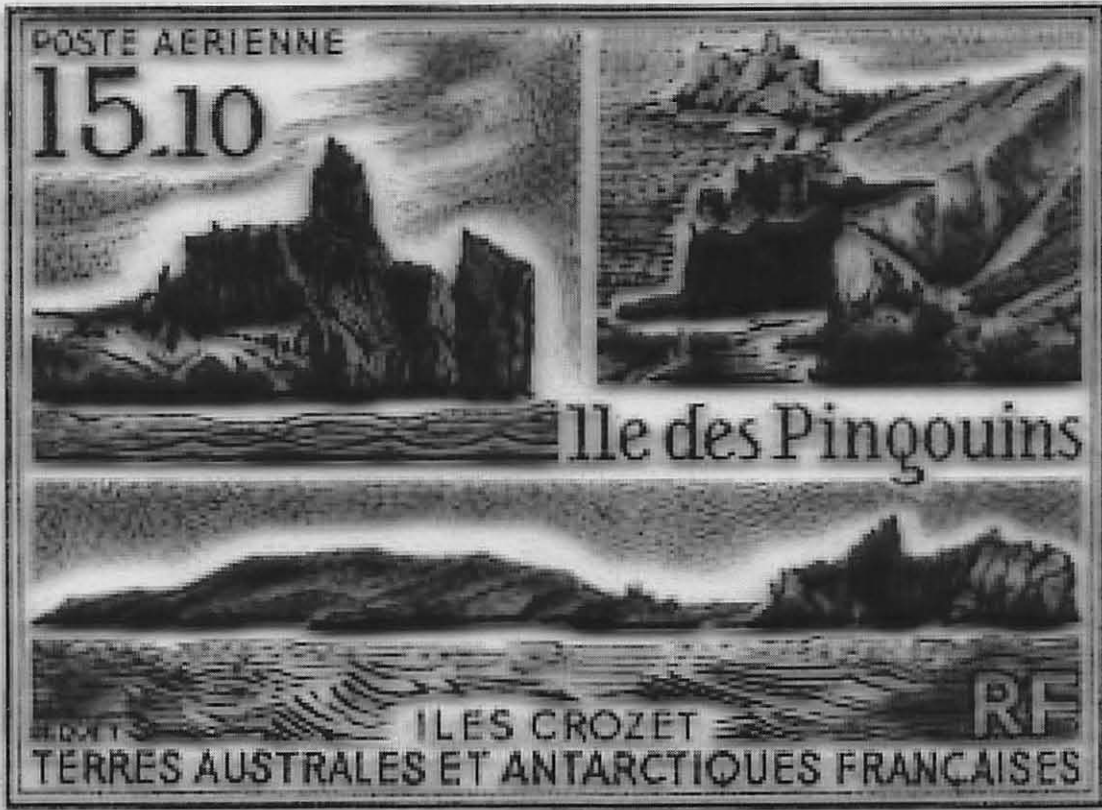


The Kerguelen Archipelago is situated at 49°20' South, 70°20' East, midway between Africa, Antarctica and Australia. Kerguelen is a French possession, lying some 13,000 km from France in the Southern Indian Ocean. The main island occupies measures roughly 120 km by 140 km, occupies 6,675 sq km and is surrounded by around 300 other smaller islands, reefs and rocks, forming an archipelago of 7,215 sq km.

Kerguelen has been continually occupied by scientists since 1949, with a population varying between 50 and 100. The French Base at Port aux Français is large and well appointed, boasting a hospital, restaurant, library, sports centre, cinema and chapel (Notre Dame des Vents). The base is shared with CNES (The French National Space Centre) who operate a base dedicated to the tracking of satellites. For national security reasons, the base needed to be on French soil in the Southern Hemisphere, and Kerguelen is ideally placed to track Ariane rockets launched from Kourou in French Guiana and by the Japanese Space Programme from Tanegashima and by the Indians from Shriarikota. The station was constructed by Alcatel and is manned by personnel from CEGELEC. The bases are supplied from Reunion Island by the Marion Dufresne, which makes two or three trips a year to visit The Crozet Islands, Terre Adelie and Amsterdam/St Paul.





Kerguelen