

There's much more to a summer holiday on the island of Jersey than sunbathing on beaches. It's a fabulous place to go wild, as Caroline Mills discovers

Born to be Wild

Many viewers have watched avidly over the past three years as the trials and tribulations of a slightly-eccentric British family growing up on the Greek island of Corfu have played out on television. At the heart of the television series *The Durrells*, which came to an end in May of this year, is Gerry, a young boy whose passion for observing animals and wildlife is wholly evident.

The series was based upon Gerald

Durrell's (Gerry) autobiographical book *My Family and Other Animals*. And sometime after author and conservationist Gerald Durrell left his boyhood home in Corfu, he ultimately settled on Jersey, one of the Channel Islands. It's an island that's perfect for going wild.

It's on Jersey that Gerald, in 1959, set up the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (or Durrell, for short), an international charity working to save species from extinction.

Headquartered on the island, Durrell continues to focus on the most threatened species in the most threatened places.

Rewild Our World

The international conservation charity has focused its new strategy on 'rewilding' and has set its sights on ambitious targets to achieve by 2025 when founder, Gerald Durrell would have celebrated his 100th birthday. ►

Go wild in Jersey with magnificent walks along the rugged coastline, get close to nature and discover the island's national park. (©Jersey.com)



Jersey's magnificent coastline is one of the ecosystems that the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust is focusing on in its 'Rewild Our World' campaign. The Trust is headquartered on the island.

A key focus of that strategy is 'rewilding' people with the aim 'for more diverse, beautiful and resilient natural landscapes in which species can thrive and people can enjoy a deeper connection with nature'. Says Durrell's CEO, Dr Lesley Dickie, "We know that when people are connected to, and feel part of nature they have a greater sense of responsibility for the natural world. The extinction of species is the most poignant symbol of people's destruction of nature. By 2025, the aim is for a million people to be better connected to nature."

And that rewilding vision begins at home.

Over the next few years Durrell will focus its long-term restoration of ecosystems on ten 'rewilding sites' across the world's major terrestrial biomes. And, along with the rainforests of Sumatra and the ecosystems of Mauritius, one of those sites is the coastlands of Jersey.

At 45 square miles, and with 43 miles of coastline, the island of Jersey offers a spectacular destination for those wishing to reconnect with nature – whether by taking a visit to Jersey Zoo, founded by Gerald Durrell; by heading off on a thrilling seafari by RIB boat; or simply by walking ►

Gorillas go wild on Jersey

This year marks the 60th anniversary since Gerald Durrell set up the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. To celebrate, the organization, in partnership with Wild in Art, has created Go Wild Gorillas, a public art trail across Jersey.

The trail consists of 40 brightly coloured, artist imagined life-size gorilla sculptures, which will be placed across the island and will lead people on a trail of discovery, not only to see the gorillas themselves, but the nature in which they are placed.

This large scale community project will bring together art and conservation to help raise funds for Durrell, in particular it will mark the launch of its fundraising efforts to build a state of the art new gorilla house at Jersey Zoo.

Go Wild Gorillas will also play an important role in Durrell's new strategy by encouraging more people to get outdoors and reconnect with nature. The art trail will come alive from 27th July until 14th October 2019, after which there will be a Grand Gorilla Auction of the artworks on 6th November 2019.

You can follow @GoWildGorillas on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



On your way to The Devil's Hole, or while walking along the north coast around the Mourier Valley, keep an eye out for the Manx loaghtan rare breed sheep, introduced by the National Trust for Jersey to manage the invasive bracken through grazing.

the coastal path around Jersey's dramatic and magnificent coastline or exploring the peaceful inland valleys by bike.

These are just a few of the opportunities to go wild on Jersey.

Gerry on Jersey

Visit Jersey Zoo, founded by Gerald Durrell, and discover the conservation work taking place across the globe by the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. The zoo provides a window into the wild, helping people connect with nature and inspires to take responsibility for the world in which we live.

You'll see meerkats, orangutans, gorillas, gibbons, lemurs in breeding programmes and many more endangered species alongside a wealth of information. There's also an excellent exhibition about Gerald Durrell's life and his contribution to animal conservation.

