

LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE ADVISORY GROUP

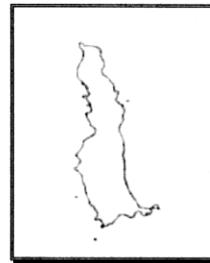
The Aims of the Group are: 1) to provide a nucleus of expertise on the marine habitats and waters surrounding Lundy; 2) to provide a forum for exchanging views on present and proposed activities around Lundy; 3) to safeguard the interests of all those who use the waters around Lundy and its natural resources; and 4) to advise the Management Group for the Reserve / Special Area of Conservation.

Established: 1985

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Notes of the 28th meeting of the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group

(formerly known as the Lundy Marine Consultation Group, of which this was the 46th meeting)

held on **Thursday, 23rd October 2008** in the Council Chamber,
Bideford Town Hall, Bideford at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Keith Hiscock	(KH)	Marine Biological Association	Chair
Mike Deaton	(MD)	Appledore Sub-Aqua Club	
Nicola Saunders	(NS)	Lundy Warden	
Chris Mandry	(CM)	British Sub-Aqua Club/Ilfracombe S-AC	
Damian Board	(DB)	Appledore Sub-Aqua Club	
Leigh Hanks	(LH)	<i>Obsession</i> Charters	
Andrew Bengay	(AB)	<i>Obsession</i> Charters	
Royston Johns	(RJ)	Torridge District Council	
Steve Ashton	(SA)	Ilfracombe & N. Devon Sub-Aqua Club	
Tim Robbins	(TR)	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee	
Sarah Clark	(SC)	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee	
Cat Jones	(CR)	Devon Wildlife Trust	
Keith Denby	(KD)	Ilfracombe & N. Devon Sub-Aqua Club	
Gavin Black	(GB)	Natural England (Devon Office)	
Derek Green	(DG)	Lundy Manager	
Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society & Marine Conservation Society	Secretary

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, especially those attending for the first time.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received from: Mel Parker (Natural England) who had just started maternity leave.
2. **Notes on the last meeting, held on 17th April 2008:** Whilst there had been some improvement in the time it had taken to issue these 'notes' by the Hon. Sec., it was still felt there was room for further improvement. Otherwise, these were accepted as being a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman, KH.
3. **Matters arising:** KH brought the Group up to date with his proposal for the study of contaminants in certain sediments and organisms. Peter Henderson was unable to take appropriate samples while he was over on the island. KH had hoped to collect some himself, but he hadn't managed to dive off Lundy this summer. His plan is to collect

The following organisations sit on the Advisory Group: British Sub-Aqua Club * Devon Sea Fisheries Committee * Devon Wildlife Trust * English Heritage * Environment Agency * Landmark Trust * local dive charter interests * local diving clubs * local sea fishing interests * The Lundy Company Ltd. * Lundy Field Society * Marine Archaeological Interests * Marine Biological Association of the U.K. * Marine Conservation Society * Natural England * North Devon Coast and Countryside Service * North Devon Fishermen's Association * South-West Federation of Sea Anglers * Torridge District Council

appropriate samples, freeze and store them, and then, should funding become available at some time in the future, get them analysed for contaminants.

KH also informed the Group of the outcome of the DNA analysis undertaken on some sunset cup coral tentacle clippings he had collected in September 2007. Of the samples analysed, which had all been taken from a number of individuals from the same site, their DNA was identical – in other words, they were all 'clones' of each other and were the result of asexual reproduction. This throws up a number of further questions. For instance, is the population at Lundy self-recruiting or are larvae arriving at the island from some distance away? KH needs to collect further samples from individuals at Lundy (preferably from a variety of locations) as well as some from Plymouth populations too. He has co-authored a paper with the researcher undertaking the DNA analysis (presently in draft form) to document these findings. KD requested that, if the findings were now in the public domain, a short summary could be put on the web site.

With regard to the possible discharge of sewage tanks from the *Balmoral* and the *Waverley* whilst within Lundy waters, DG had written to the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society asking that these vessels do not empty their tanks at Lundy.

KH had received assurances that the Marine Bill would be included in the next Queen's Speech (at the start of December), indicating that it would be debated during the next parliamentary session.

4. **Lundy Management Forum:** [Note – this meeting took place at Natural England's offices in Exeter on 24th October 2008, the morning after the Advisory Group meeting being reported upon here. Both KH (representing the Lundy Field Society) and RI (representing the Advisory Group) attended.

