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Dory donor makes Ramsar work more easily

THE Wildlife Trust has been given a boat by an anonymous donor to help maintain the island's priceless Ramsar site, which includes the west coast and Burhou.

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The 5.3-metre dory given to help maintain Alderney's Ramsar site. (0535914)

THE Wildlife Trust has been given a boat by an anonymous donor to help maintain the island's priceless Ramsar site, which includes the west coast and Burhou.

Currently the trust undertakes more than 700 hours' research and management per year at the site on behalf of the States.

Gannets, puffins, seals and hundreds of different seaweed types are just some of the natural treasures of the area.

The trust has been in need of a boat for a long time and has had to rely on the generosity of friends and family who have loaned various vessels over the years.

However, with increasing health-and-safety pressures this was no longer a viable option and it has been searching for an alternative.

'When the other options seemed unavailable, this donor has allowed us to start realising the huge potential of the island's Ramsar site,' said manager Roland Gauvain.

The boat, a 5.3-metre dory, will be made available whenever possible to anyone working for the good of Alderney's marine wetlands.

'The donor wants it to have the broadest possible use so long as people are working to benefit the Ramsar site in a non-commercial way,' said Roland.

The area was the first internationally important wetland in the Bailiwick to be designated and is one of the most important seabird sites in the region.

The trust is responsible for much of the day-to-day work and is planning more than 25 visits to offshore islands and rocks within it this year.

Trips will include work to control rats affecting bird colonies as well as the first detailed survey of Les Casquets rocks in the summer.

It seems that the UFO sightings in the Bailiwick in April were part of a national trend that saw an increase in alien spotting.

Ministry of Defence records show that while there were 97 UFO sightings in 2006, that number grew last year to 135.

Aurigny pilot Ray Bowyer and his passengers saw a strange object off the coast of Alderney.

The story made headlines around the world and Captain Bowyer even appeared on the TV show, Richard and Judy, to talk about his close encounter.

The MoD took the Alderney sightings seriously and extra weight was attached to them because two pilots, who are trained observers, independently reported having seen the same object simultaneously from opposite sides.

However, the ministry doesn't investigate UFO sightings unless there is a security implication.

What the aliens want with Alderney is unclear but they'll certainly receive a good welcome if they come back again this year.

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