

Media Release from Alderney Wildlife Trust

Date: 17th November 2025

Channel Islands Volunteers Unite to Protect Alderney's Fragile Sand Dunes

The Alderney Wildlife Trust (AWT) was delighted to welcome a 15-strong team from the Guernsey Conservation Volunteers (GCV) over the long weekend of 14th – 16th November, as part of a major effort to restore Alderney's coastal sand dune habitats.

Fresh from receiving the King's Volunteering Award on 14 November, making them the only voluntary group in the Channel Islands to receive this prestigious honour in 2025, the GCV celebrated their achievement by continuing their long-standing partnership with Alderney's conservation community. Remarkably, all GCV volunteers paid for their own flights and accommodation in order to take part.

They were joined by local Wildlife Volunteers, bringing the total number of people working on the dunes at Braye Beach to more than 30. Together, the team successfully removed an estimated 13 cubic metres of invasive sour fig, a heavy, fast-spreading invasive plant that smothers native dune vegetation.

Sour fig is believed to have been introduced to Alderney shortly after the Second World War to cover wartime bunkers. Today, it poses a significant threat to the island's delicate dune systems. These dunes rely on marram grass, whose remarkable 4-metre-deep roots bind the sand together, forming a natural barrier against storm surges - an especially vital service for the homes and businesses along Braye.

Left unchecked, sour fig carpets and weakens the native marram grass, reducing the dunes' stability. Thanks to the dedication of volunteers from across the Bailiwick, this vital habitat has been given a renewed chance to thrive.

"This weekend has been a wonderful example of Bailiwick residents coming together to help protect the wildlife of our islands," said Roland Gauvain of the Alderney Wildlife Trust. "Our most sincere thanks go out to all the volunteers, especially the members of the GCV who took the time to visit Alderney once again. Their commitment makes a real and lasting difference."

Part of a Wider Vision for Nature Recovery

The clearance work forms part of the Natural Barriers Project, which supports nature-based solutions to challenges facing Alderney, including the restoration of the island's historic Atlantic woodland.

This effort is underpinned by the AWT's approach through its Alderney State of Nature (ASoN) project, designed to guide its long-term *Actions for Wildlife*. In 2025, researcher Sophie Mowbray completed detailed mapping of Alderney's sand dune habitat to track how the system is changing over time (saved to our website [here](#)). This work will combine with further ASoN research in 2026 to assess dune health and establish rapid-response monitoring techniques.

Thanks to staff trained as certified drone operators, AWT can now use drone technology to build high-resolution 3D models of key habitats helping automate monitoring and allowing the team to detect early signs of decline.

How to get involved – the AWT welcomes volunteers of all sorts to get involved taking action for nature, to find out more go to <https://www.alderneywildlife.org/get-involved/volunteer>

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Background

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 Trust, 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 organisations 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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