



# LUNDY MARINE CONSULTATION GROUP

c/o The Honorary Secretary  
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## Notes of the 17th Meeting of the Consultation Group

held on Thursday, 30th September 1993 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bridge Street, Bideford at 7.00 pm.

### Present:

Ray Kimberley	Chair, Independent
Ian Knight	Torrige District Council
Keith Bower	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee
Laurie Winsborrow	Bideford Trawlers Association
Mark Winsborrow	" " "
Alan Morton	National Rivers Authority
Brian Mander	MAFF
Bill Foster	Marine Conservation Society
John Baker	Royal Yachting Association
Joan Edwards	Devon Wildlife Trust
Tim Adkin	North Devon Heritage Coast
Brian Pointer	Lundy Island
Robert Irving	Lundy Field Society

1. Welcome to new representatives: Alan Morton, Brian Mander, Bill Foster, Tim Adkin and Brian Pointer were welcomed to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence: Sian Pullen (Worldwide Fund for Nature); Steve Mulberry (National Trust); Jane Driver (National Rivers Authority); David Townshend and Dan Laffoley (English Nature); Andrew Gibson (Lundy Warden).

3. Notes on the last meeting, held on Thursday, 25th March 1993. These were accepted as being an accurate account of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising: Laurie Winsborrow had looked into the matter of pots present off Tibbetts Point (ref. point 4 of notes from previous meeting). These were spare, empty, non-baited pots which had been left there over-winter by a Cornish boat it is thought; they could be removed from the Reserve if a request was made to do so.

5. Report from the Reserve: Andrew Gibson's report, attached to these notes, was read out by Brian Pointer.

[Agenda item 9 was brought forward to be heard at this point].

9. Proposals for a voluntary Marine Conservation Area between Ilfracombe and Combe Martin: Tim Adkin informed the Group of these proposals which are supported by Devon County Council, Devon Wildlife Trust and English Nature. The proposed boundary to the MCA would be from Hangman's Point to Ilfracombe Harbour and out to the 20 m depth contour. The prime objective of such an Area would be to raise the public's awareness of marine life along this mainland stretch of coast. It has been suggested that this may relieve some of the diving pressure on Lundy, but it was pointed out that strong tidal currents make this section of coast awkward to dive. Whilst consultations are still at an early stage, a meeting has already been held with landowners, DSFC and MAFF, with no strong objections to the idea being raised. Keith Bower questioned the basic reasons for setting up another "reserve", wondering if the very marine life that was to be protected would simply suffer from greater visitor pressure such a venture would encourage. Laurie Winsborrow also pointed out that fishermen are, by and large, in favour of protected areas but only if they are properly policed. Joan Edwards stressed that local people would be encouraged to keep an eye out for wrong-doers within the MCA; and that it was not being set up to **protect** marine life as much as to **educate** people about marine life. The title of "Voluntary Marine Conservation Area" was regarded as being a bit of a mouthful and Robert Irving suggested a better title might be a Marine Park.

6. Progress on the Lundy Management Plan by English Nature

7. Outcome of the Interpretive Review of the MNR by the Nature Conservation Bureau Ltd. for English Nature

Both of these items were to be presented by David Townshend who was unfortunately absent from the meeting due to ill health. It is hoped he will be able to inform the Group of developments on these topics at its next meeting. The Lundy Management Plan is now at a consultation draft stage. Copies are to be sent to all members of the Group. [Please contact the English Nature office in Okehampton, Tel. 0837 55045, if you have not yet received a copy.]

8. Application for dredging licence by Civil and Marine off Ilfracombe: Joan Edwards brought the Group up to date on this development. Comments on the Environmental Statement produced by Oakwood Environmental for Civil and Marine, had been sought by the Dept. of the Environment by the end of September 1993. Devon Wildlife Trust had written to the DOE expressing their opposition to the granting of a gravel extraction licence, particularly with regard to the damage this would cause to Sabellaria and Modiolus reef communities. Robert Irving had also written on behalf of the Group indicating the continuing concern over possible silt plumes affecting Lundy. He requested that the Group be kept informed of developments on this matter. Apparently the DOE are undertaking a review of dredging in the Bristol Channel, and the Crown Estate are also reviewing their procedure for licence applications. However, the outcome of these may not be known for a further two years or so.

10. Any other business: Robert Irving reported that under the new

Management Plan for Lundy, English Nature propose to have a Management Committee for the MNR consisting of EN, DSFC, the Landmark Trust and the National Trust. An additional Advisory Committee would also be established, with the same groups represented as present on the existing Lundy Marine Consultation Group. This would be able to make recommendations to the Management Committee. It is hoped that this issue will be discussed at greater length at the next meeting.

An assessment of the sublittoral monitoring studies carried out in the MNR from 1984-1990 by the NCC has been recently published in the 1992 LFS Annual Report (copies available through Robert Irving on request).

Ray Kimberley, the Group's Chairman since October 1985, indicated at the meeting that he would not be able to continue in this capacity due to health reasons. Keith Bower formally proposed a vote of thanks on behalf of the other Group members for his contributions over the years. We wish him well in his "retirement". Ian Knight kindly agreed to take over the Chairmanship.