RI reported on the main points which had been raised at the Advisory Group meeting. No additional marine-related matters were raised during the meeting. The date of the next meeting of the Management Forum is planned to take place on 24th April 2009, the day after the next Advisory Group meeting.

5. **Report from the Reserve:** the following report was presented by Nicola Saunders, Lundy Warden.

Warden's Report (April – October 2008)

5.1 Staff

- 5.1.1 We had a seasonal volunteer, Tim Baldwin, on Lundy for the summer. He was an excellent addition to the team and greatly assisted the conservation work on Lundy over the summer months. Having an additional pair of hands was a particular help for Chris, the ranger and highlighted the benefits of such a position so we will be recruiting a volunteer for next summer.

5.2 Human Activity

- 5.2.1 **RIB:** Despite poor weather it has been an excellent year for RIB use. It was launched at the start of the season and has been in the water more than it has been out, with a noticeable increase in use compared to previous years.

The Honda engines were replaced with 2 stroke Mariners. Traditionally the RIB is brought in over winter and stored in the village. However, we are hoping to keep it down in the bay this winter so that it is still accessible and available for use, should the weather allow.

5.2.2 Fishing and potting activity:

- 5.2.2.1 **11 May – Angling Infringement**

A Motor boat was reported fishing off Knoll Pins by James Leonard - SW & NS went alongside and had a chat, gave zoning scheme leaflets & 'WISE' DVD - the vessel was from Swansea and they had not realised they were in a NTZ. They moved off as soon as they were asked and started fishing south of Rat Island.

5.2.2.2 15 June – Angling Infringement

Clive Pearson (*Jessica Hettie*) reported two vessels (18ft outboard day boats) fishing off the Knoll Pins. He informed them that it was prohibited and they moved off to the south end. Clive did not get the names of the vessels. After they left, he found an injured Red band fish floating on the surface of the water.

5.2.2.3 30 June – Potential Potting Infringement

On the evening of 30th June a visitor reported a string of pots at the Knoll Pins. We checked at 8 am the following morning, but nothing was found.

5.2.2.4 30 August – Angling Infringement

Boa Preskidor – this vessel was reported fishing just south of the Sugar Loaf. She was informed by Clive Pearson (*Jessica Hettie*) of the NTZ and she moved up to the Knoll Pins, where CP had further words. Sophie and I did a patrol in the RIB and found them on the west coast off Jenny's Cove. We gave them a copy of the DVD & Zoning scheme.

5.2.3 Diving: Resident dive groups on Lundy were down by a third in 2008, largely attributed to the weather.

5.2.4 Seaflex moorings: Anthony Glover (*Datchet*) placed 3 the new Seaflex moorings in the Landing Bay in June.

5.3 Wildlife

5.3.1 Grey Seals: See note on seal survey below (7b).

5.3.2 Cetaceans:

5.3.2.1 Dolphins: One reported pod of Bottle-nosed dolphins in October; 6 sightings of Common dolphins, between June & October. Pods of 10 upwards the largest of 60-100+ on 18 Sept; 11 reported sightings of "Dolphin sp.". A total of just 18 reported sightings.

5.3.2.2 Porpoises: 13 reported sightings.

5.3.2.3 Minke Whale: Only one logged sighting on 24th August, 3 Minke's seen from *Jessica Hettie* off the *Robert*; Verbal report also reached me that Minke's were seen SE of Lundy on 28th September.

5.3.3 Basking Sharks: Only one reported sighting on 2 August, 2 sharks off the East Coast.

NB. Many of the charter boats, and dive boats see far more that we do from the island. It is really important to log sightings of all species and if possible, with your support I'd like to set up a system whereby any sightings are reported to us on Lundy.

5.3.4 Seabirds:

5.3.4.1 A promising year for the puffins. The usual suspects were back at St. Philips Stone & we estimate 4 pairs bred successfully. There appeared to be an increase in the numbers present at this site with a lot of mid-season milling about & I suspect these were non-breeders prospecting. Puffins were also seen at 2 sites in Jenny's Cove, which are the first land-based sightings here for 10 years, and with puffins seen taking fish into two separate burrows at one of the Jenny's sites, we can assume successful breeding. Next year could be an exciting year for the puffins if this trend continues. A full report will be produced for the LFS Journal.