Visit Jersey's wetlands

Take a trip to the Jersey Wetland Centre, run by the National Trust for Jersey. On the west coast, beside the beautiful and sweeping Sr Ouen's Bay, the grass-roofed building provides a hide offering a glimpse over the St Ouen's Pond SSI and nature reserve, an important ecological area of the island. There's plenty of information on the wildlife you're likely to see, including the rare Marsh Harrier.

Discover rare orchids

Late spring and early summer is a great time to visit Jersey and, in particular, Noir Pré, a collection of wildflower meadows near the Jersey Wetland Centre. For in late May and early June, the meadows burst into colour – or purple to be exact – with thousands of wild orchids, including the rare Jersey

Orchid, native to the island. It's a wondrous site, there are paths around the meadow and you'll spot many other wildflowers, too.

Visit a collapsed cave

It's a short walk downhill from the car park/bus stop beside the Priory Inn Pub at St Mary to view the Devil's Hole, an exceptionally dramatic blowhole that has been eroded into Jersey's coastline over thousands of years. Peer down into the hole from the viewing platform and watch as the waves crash in through the tunnel entrance onto the rocks.

While here, keep a look out for the Manx Ioaghtan sheep, a rare breed that has been introduced to the island by the National Trust for Jersey to manage, through grazing, the bracken that has taken over the heaths on this middle stretch of the north coast.



Visit the Jersey Wetland Centre to view one of Jersey's most important ecological sites on the island and where you can see all kinds of wildlife.



Keep an eye out for rare birds such as the puffin or chough and, not so rare oystercatcher, shown here.

Look out for rare birds on the north coast

While on the north coast, take a look out for some rare birdlife on the island. Choughs were 'extinct' from the island and, owing to the Birds on the Edge programme (a partnership between the States of Jersey, the National Trust for Jersey and Durrell), there are now around twelve breeding pairs, most often sited on the north coast. There are also about a dozen puffins, which are only seen around the rocky cliffs of Plémont, an area once occupied by a complex of unsightly buildings but now returned to nature.

The nesting sites are protected but the walks along the north coast, from the atmospheric ruins of Grosnez Castle on the northwest tip, beyond Plémont and Devil's Hole to Vicard Point and Rozel on the northeast tip are outstanding. There's a coastal path that runs the length from which you'll enjoy a majestically rugged wildness.

Discover Jersey's south coast wilderness

If you believe, by walking on the north coast, that you've seen all there is to see, think ►

Take the short, downhill walk to The Devil's Hole, a collapsed cave and blowhole where the waves crash onto the rocks.



again! Jersey's southern coastline is totally different. There are big bays, including St Aubin's and St Brelade's on the south coast, but one of the best places to go wild is a walk around Noirmont Point, down onto the beautiful, secluded Portelet Bay and back uphill to wander around Portelet Common.

The coastal views are stunning but the scenery, flora and fauna even more so. You'll see incredible birdlife, butterflies, reptiles (keep a look out for the emerald European Green Lizard), together with coastal colour

including heather on the commons, bright gorse and the garish, tropical colours of various succulents, which look very showy but, as non-native invasive species, are actually causing the island ecological problems.

Take a nighttime walk on the seabed

Jersey's tides, particularly around the southeast coast, are some of the largest in the world, with approximately 40 feet of

water 'coming and going' every day. These tides create an incredible underworld, and it's possible to take guided walks onto this otherwise treacherous daily extension to Jersey. In particular you can book an informative guided Bioluminescence Walk with Jersey Walk Adventures to view the glow-in-the-dark creatures that light up the seabed at night. There are also oyster trails, wild vegetable foraging and 'moonwalks' across this strange landscape, formed by the daily tides. ►

➔ Discover Where to Stay:

**Durrell Wildlife Camp,
Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
La Profonde Rue, Trinity
Jersey, JE3 5BP
Tel: 01534 860097
www.durrell.org
Open March to November**

Enjoy a luxury glamping experience with a difference by staying in a geodome glamping pod in the grounds of Jersey Zoo. There are 12 pods, including two fully adapted for wheelchair occupancy, sleeping couples or a family of four (cots and high chairs also provided) with real beds, futons and a wood-burning stove. Each pod maintains privacy by beautiful living willow hedges and has its own fully-equipped kitchen, en-suite washroom with toilet and shower, mains electrics and outdoor decking area with seating and sun loungers. Tepees are also available with some pods for additional children.

