



# LUNDY MARINE CONSULTATION GROUP

c/o The Honorary Secretary  
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## Notes of the 15th Meeting of the Consultation Group

held on Thursday, 24th September 1992 in the Council Chamber,  
Town Hall, Bridge Street, Bideford at 7.00 pm.

### Present:

R. Kimberley	(Devon Sea Fisheries and M.A.F.F.)	Chair
N. Downes	(Devon Sea Fisheries District)	
L. Hawke	(M.A.F.F.)	
J. Puddy	(Lundy Island: Landmark Trust/Lundy Company)	
S. Welton	(Marine Conservation Society)	
S. Pullen	(Worldwide Fund for Nature)	
S. Warman	(English Nature)	
I. Knight	(Torridge District Council)	
R. Irving	(Lundy Field Society)	Secretary

### 1. Apologies for absence:

Robin Evans	(Landmark Trust)
Andrew Gibson	(Lundy Warden)
Joan Edwards	(Devon Wildlife Trust)

2. Notes on the last meeting, held on Thursday, 19th March 1992.  
These were accepted as being an accurate account of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising: It was regretted that Andrew Gibson was not present so that he could elaborate on his statement that the amount of shellfish removed from the Reserve had increased since its designation. John Puddy stated that there had been an increase in the number of pots set between the island and the mainland this season, but that the number within the Reserve had decreased. The area close inshore off the southern half of the east side was being used less for storing catches.

4. Report from the Reserve: John Puddy presented this in Andrew Gibson's absence. See pages at end of this summary.

5(i) EN MNR Information signs at Bideford and Ilfracombe: Steve Warman confirmed that replacement, more "friendly", signs were on their way. He apologised for EN's delay in producing them. They should be in place by next spring. John Puddy had seen the drawings

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for these and welcomed them. The tape recording which informed passengers aboard the Oldenburg of the MNR had been well received and meant that all visitors to the island are now informed about the MNR. Ian Knight suggested that further information could be made available, including, perhaps, "workpacks" for children.

5(ii) Preparation of the MNR Management Plan: Work on this had been delayed but it was now nearing completion. As well as descriptive sections, it would also include a work programme with a detailed list of prescriptive tasks to be carried out by the Warden and others. The Plan would incorporate both marine and terrestrial management elements. It was important for these to be agreed soon so that bids could be submitted within EN for funding for next year. Neil Downes also pointed out this was also the case for DSFC funds. The draft Plan would be sent to all members of the Consultation Group by the end of October asking for comments. EN, DSFC and LT between them would sort out the implementation of the work programme.

5(iii) Formation of an EN Management Committee: Having discussed this idea with a number of parties, Steve Warman explained that he thought a formal Management Committee would not be necessary. EN and DSFC would meet regularly to discuss the running of the Reserve, the minutes of such meetings being available for others to see. The Secretary, Robert Irving, would be willing to represent the views of the Group to EN/DSFC as and when appropriate.

The discussion which followed included the following points:

- \* Publicity - should the MNR be better publicised? EN could use trade fairs (e.g. "Fish West") to get their intentions over, suggested Len Hawke. Steve Warman explained that EN intended to promote the MNR as a place where marine conservation can be seen to be working. It was LT's job to promote Lundy as a place to visit. There was a tricky balance needed here. EN's intention was not to encourage boatloads of divers into the Reserve. John Puddy saw no conflict in aims between EN and LT. If divers came to stay on the island, there could be a certain amount of control over their activities; keeping an eye on the occasional short-stay boat was tricky.
- \* Reassurance - Neil Downes pointed out that MNRs have an unfortunate stigma attached to them: they certainly haven't gone down well in the fishing fraternity. The Management Plan was important to "hang everything else on". Steve Warman confirmed that it was EN's intention that fishing, provided it was ecologically sustainable and that no damage to non-target species was incurred, would continue at Lundy in perpetuity. It was important to show that the fishery here was properly managed.

6. Marine Consultation Areas: Sian Pullen kindly brought the Group up to date with the Department of the Environment's plans for MCAs. These have been in existence in Scotland for a number of years. The Lundy MNR had been one of 13 put forward by DoE for England at the beginning of the year. 130-140 replies to the consultation document have been received by DoE covering all of these MCAs (the Secretary had submitted comments on behalf of the Group to be included in the reply by the MCS). Comments were widely disparate, with many feeling

the concept didn't go far enough. MAFF had recommended that MCAs be shelved for the time being. It's possible they may be amalgamated with the new EC Habitats Directive.

Neil Downes pointed out that it had been a hurriedly constructed document which fell flat on its face. There were far too many errors present - for instance, the Lundy MCA boundary did not match up with the coordinates given. There were even reservations by EN and the Countryside Council for Wales. However, with the area being proposed being larger than the MNR itself, there was an implicit acknowledgement that activities outside the MNR could affect marine life within it.