- 5.3.4.2 Sophie and I completed the annual productivity surveys for kittiwakes, guillemots & fulmars and a full report will be produced for the LFS Journal.
- 5.3.4.3 The four-yearly Seabird Census took place this year, funded by Natural England. The surveyors were David Price, Peter Slader and RSPB personnel (including Helen Booker). Interim results are 'positive' for guillemot (up from 2,321 in 2004 to 3,302 in 2008) and razorbill (up from 841 in 2004 to 1,045 in 2008), but not so good for kittiwake (stable at 148 in 2004 and 151 in 2008, but huge decline since 1981 when 933 were recorded). Of particular note however is the dramatic increase in Manx shearwater numbers – up from 154 'responses' in 2004 to 560 'responses' in 2008.

5.4 Monitoring

- 5.4.1 **Temperature loggers:** The jetty temperature logger was retrieved & replaced on 8th August: mean water temperature was 12.9 °C; max. of 18.3 °C; & min. of 8.1 °C; The logger on the *Robert* was retrieved and replaced a week or so later. Unfortunately although still transmitting the data could not be retrieved. It was sent back to the UK distributors who were also unable to retrieve the data due to a fault on the logger. Although it is not looking promising, there is still some hope as it is now on it's way back to the manufactures in Canada, where they hope to be able to download the data.
- 5.4.2 **Harvey Survey** – see later report by Keith Hiscock (7c).
- 5.4.3 **Seal Survey** (Stephen Westcott) – see later report by Gavin Black (7b).
- 5.4.4 **New cup coral sites** – During Keith's survey more scarlet & gold star (*Balanophyllia regia*) cup coral sites were found on the north side of Rat Island with ~ 300 individuals across at least 3 sites. The intention is to photograph the sites for future monitoring, but tides have not allowed this to date.

5.5 Raising Awareness

- 5.5.1 **Media Interest:** we have had a number of media visits over the summer, the most notable of which were: BBC Countryfile Magazine, BBC Westcountry, The Times & BBC Coast.
- 5.5.2 **School Visits:** Have continued with mixed success, the weather this season has lead to a few cancellations.

5.6 Interpretation

- 5.6.1 **Leaflets:**
 - 5.6.1.3 The new free **Wildlife leaflet** has been produced and became available in July – we had 5000 copies printed, but apparently under estimated it's popularity as almost half of these had been distributed by the end of August, so a further print run was ordered in September.
 - 5.6.1.3 The **A5 Zoning Scheme flyer** ran out this year and the opportunity was taken to re-design this in line with the new 'Lundy Style'
 - 5.6.1.3 The **Bird leaflet** had also been re-produced and has currently gone to proof, so should be completed within the next couple of weeks
- 5.6.2 **Beach Building:** The Beach Building project is underway, we have put the project out to tender and have started to receive project specifications.

- 5.6.3 The new **marine DVD** has been produced and distributed – you should all have received a copy in the post.

Nicola Saunders, Lundy Warden

Comments arising from the Warden's Report:

- NS & DG have been trying to rectify problems with the Seaflex moorings in the Landing Bay. Essentially, the sleeve over the mooring rope rides up and causes the buoy on the surface to flip over. They have tried various ways to remedy this but as yet to no avail. It was suggested that they contact Seaflex and suggest they put it right!
- NS requested help from the diving/angling charter skippers in formally recording their sightings of cetaceans. Numbers in the island logbook are quite low, but it is thought this may be due to under-recording. After some discussion it was suggested that NS draws up a recording form (on waterproof paper), copies of which could be distributed to, and kept on board, the various regularly-visiting boats. It was also suggested a standard cetacean ID sheet be included too.
- KH pointed out that the low water monitoring site for the scarlet and gold star cup coral in Devil's Kitchen may have been confused with another very similar site just 15 m away. KH would provide NS with the relevant photographs for re-location of the correct site.
- KD requested that a digital copy of the new Zoning Scheme map be e-mailed to him so that he could put it up on the web site.

6. Beach Road update:

DG brought the Group up to date with progress on the repairs to the Beach Road. Work was on schedule. There had been a 'slight snag' with funding, but DG was optimistic that the current shortfall could be sorted out. £177k had been raised so far by the direct appeal. Phase I (the section of road from the Trinity House landing stone to the top) was now complete. Phase II (from the landing stone to the Beach Building) had just started and would continue over the winter. The old (original) slipway on the Landing Beach had been refurbished. This slipway is critical to the island's resident community as, should the beach road between the jetty and the landing stone become impassable, goods and provisions would have to be landed on the Landing Beach (as was done in the past). Jobs still to be seen to included securing the Castle; dealing with the numerous small caves undermining the road; making improvements to the Beach Building; and improving the slope of the 'new' slipway.

