

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 19th JANUARY 2010**

Question

Would the Minister advise what management plans, if any, exist for each of the 4 Ramsar sites in Jersey (namely the South East Coast, Les Ecréhous and Les Dirouilles, Les Minquiers and Les Pierres de Lecq/Paternosters), whether the plans were approved by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Ramsar Secretariat and advise when these management plans were put into place.?

How much has been spent on the management of each site since each Ramsar Convention was put in place?

What funding is in place for any recurrent costs required to implement the Ramsar Conventions fully?

Are the management plans for these sites updated and shared with Defra and the Ramsar Secretariat and, if not, why not?

Answer

In 2002/3 in recognition of the fact that Jersey was not able to meet its obligations under the various Multi-Lateral Environmental Agreements within current resources, the Planning and Environment Department undertook a detailed Resource Needs Analysis of the basic funding required to address this situation. A bid for resources was subsequently submitted to the 2003 Fundamental Spending Review clearly setting out the consequences of not providing these funds. This bid was rejected by the States. Consequently, in the absence of additional resources progress on developing management plans for the Ramsar site has been slower than anyone would have liked.

The Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan, adopted by the States of Jersey in October 2008, aims to meet not only our obligations under the Ramsar Convention, but also obligations under a raft of other marine-related Multi-Lateral Environmental agreements to which Jersey is a signatory.

The Strategy sets out a requirement to develop management plans for all of our Ramsar sites. In March 2009 a Marine and Coastal Officer was appointed to deliver the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan and, as such, has been given the specific task of developing Management Plans for each of Jersey's Ramsar sites.

The first management plan meeting with relevant stakeholders will occur in February 2010 and the Department hope to have all of the plans agreed by the end of 2010.

It should be stressed however, that despite extremely scant resources, since 2003 P&E has made considerable progress towards putting in place measures which will greatly speed up the development of such plans this year. These are listed chronologically below:

- In 2002 the South-East Coast Ramsar site and the Offshore Reefs (not designated until 2005) were included within The Jersey Island Plan 2002 as part of the Marine Protection Zone and given protection from development and harmful activities under Planning and Building (Jersey) Law.
- In 2003 a public information leaflet about Jersey's South-East Coast Ramsar site was published.
- In 2005 World Wetlands Week walk introduced 800 people to the South-East Coast Ramsar site and spread the message about the need for wise and sustainable use of the site. Educational walks supported by both Planning and Environment and Jersey Tourism have been occurring within the South East Coast Ramsar site since 1998.
- In 2005 Discovery Pier visitor centre was opened as a public information centre about the Ramsar sites.

Sadly, due to funding pressures, this centre was closed at the end of 2009. However, the Department has adopted a more efficient approach to public outreach through ECO-ACTIVE, and specifically, through the introduction in 2008 of ECO-ACTIVE Marine, a dedicated programme designed to provide accurate advice to empower Islanders to make more environmentally conscious decisions on marine and coastal issues.

- In 2008, in response to concerns over the growing number of marine tour operators landing on the offshore reefs, P&E, in conjunction with Jersey Tourism, organised and part-funded a course designed to ensure the operators have an understanding of how to approach marine wildlife and how to minimise any disturbance to those animals. As a result, over 80% of known commercial marine tour operators in Jersey were trained and accredited under the internationally recognised WiSe (Wildlife Safe Operator) Scheme. All WiSe operators agree to abide by appropriate Codes of Conduct for the animals that they view, created to ensure that their operations are safe and sustainable. Another course has been organised in 2010.
- In 2008, following extensive consultation P&E also developed and launched the Jersey Marine Wildlife Watching Code. A summary leaflet was widely circulated, with the full version available on both www.gov.je and www.eco-active.je.
- In 2008, the process of developing the Les Ecrehous Management Plan was started with a workshop attended by over 70 stakeholders. This, together with the work of the Seabird Working Group, resulted in the establishment in 2009 of parts of Les Ecrehous as a Seabird Protection Zone.
- In 2009, the Planning and Environment Department and WEB jointly commissioned an ecological study of the South East Coast Ramsar site, which will form an important, up-to-date baseline for developing the Management Plan in 2010.
- In 2009, an Aquaculture Management Strategy was commissioned to provide a framework for the sustainable development of this industry. As the majority of the current industry resides within the boundaries of the South East Coast Ramsar site a strategy of this nature will be part of the overall Ramsar management plan

Defra and the Ramsar Secretariat

There is no requirement for either Defra or the Ramsar Secretariat to formally approve any Ramsar Management Plans. However, the Ramsar Secretariat has issued a raft of very useful guidelines, which will be followed in the course of developing Jersey's own Ramsar Management Plans. Defra and the Ramsar Secretariat will be included as stakeholders in the consultation process and the final plans will be sent to both organisations on their completion.

Funding

There is still no specific separate funding allocation for delivering the obligations under the Ramsar Convention, however the requirements within the Convention are included within the delivery of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan and consequently administration of the sites comes from Environment Department funding.