zone](#)

Following observations of a decline in Burhou's puffin population, and concerns of disturbance impacting breeding success a "Puffin Friendly Zone" was designated in 2018. This was set up by a collaboration between the States of Alderney, the Alderney Wildlife Trust, the Alderney Marine

Management Forum, Alderney Harbour Office and local fishermen, and is part of the Alderney Ramsar programme.

The puffins on Burhou are currently sitting on eggs in their burrows and can be seen socialising around the burrow entrances on the PuffinCam.

The Puffin Friendly Zone is in place during the puffin breeding season and aims to provide the puffins with a safe area to rest, undisturbed by visiting or passing boats. Puffins are easily disturbed when rafting on the water, leading them to take flight which uses up vital energy reserves and interrupts feeding and parenting habits. This disturbance can have a significant impact on breeding success.

Atlantic puffins are currently listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as an endangered species in Europe, with rapid population declines likely due to threats including human disturbance, climate change, renewable energy production, pollution and even disease like avian influenza. Such threats, compounded with their low breeding rates (1 chick per pair per year), makes puffins very sensitive species.

We kindly ask all mariners to help protect puffins by following the associated code of conduct when near Burhou. Anyone can help by raising awareness of the Puffin Friendly Zone and helping to police it by informing the Alderney Harbour Office or the AWT if they see marine users within the zone.

### [Burhou's Puffin Colony and the Alderney Ramsar Site](#)

The island of Burhou, to the North-West of Alderney, is home to the largest population of Atlantic puffins in the Channel Islands during their breeding season from March to August. The puffins lay eggs in burrows on land and rest and gather in groups, known as rafts, on the adjacent sea.

The Alderney Wildlife Trust annually monitors the puffin population on Burhou, counting the number of rafting birds and observing burrows, as part of management of the Alderney West Coast and Burhou Islands Ramsar site. Such monitoring helps us understand current and future trends in the puffin population and behaviour. To further reduce disturbance to seabirds on Burhou, monitoring is carried out through remote cameras, which are streamed live to the public.

PuffinCam, which has recently gone live again, gives hundreds of thousands of viewers a direct window into the trials and tribulations of Alderney's most colourful residents live. It captures valuable data and give the public an insight into the lives of Puffins. PuffinCam also provides a unique insight into the other wildlife on the wildlife refuge of Burhou, such as the colony of grey seals, lesser black-backed gulls, and peregrine falcon.

The Atlantic puffin is currently listed as an endangered species in Europe by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with rapid population declines likely due to threats including human disturbance, climate change, renewable energy production, pollution and shifting species distributions. Such threats, compounded with the species low breeding rates (1 chick per pair per year), makes puffins very sensitive to change.

Steve Roberts, States of Alderney Member for Environment:

*I welcome a voluntary code of conduct on the very sensitive areas of Burhou and the rare wealth of its bird life .*

*All responsible boat owners please observe this area of outstanding beauty and ecological importance, in turn preserving the birds protected habitats, for the present and the future, with consideration to dwindling numbers of some species. It is their world, of which we need to recognise and preserve.*

**Ends**

## Background

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### **About the Alderney Wildlife Trust**

The Alderney Wildlife Trust is one of the 46 Wildlife Trusts working across the British Isles. We are the youngest of the Wildlife Trusts, forming over 20 years ago and since then the AWT has received incredible support from a dedicated team of wildlife enthusiasts, what we like to think of as the 'TeamWilder'. This team isn't just limited to residents and AWT members, it includes people from all walks of life who have an interest in our island's wildlife, as well as supporters and organizations from around the world. We work with the local community to engage them with their natural environment in order to protect Alderney's wildlife for the future.

Our mission is to study, protect and champion Alderney's wildlife. We wish to see a thriving natural island where wildlife and natural habitats play a valued role in addressing our island's future and the climate and ecological emergencies that face us.

***Alderney is a very special place and by helping the work of the Alderney Wildlife Trust you can make a difference. After all, if you love where you live, you'll want to look after it - Dr. George McGavin, Patron AWT***

## Notes to Media

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For further information, please contact:

Alderney Harbour Master - Adam Rose: [adam.rose2@gov.gg](mailto:adam.rose2@gov.gg)

Alderney Ramsar Secretariat - Alex Purdie: [ramsar@alderneywildlife.org](mailto:ramsar@alderneywildlife.org), 07781 118773