AB asked if any external lighting would be added as part of the 'improvements' to the Beach Building. DG said no – that would not fit in with the Lundy 'experience'!

7. Projects:

Brief updates were given on the following topics:

7a Sediment biota and biotope mapping in the Lundy SAC:

GB brought the Group up to date with this project which had yet to be completed. The biotope mapping aspect could not be completed until the Marine & Coastguard Agency (MCA) had undertaken their planned acoustic bathymetric surveys in the N. Devon area. These had had to be postponed. However, the survey of sediment biota had been completed by Ambios consultants. 52 grab samples had been taken using a Hammond grab. A total of 478 species had been found in these (a very high number for sedimentary infauna), which could be divided into 19 distinct 'communities' (level 4 biotopes).

KH asked if the eventual biotope map could be quality assured before publication, as interpretation of previous remote sensing data by workers unfamiliar with Lundy' waters had included a number of obvious errors. GB agreed that this would be done.

7b Seal survey 2008:

The grey seal *Halichoerus grypus* is a 'feature' of the SAC and the resident population requires monitoring on a regular basis. Stephen Westcott, an independent seal expert. Had been contracted by Natural England to survey Lundy's seals over a 12 month period. He had recently been on the island for a week studying the seals, assessing their haul-out sites, the gender proportions; the pupping sites; and starting a photo-ID image database. Stephen had found a total of 30 pups (a remarkably high number, as typically only about 25 or so are found over the whole pupping season!). One of these was found dead in the water; 19 were found in sea caves and 10 on boulder beaches. The most important single sea cave sites were Seal's Hole (5 pups), Aztec Seals Hole (4, plus one in an adjoining cave) and Jenny's Seal Hole (3). By far the most important remote beach site was Halfway Wall Bay beach (5 pups). 8 live pups were found on the south coast, 12 on the west coast and 9 on the east coast. None were found on the North coast. Stephen intends to map all of the island's caves once the pupping season is over, both at low water springs and low water neaps.

7c Intertidal biota – 60 years on (PowerPoint presentation):

Keith Hiscock gave an illustrated presentation to describe the survey of Lundy shores undertaken at the end of August and beginning of September, 60 years after the surveys of Leslie and Clare Harvey. A report was also circulated. Ten biologists had taken part and eleven locations had been surveyed.

Overall, the same species reported by Harvey were again recorded in 2008 and some additional species were found. Non-native species recorded in 2008 were harpoon weed *Asparagopsis armata* (which had been recorded by Clare Harvey as the '*Falkenbergia rufulanosa*' tetrasporic phase.) and wireweed *Sargassum muticum* (which was first observed at Lundy in 2000 by Ian Reach). *Asparagopsis* was found as the gametophyte (harpoon weed) stage in a rockpool at Devil's Kitchen – the first time that it has been seen intertidally at Lundy. The Australasian barnacle *Elminius modestus* was found on the wall of the old jetty and opposite on rocks. The abundance of some species may be less than that present in the late 1940's. 'Highlight' finds were *Elysia viridis* present on *Codium* sp. and the small starfish *Asterina phylactica* in an upper shore pool at South Lametor and possibly in the *Corallina* turf samples from north of Rat Island. Several colonies of the scarlet and gold star coral *Balanophyllia regia* were found, significantly increasing its known occurrence. The team was pleased to find both species of stalked jellyfish recorded by Harvey as these had previously been noted as 'not found' in recent years.

Samples of algae (as pressed specimens) have been taken to the Natural History Museum and are being further checked by Juliet Brodie. Field records are held by Keith Hiscock for general surveys and by Nova Mieszkowska for 'MarClim' species. Samples of animals including the *Corallina* turf samples have been taken to the Marine Biological Association and are being checked/identified by Keith Hiscock. Images taken by survey personnel have been copied to Keith Hiscock.

Keith thanked Natural England for providing core funding, all of the expedition members for their hard work and Nicola Saunders and Sophie Wheatley for transport in the Warden's RIB to sites.

