

STATES OF JERSEY



LES ÉCRÉHOUS AND LES MINQUIERS: PROHIBITION OF THE LANDING OF DOMESTIC ANIMALS

**Lodged au Greffe on 22nd July 2020
by the Connétable of St. Martin**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Minister for the Environment to bring forward legislation to prohibit the landing of dogs or other domestic animals at any time on Les Ecréhous and Les Minquiers.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. MARTIN

REPORT

Over the past few months, Members will have noticed increased coverage of the environmental protections afforded to Les Écréhous and how they could be improved, in order to bring further protections to the wildlife on the reef, including the local tern and seal populations.

Les Écréhous enjoys global recognition for its history and biodiversity, and, as a Ramsar Site and OSPAR Marine Protected Area, it is critical that the Assembly ensure that it is afforded the protections it needs to maintain its standing. However, it is clear that we can go further than what is currently in place.

I am therefore seeking a ban on the opportunity to bring dogs and other domestic animals onto the Island's two reefs – Les Écréhous and Les Minquiers – in order to help minimise the negative impact that non-native animals may have on the native local wildlife. By adopting this proposition, the States Assembly can send a simple and clear message to visitors that the native wildlife must be respected, and to improve conduct on the reefs whilst we await a new Wildlife Law.

In the Minister for the Environment's response to Oral Question 177/2020, asked by Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence, the Minister confirmed an increase in the number of breeding birds in the colony this year, and suggested that this was due to a lack of human activity during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. The Minister also confirmed that the nesting areas had been cordoned off from the public. The department has also provided signs to the reef informing visitors not to bring dogs or drones.

The opportunity to bring dogs and other domestic animals onto Les Écréhous is already limited, but it is not universal. Information published by the then-Department of the Environment on 23rd April 2015 “strongly discouraged”¹ Jersey owners from bringing their animals onto the reefs, although this has never been followed-up in law, and French visitors are already barred from bringing animals onto the reefs as the result of existing regulations on rabies.

Likewise, whilst Ports of Jersey's English language code of conduct² for the reef does not mention bringing animals onto the reef, the French language equivalent explicitly states that animals cannot be landed on the reef.³ We can therefore see that there is a disparity in guidance, and an opportunity for the States to make it consistent.

One option that has been considered was to propose the extension of the [Policing of Beaches \(Jersey\) Regulations 1959](#). However, it would not be desirable to extend the Regulations to Les Écréhous in this fashion, because the start date of 1st May would not be in line with the main nesting season, which, according to the Ports of Jersey's Code of Conduct, lasts between 1st January and 31st July, and, with wildlife ever-present on the reefs, a year-round ban is therefore preferable.

¹ Damage to wildlife on offshore reefs -

<https://www.gov.je/News/2015/Pages/DamageOffshoreReefs.aspx>

² Les Ecrehous Code of Conduct -

<https://cdn.ports.je/web/ID%20Les%20Ecrehous%20Code%20of%20Conduct%2020150527%20KW.pdf>

³ Les Ecrehous Code de Conduite -

<https://cdn.ports.je/web/Les%20Ecrehous%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20FR.pdf>

This will only be the first step towards providing greater protections for species on the reefs. As noted in the Minister for the Environment's answer to [Written Question 12/2020](#), also submitted by Deputy Morel, we require a sound statistical understanding of how the reefs are being utilised before a debate on the use of permits or long-term methods of enforcement can begin.

As Connétable of St. Martin, Les Ecréhous is part of the Parish of St. Martin. Representatives of the Department of the Environment, the St. Martin Honorary Police, members of the E.R.A. (Ecréhous Residents Association), the Parish Deputy, and myself meet to ensure that the reef is safeguarded. I would be happy to continue to work with the Minister for the Environment, his department, and other Members to produce a satisfactory, long-term solution that protects the species on these reefs, whilst allowing visitors to continue to enjoy them.

I hope Members will support this Proposition.

Financial and manpower implications

It is expected that the cost of updating the Ports of Jersey Code of Conduct and relevant signage can be absorbed into existing departmental budgets.

The question of manpower would be subject to the view of the Minister and subject to consultation with relevant bodies (including the Parish of St. Martin and any relevant departmental officers) on how to best enforce this ban, and it is not expected to result in significant changes to the current oversight of the reefs by the relevant authorities, those being the department for Growth, Housing and the Environment, and the Parish of St. Martin.