A central orchard around which the pods are sited provides a lovely communal picnic space while there is also a communal safari lodge with comfy seating, lockers and a barbecue patio.

Most pods have views over either the Lemur Lake or the Orangutan area. Expect to wake up to the sounds of wildlife! All guests staying at the wildlife camp receive repeat-visit access to Jersey Zoo during opening hours for the duration of their stay. There are also, exclusive to glamping guests, special dusk tours of the zoo with a keeper after public closing time.

All profit from stays at the Durrell Wildlife Camp go towards Durrell's mission of conservation.

**Rozel Camping Park
La Grande Route de Rozel
St Martin
Jersey
JE3 6AX
Tel: 01534 855200
www.rozelcamping.com
Open May to September**

This delightful campsite offers grass pitches with or



without electric hook-up for tents, motorhomes and touring caravans, some with magnificent views to the French coast.

The site also has fully equipped, pre-erected tents that sleep up to five people.

Two clean amenity blocks provide free hot showers, toilets, a laundry and washing up area plus an adapted washroom for guests with disabilities. There's also a family changing area, small shop, games room and heated outdoor swimming pool.

The site is located in the northeast of the island, with quiet lanes and plenty of footpaths for walks to the tiny coastal village of Rozel with its harbour.

**Hideaway Motorhome and
Caravan Stopover
Beaumont Hill
Jersey
JE3 7YA
Tel: 01534 759082
Bookings taken via pitchup.
com
Open all year**



This adults-only site is the most convenient when visiting the south and west of the island and is also the most convenient to reach from the port in St Helier. The stopover site is like an aire and has just five hardstanding pitches, each with hook-up and water.

Facilities for grey waste, chemical toilet and rubbish disposal are available but there are no toilets or showers so motorhomes and caravans must be totally self-contained.

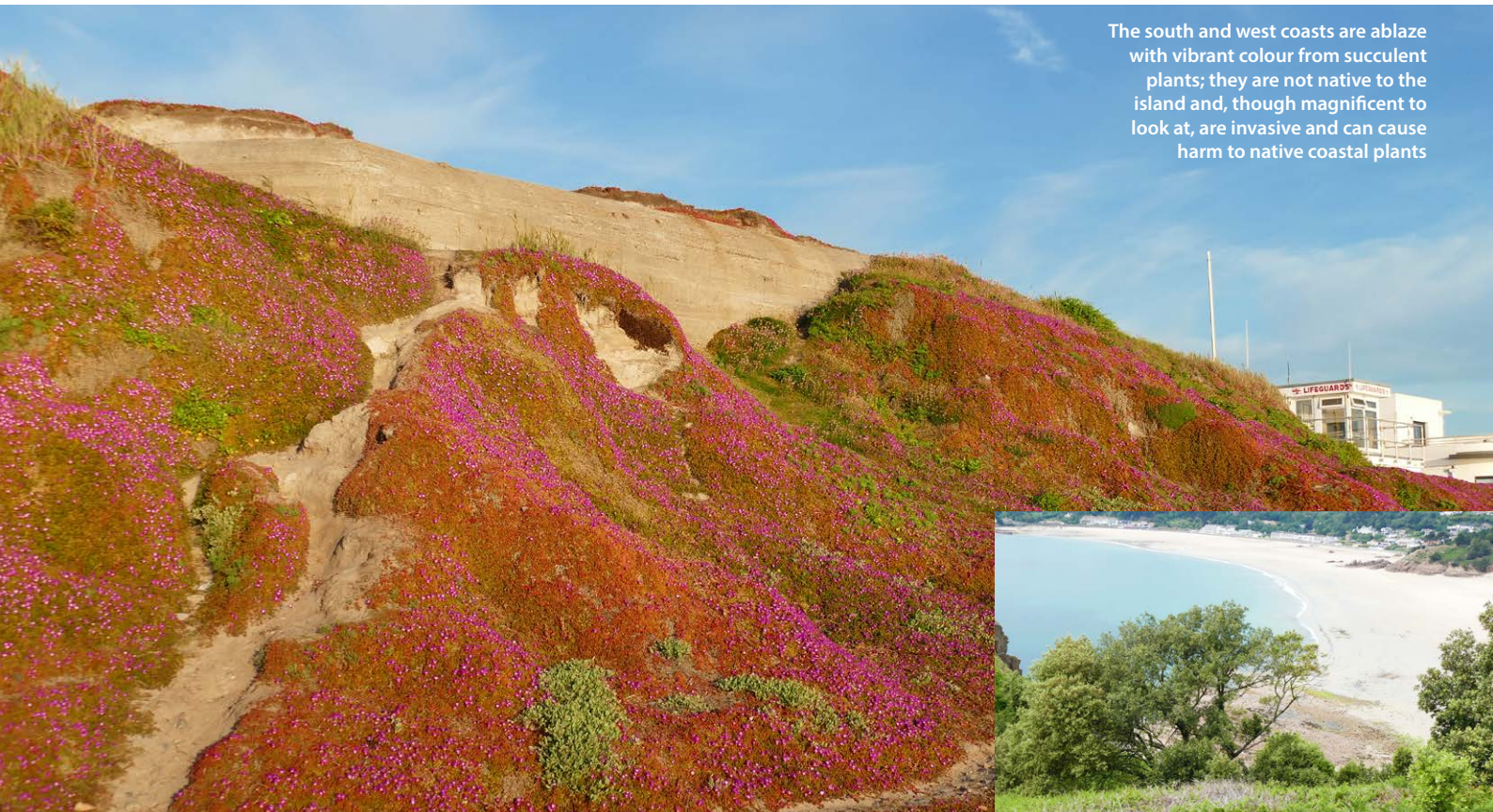
The area is adjacent to a picturesque wildflower bank and overlooked by trees. It is the only site on the island that is open all year.