7d No Take Zone monitoring – latest results:

GB brought the Group up to date with this on-going project. The potting survey had taken place this summer but no diving element was undertaken. Miles Hoskin was still assessing the findings. Initial results showed there to be no significant changes compared to the situation in 2007. There appeared to be a slight increase in the overall size of lobsters, but not an increase in their numbers. Miles is currently preparing a 5-year report of the project and also writing a number of papers.

7e Lobster tagging project (PowerPoint presentation):

Sarah Clark (Marine Environmental Fisheries Officer, DSFC) gave a presentation on DSFC's lobster-tagging project off the N. Devon coast. This study aimed to track the movement of lobsters and to assess their growth rates. Approximately 930 lobsters had been tagged using yellow Floy streamer tags, each with a unique four digit number, and released along the North Devon coast and around Lundy Island. The majority of lobsters tagged were undersized or berried lobsters, although 275 lobsters from the No Take Zone were tagged (including lobsters over 90mm carapace length), and then returned to the sea. Fishermen have been keen to take part in the programme and have been reporting tagged lobster recaptures. Each lobster recapture report is entered into a draw with a prize of £100. Draws will take place every 6 months for a period of two years and is funded by Natural England. The response from fishermen has been very positive and Sarah expressed her thanks to all those who had returned tags. The project had been running for since June 2008 and as well as tagging lobsters, information has been gathered from on-board fishing vessel survey work on the number and size of lobsters being caught and retained and those being returned to the sea, in order to look at the productivity and viability of the fishery. Sarah was now at the stage of collating and mapping the results already obtained and is looking forward to receiving further recapture reports from the fishermen next year. Funding is being looked into by DSFC to develop and continue the tagging programme in 2009.

CM asked that the Group 'officially' expressed its support of this project to the DSFC. KH agreed that he would write to the Chief Fisheries Officer, Keith Bower, in the hope that this would encourage continuation of this very worthwhile project.

7f Nekton survey – M.Sc. project:

An M.Sc. student at Plymouth University, Danielle Gabb, had carried out a project at Lundy investigating local fish and crustacean populations using a remote underwater video camera. The camera was fixed to one end of a stick with mackerel bait at the other end. The stick was then lowered close to the seabed in a number of locations. These included being positioned over hard rock and soft sediments, both inside and outside the NTZ. A standard filming period of 15 minutes was adopted.

The results showed 12 species of fish and 6 species of crustacea were attracted to the bait. There appeared to be no significant differences between the 'soft' and 'hard' habitat types. Goldsinny wrasse was the most populous species within the NTZ and lesser spotted dogfish outside the NTZ. Recommendations were made as to how the study could be taken further.

8. Any other business: The following points were mentioned:-

- GB informed the Group that an M.Sc. student from Exeter University, Alex MacDonald, had undertaken a study of porpoises off Ilfracombe using hydrophones. The study had lasted for two months (June/July 2008) and had found an increase in porpoise activity at night.

- NS thanked all those who had contributed photographs for the new series of leaflets.
- RI had been asked to raise a number of points on behalf of Dr Jean-Luc Solandt of the Marine Conservation Society to do with the NTZ, specifically for the attention of the Devon Sea Fisheries Committee and Natural England. These had already been forwarded by means of e-mail to the individuals in question. His points were:
 1. What research will be done by appropriate authorities to make an assessment of the number of pots that should be allowed to be set in the wider marine reserve and SAC? Will this be set around a socio-economic baseline relevant to some set base date of use, or will the number be based on the ecology of the site, and sustainable fishing effort?
 2. Is it unprecedented for Lundy to be potted at all seasons? Should there be the consideration of a seasonal 'potting window' in order to prevent 'ghost-fishing' by pot-gear which cannot be retrieved during times of inclement weather?
 3. Does NE assume that the site objectives for areas such as Lundy will require a limit on the potting effort for future MCZs?
 4. Is there a case that the removal of lobsters (a key predator) may be indirectly compromising the natural reef features by allowing 'escapes' of their natural food source - therefore be relevant to an appropriate assessment?
 5. I'm surprised that the GPS of the encroaching vessel was an excuse for not prosecuting the offending fisherman - surely it is the responsibility of the fisherman to make sure the GPS reads correctly?

It was agreed that TR and GB between them would address these points directly with Jean-Luc.

- 9. Date of next meeting: Thursday, 23rd April 2009** to be held at 7.00 pm in Torridge District Council's Committee Room, Riverbank House, Chanters Lane, Bideford.