11. Date(s) of the next meeting(s):

24 March 1994

29 September 1994 (provisional)

J. J. P. [Signature]  
24. 3. 94.

## Report from the Reserve

**Weather:** The summer has been patchy, but better than last year. We were not plagued with strong easterly winds and very few Oldenburg sailings had to be cancelled. Temperatures were generally lower than average and both June and July were the wettest since Lundy recording started in 1971. The sea temperature was low and only rose slowly, reaching a maximum of 17 degrees. This had an effect upon plankton levels and an early bloom soon fizzled out - there were only 18 sightings of Basking Shark recorded (3rd July - 10th August). Water visibility was very good and provided some good diving.

**Silt and pollution:** The covering of silt reported last year, has started to clear at most locations, although it has been present for a time after strong easterly winds. The reduction appears to coincide with the stopping of the sludge dumping by the Glen Avon. If this is the case, as dumping took place in the same area as the proposed sand and gravel extraction, I feel that Lundy may be affected by this operation, despite the recent report to the contrary. Plastic waste has to be cleared from the Landing Beach in Easterly wind directions, but the beaches are clear at other times. There was a further incident of cut net being thrown into the bay from a Belgium trawler and DSF are looking into it. Following the Easterly gale (13 September - maximum gust 77mph) many of the rock pools in the area between Rat Island and Surf Point have been covered in sand. The northern part of the Devils Kitchen has a greater amount of shingle in the pools and there is also more shingle at Hells Gate.

**Potting:** The level of potting has been similar to last year and there appears to be only one fisherman using the East side of the island. Some pots are still left longer than would be expected between checks and on several occasions pots have been laid very close to the Knoll Pins and possibly on the protected site at Seal Rock. Divers who have visited the other protected site of the Iona II have reported an increasing quantity of fishing net caught on the wreck, although no trawling has been observed near the wreck. Yachtmen have complained about the potting on the East side, particularly in places that have traditionally been used as anchorages - on at least one occasion this has resulted in props being fouled.

**Diving:** There have been resident diving groups since May and the good visibility has been appreciated. Periods of light winds and winds from the North West, have resulted in a greater level of diving activity on the South of the island. Two local groups have expressed an interest in assisting with the monitoring of the Reserve and this is being set up. For part of the summer, both the Robert and the Earl of Jersey were buoyed - whilst this assists the visiting diving groups, there is an increased danger of disturbance to these sites. It is disappointing how many divers are only interested in seeing wrecks and show little interest in the marine life. The island compressor is still out of commission, but we have had a hired unit for the season. Because there was an air bank with the hired machine, at times the turn around time for bottles was better than previous years. Our own unit will be back in use for next season, when we hope it will have an air bank added and will also be made mobile.

GULL  
ROCK

A greater number of charter visits are being made and there has been some criticism about the service and diving knowledge of the operators. Whilst it is outside our control, this criticism does reflect upon the island and the Reserve. For the 1994 season, we shall be restarting limited advertising about the residential facilities and we can now offer hire of the island hard boat to groups. There is no doubt that resident groups are given a better deal, plus a far greater interest in the conditions and sites within the Reserve.

There was a diving incident on 14th September, when two divers were thought to be overdue. They had dived the Robert and were not seen by their control boat when they surfaced. The island boat and Chivenor turned out and they were found about half a mile from the dive site. The helicopter lifted them from the sea and as they had made a controlled ascent, they were landed on the island.

**Snorkelling:** Snorkellers have been active since May and 150 adults and 80 children have used the island snorkelling equipment. A number of school groups have had project sessions and there have been beginners 'Have-a-go' sessions each week since June. The underwater nature trail has been well used and on days when the visibility of the Landing Beach has been poor, it was usually possible to use the Devils Kitchen. Our equipment has been increased by the addition of 9 new wetsuits and most of the remaining stock has been augmented. For next year it is hoped to have the use of the old compressor room as a changing room and use the covered area outside as a drying room. New leaflets are being produced and there will soon be waterproof guides for snorkellers to take with them. There has been a great deal of enthusiasm for snorkelling and the people using the facilities represent a good percentage of the resident visitors.

**Seals:** A seal count was conducted on 24th September. The sea state was good on the East side, but the swell prevented checking the caves on the West and South coasts. The count was lower than the known population and this was probably due to the neap tide conditions. In total 70 seals were found - 8 bulls, 50 cows and 12 juveniles. A further check is planned to coincide with the spring tide if weather permits.

**General:** The proposed zoning scheme is generating interest, as is the new Marine Reserve sign at Ilfracombe. In the pipeline for next year, is a series of leaflets for both the marine subjects and the SSSI. A manned information point is being established for visitors at the unloading point and there will be an information office next to the Tavern.

Seabird breeding was generally good and throughout the season there were good stocks of Sandeels and sprats inshore. Puffin numbers are static, but there are a growing number of young birds with the group and hopefully some of these will soon be ready for breeding.

No sign of Sargassum seaweed has been found yet.

On Sunday 26th September, BBC Radio 4 broadcast a programme about the Reserve in its Living World series. The presenter was Lionel Kellaway and I was assisted by Dan Laffoley from English Nature.

Andrew Gibson, September 1993