A permit is required for touring caravans and campervans/motorhomes to enter Jersey. This is obtained when booking your campsite (the campsite will apply for the permit on your behalf).

Caravans must make just two journeys to and from the campsite/port.

Motorhomes may travel around the island with a permit although, due to the narrow roads, it is recommended to leave the motorhome as a base at a campsite and enjoy the walking and cycling on the island, or use the extensive bus network.

The south and west coasts are ablaze with vibrant colour from succulent plants; they are not native to the island and, though magnificent to look at, are invasive and can cause harm to native coastal plants



➔ Discover More:

Jersey Tourist Board
www.jersey.com

Jersey Zoo & Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
www.durrell.org

National Trust for Jersey
www.nationaltrust.je

Jersey Seafaris
www.jerseyseafaris.com

Jersey Walk Adventures (bioluminescence walks)
www.jerseywalkadventures.co.uk

Getting there:

Condor Ferries
www.condorferries.co.uk

Condor Ferries operates a year-round service connecting the UK through Poole and Portsmouth to the Channel Islands (Guernsey and Jersey) and to St Malo in France.

Two high-speed ferries, the Condor Liberation and Condor Rapide, take cars, campervans, touring caravans and motorhomes alongside foot passengers while the Commodore Clipper provides a longer, conventional service for all-weather, year-round crossings, including overnight with cabins.

All ferries offer a cafeteria-style restaurant with delicious hot meals, bars and comfortable airline-style seating, with upgrades available to separate lounges.



Explore Jersey's archipelago

There is little more thrilling than the excitement and speed of a RIB boat ride, but when it is combined with a cut of the engine to float around and gently explore Jersey's archipelago of thousands of tiny islands, and witness an abundance of wildlife including seals, dolphins and seabirds, it's a double whammy.

Jersey Seafaris take passengers on wildlife excursions to beautiful Les Écréhous and Les Minquiers, where you can explore the peaceful, middle-of-nowhere rocks and sandbanks surrounded by jewel-like seas. The archipelago is a part of Jersey National Park and also an internationally recognised Ramsar Wetlands site – a marine version of a national park.

Cycle through Jersey's peaceful heartlands

There's more to Jersey than just coastline and you'll find plenty of wild and peaceful places to discover inland. Take Hamptonne Woods, for example, where you can follow the Crapaud (French for toad) Trail or St Peter's Valley, with a brand new traffic-free cycle trail from which you can see idyllic marshy water meadows brimming with wildflowers and, in the woods, red squirrels.. ■