



Media Release from Alderney Wildlife Trust

Date: 19th November 2024

The Annual Sour Fig Pull Returns to Alderney this Weekend!

This Saturday, November 23rd, the Alderney Wildlife Trust (AWT) will be working alongside 12 Guernsey Conservation Volunteers and members of Alderney's local community to remove Sour Fig from the Braye dunes.

Why Remove Sour Fig from Alderney's Coastline?

Sour Fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*) has earned a place among the 20 most aggressive invasive plant species in coastal areas worldwide. Introduced to Alderney in the 1950s, its striking flowers often mask the ecological harm it causes. This fast-spreading plant alters soil chemistry and outcompetes native species, sometimes pushing them to extinction.

The threat posed by Sour Fig is especially severe for Alderney's fragile sand dunes—critical natural defenses against the sea. Sand dunes buffer our coastline, shielding it from storms and high tides. However, where Sour Fig takes hold, it suppresses native dune grasses whose roots stabilize the dunes and trap windblown sand. Without these grasses, the dunes become vulnerable to erosion and, in the worst cases, can collapse, exposing the land behind to severe storm damage.

The good news? Removing Sour Fig early often leads to a rapid recovery of the ecosystem. Although the cleared areas may look bare initially, by next spring, native species should begin to flourish again. Similar restoration efforts have been successful at Braye in previous years and are conducted annually at Saye, Houme Herbe, and the South Cliffs.

How to Get Involved

Despite the windy and wild weather forecast, the area should be well sheltered, and with the support of the Braye Beach hotel, hot drinks and a lunch will provide some respite and help keep everyone warm and dry. Anyone can join the volunteers at Braye dunes this Saturday, November 23rd. There are two sessions:

- Morning: 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
- Afternoon: 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

To participate, please email admin@alderneywildlife.org or call **01481 822935**.

Refreshments and a Short Talk

As a thank-you, volunteers will be treated to refreshments at the Braye Beach Hotel, courtesy of AWT. If you're unable to join the clearing but want to learn more about the impact of invasive plants like Sour Fig, come to a free talk at the Braye Beach Hotel at **1:00 pm**—no booking required.

Help us protect Alderney's precious coastline and restore its natural beauty. We look forward to seeing you there!

Ends

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 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

For further information, please contact:

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