7. The No-Fishing Zone off the east coast - one year on: This was brought into effect by DSFC at the end of June 1991, and appeared to be working well. Fishermen have kept to the agreement and were to be thanked for doing so. There had been no gear set in the area of the Landing Bay, so craft had been able to manoeuvre without hindrance.

This year about 100 pots had been worked along the west side of the island on short strings. The east side may be used for storing pots during bad weather, but not for fishing purposes. Five boats had been working the island this year: 2 from Port Isaac, 2 from Ilfracombe and 1 from Bideford.

Robert Irving expressed his concern about pots still being able to be used close in to the east coast where large numbers of delicate sea fans were known to occur. Would there be a chance of extending the Zone right up to the shore here? Neil Downes thought that might be asking too much of the pot fishermen. He went on to explain that DSFC had actively been looking into the possibility of using the MNR for fisheries research purposes, perhaps initiating a lobster seeding programme. This, however, would cost in the region of £50,000 to establish. Prior to this project being undertaken, it would clearly be helpful if shellfish catches from within the MNR could be monitored in some way.

Sian Pullen asked if the use of tangle nets within the MNR could be reviewed, as reports elsewhere showed that these are responsible for a large "bycatch", including seals. Len Hawke explained that target species for this method of fishing in this area were likely to be turbot, ray and pollack. DSFC were currently reviewing the landing of crab claws, which may or may not have been caught incidentally by tangle nets. One licence for tangle netting within the MNR had been issued this year but it hadn't been taken up.

8. Dredging licence application, 12 miles N of Ilfracombe: Civil and Marine Ltd. made an application to the Crown Estate for a production licence to extract 850,000 tonnes of aggregate per annum from area 394, N of Ilfracombe. The advice of a firm of consultants was sought on the possible effects this may have on the adjacent coastline. In addition, an environmental assessment study was carried out by Wimpey Environmental, concentrating on the fisheries interest of the area. This study has not generally been well received by many of those who have seen it. It contains little information on the effect such dredging operations would have on

other forms of marine life. Most surprising was that no mention was made of the Lundy MNR in the report. The Secretary had received information from the DoE on this matter and has agreed to reply indicating the Group's concern. The precautionary approach (as promoted by the government) would place emphasis on the report showing that planned operations would not have an effect on Lundy. MAFF are due to meet with the Crown Estate Commissioners in October to discuss this matter further. It was proposed that a "before and after" survey be carried out on a test area to assess damage.

9. Any other business:

(i) Oil and Gas exploration. The 14th round of bidding for new offshore blocks was being undertaken by the DTI, including a number around Lundy (particularly to the N and W). The DTI have apparently been working closely with JNCC and EN over this. It was not certain whether a decision on granting licences had been made in August or not. Again, the Secretary agreed to write to the DTI expressing the Group's concern.

(ii) Monitoring studies. EN had commissioned a report on assessing the littoral and sublittoral monitoring work which had been carried out over a number of years on Lundy and the Isles of Scilly. This was produced in April, though Steve Warman had only just received a copy! [The synopsis page of this report is attached].

(iii) Membership of the LMCG. It was suggested that representatives of groups such as the NRA and South West Water be asked to attend meetings. The Secretary agreed to make initial approaches.

(iv) Len Hawke informed the Group that MAFF were concerned about the amount of litter present in the Bristol Channel which was drifting westwards. He asked if divers on the island had reported an increase in the amount of litter in the water. John Puddy said he wasn't aware of any, but after easterly winds there was always an accumulation of plastic material in the Landing Bay. All island rubbish except glass is incinerated, with remaining items being taken off the island. Rubbish on board the Oldenburg is taken back to the mainland. The discarded material of particular concern to MAFF is of shredded plastic sheets which float in mid-water and become tangled in fishing nets. Photographs taken by divers of such litter items would be most welcome by MAFF.

10. Dates of the next meetings:

Thursday, 25 March 1993

Thursday, 30 September 1993 (provisional)

*R. A. Kimberley* 25<sup>th</sup> March 1993.

## REPORT ON LUNDY MNR

Sea visibility: Plankton was low throughout the season, making visibility better than usual, however the poor weather conditions from mid July resulted in tremendous fluctuations in vis from then onwards.

Diving: There have been resident divers since May with few gaps, however the number of divers is slightly down on last year. Early local divers reported good diving on the west side, but a succession of easterly winds made the east side virtually undiveable. The Knoll Pins have not been so good this season, whereas Gannets Rock has been superb. There has been little signs of damage to the wrecks and almost without exception divers have responded positively to the 'Code of Conduct'. Divers would welcome a no fishing area on the east side and would adhere to any restrictions imposed. The request for divers to use SMBs around the south end has been successful. Our diving compressor gave trouble at the end of the season and will be sent off for repair during the winter months.

Interpretation: EN are producing a new sign for the Reserve, but there is no progress on a marine display in 'Seaview'. The Warden is producing an updated leaflet for the seashore.

Snorkelling: With the help of grants from EN and WWF we now have a selection of wetsuits and snorkelling gear. There is an underwater nature trail in the Landing Bay, but the bad weather has played havoc with the buoying system. For next year there will be waterproof maps and guides for the trail. Snorkelling proved popular when the weather allowed and a number of people who wanted to try it were disappointed when conditions prevented it. The trail will be featured on the first programme of the 'Really Wild Show' in the new series in Jan.

Landing Beach: The cove roadway has been completed with support walls being built at vulnerable points. Tide conditions have caused a tremendous movement of shingle both on the Landing Beach and at Hells Gate. Both beaches have a thick covering of shingle at the present time.

Marine life: The lack of plankton meant fewer sightings of Basking Shark with none being reported in July. Several were seen in August around the North End. A single Sunfish has been seen in the last two weeks. There were large numbers of sprat and Sandeel throughout the seabird breeding season. Several thousand 'By-the-wind-sailors' were washed up in the Devils Kitchen area at the end of August. <sup>Littoral</sup>Monitoring has been undertaken by EN with Dr. Keith Hiscock completing it on the high tides at the beginning of the month - AG has now established the exact vantage points for future photographic records of the Landing Bay. The seals have started breeding early with one pup reported at the end of August - numbers of seals are up with no sign of the disease reported around the Cornish coast.

Fishing: Fishing activity has been less than previous years with a noticeable reduction in potting on the East side - divers reported far more crustacea than last year on the East side and there were adult Spider Crabs seen on the nature trail for most of the season. Local fishermen seem to be concentrating on an area outside the reserve about three miles south of the island. During the spring gales a Belgian trawler spent a day in the Landing Bay repairing its nets, after it left, nearly a sackful of cut nylon was washed up on the beach - DSF were told about the incident. At the same time an Irish coaster spent several days in the Lundy Roads when its cargo of wood props shifted - whilst a large number were lost over the side only six props came ashore. Concern is being expressed about the proposed dredging to the NW of Lundy and oil exploration near to the island. A survey vessel was seen working about four miles to the east of the island for two days at the beginning of Sept.

Shore walks and talks about Lundy's marine life have been given weekly during the season and have proved popular with the visitors.

Andrew Gibson

Warden

September 1992

## Synopsis

A littoral and sublittoral marine monitoring programme has been underway in the Isles of Scilly and Lundy since 1984. It was set up by the Nature Conservancy Council to provide information on important marine habitats, long term changes in community structure and the life history (particularly longevity and growth rates) and the ecology of species of high nature conservation interest. This information was needed to determine management requirements within these two proposed Marine Nature Reserves. Annual monitoring was continued at both sites until 1991, although there were some gaps in records and little analysis had been undertaken in recent years.

This volume reports on a desk study carried out under contract to English Nature to assess the results of the monitoring programme up to 1991 and consider the most appropriate means and methods of continuing the project. This was required to contribute to the management of Lundy Marine Nature Reserve and the development of an effective marine monitoring strategy for England.

The objectives of the study were to summarise and critically review and appraise the methods and results of the work undertaken, carry out new analysis of the data collected, make recommendations for improving methodology and analysis, and identify possible new areas of research required. This work was to be undertaken in liaison with English Nature and Joint Nature Conservation Committee staff and a number of experts from outside organisations (to set this project into a wider context).

The report describes the methodology applied to field work and data analysis and presents results. The study has shown that many of the species and communities of high nature conservation interest studied are very stable, long-lived and slow recruiting, therefore vulnerable to damage. Techniques for site relocation and marking, field methodology and analysis are appraised and the costs and benefits of the work undertaken to date and possible new research or future methodology considered.

Recommendations are presented for marine monitoring in the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve, the Isles of Scilly and other statutory marine and coastal sites, set within the context of English Nature's overall philosophy, draft marine nature conservation strategy and other important British and European marine monitoring initiatives. Lundy would be the marine monitoring and research flagship for English Nature and, together with the Isles of Scilly, an important control site for monitoring studies at other sites. New technology, such as image capture and storage systems, stereo-photography and image analysis, should be investigated to improve analysis capabilities. Opportunities for working with others on marine monitoring are outlined, to improve and strengthen the support for and value of English Nature's marine nature conservation programme.

It is suggested that a marine monitoring workshop is held to consider these recommendations, paying particular attention to defining the requirements for monitoring methodology and analysis techniques and methods for the dissemination of results. The aim should be to enable data collected to be compatible with that produced by other national or international monitoring initiatives.