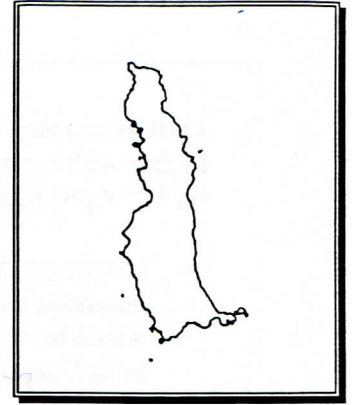


LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE ADVISORY GROUP



*Aims of the Group: 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.* Established: 1985

Please reply to the Hon. Secretary:

Mr Robert Irving,
14 Brookland Way, Coldwaltham,
Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1LT

tel. 01798 873581
fax. 01798 873582
e-mail: Robert@ria21.freeserve.co.uk

Notes of the 13th meeting of the Advisory Group

(formerly known as the Lundy Marine Consultation Group, of which this was the 31st meeting)

held on **Thursday, 19th October 2000** in the Meeting Room,
Torridge District Council Offices, Riverbank House, Bideford at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Rev. Bill Blakey	(BB)	Lundy Church	Chair
Paul Roberts	(PB)	Lundy/Landmark Trust	
Colin Eastman	(CE)	Charter boat skipper	
Chris Mandry	(CM)	Ilfracombe Dive Club & BS-AC	
John Heath	(JH)	Marine archaeological interests	
Liza Cole	(LC)	Lundy Warden	
Jo Crix	(JC)	English Nature	
Hannah Streatfield	(HS)	Devon Wildlife Trust/N. Devon VMCA	
Mike Williams	(MW)	Environment Agency	
Bill Pillman	(BP)	Torridge District Council	
Anthony Glover	(AW)	Glover Marine/Charter boat skipper	
Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society/Marine Conservation Society	Secretary

1. *Apologies for absence:* Apologies had been received from Dr Keith Hiscock (Marine Biological Association) and Keith Bower (Devon Sea Fisheries Committee).

Rev. Bill Blakey informed the Group that he would be moving to Wareham, Dorset early in the New Year and would therefore be unable to continue chairing the Group after this meeting. RI, speaking on behalf of those present, thanked him for his work as Chairman over the past year.

2. *Notes on the last meeting, held on 11th April 2000:* These were accepted as being an accurate account of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.
3. *Matters arising:* There were no matters arising specifically from the discussions of the last Advisory Group meeting.

4. *Matters arising from the last Lundy MNR Management Group meeting:* JC brought the Group up to date with various matters that had been discussed at the last Management Group meeting, held on 12th April 2000.
- *Moorings:* A research project was currently underway in the Fal looking at 'non-scouring' moorings and their effect on the seabed. If these trials proved successful, then English Nature would be willing to fund such a mooring for Lundy. The most useful location for one would be in Gannets' Bay, where divers often rest between dives around the northern end of the island.
 - *Seabirds/rats:* JC has been trying to arrange a meeting with Ian Linn of the Mammal Society to discuss the situation with him. Otherwise, nothing much has changed.
 - *Sewage discharge & waste disposal:* MW reported that the Environment Agency had consented the discharge of effluent from the septic tank below Millcombe House. However, PR wanted to know what could be done with the sludge. A full bowser would be too heavy to lift on to the *Oldenburg*. Was it fit to spread it on fields as a fertiliser? MW said the EA would look into this. A discussion then ensued as to the merits of composting biodegradable material. Seawater is used to flush the island's loos during the summer months and small quantities of household cleaners are used for cleaning purposes, both of which, it was appreciated, would not help the process of natural biodegradation taking place within the septic tank. There was the possibility of introducing new 'compost-a-loos' (as just installed in the new beach building) to all of the island's properties. CM asked if South-West Water had been consulted re. a suitable solution, but MW thought the EA's own in-house expertise should be sufficient to come up with a solution.
 - The date of the next Management Group meeting is 20th October 2000 (i.e. the day after this meeting).
5. *Amendments to the listed habitats within the cSAC description:* JC explained that a number of additional subtidal habitats had been added to the description of the Lundy candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC). Initially the site had been proposed for its subtidal reefs, but the island's grey seals, its sea caves and its subtidal sediments were now also being added to the prescription. MW asked when cSACs will become SACs in their own right and JC replied in 2004 at the latest. However, the UK government would like to see designation taking place sooner than that. In law, cSACs are now being treated as if they were already SACs.

6. *Report from the Reserve, April-October 2000* [this section written by Liza Cole]

1. Assistant Warden: Ian Reach again proved to be absolutely invaluable as my Assistant Warden this year. His ever growing knowledge of the Island coupled with his infectious enthusiasm meant that he was able to continue to raise awareness of Lundy's ecological richness. Add to this the fact that he already knew the job from last year meant he could pick up where he left off as soon as he arrived on the Island at the start of May. We work very well as a team and I was very sad to see him go at the end of September. He has taken a 12 month contract at the JNCC so unfortunately I will not be getting him back for a third year. This means I will have to re-advertise the post next year.

2. Fishing and potting activity: Lobster potting has been undertaken in the MNR throughout this summer, most of it has occurred on the West Side with a little on the East Side. Potting boats seen working the area were *Better Days*, *Compass Rose II*, *Walrus* and *Palatine (FY149)*. The last of these is new to the area.

Towards the end of May a string of pots, clearly labelled with the boat's name, was shot very near the Knoll Pins. If they were not within the 100m exclusion zone then they were very close to it. Similarly,

pots were shot by the same boat right on the edge of other exclusion zones. The skipper concerned was spoken to by DSFC to make sure they were aware of the no-go areas in the reserve.

During June trawlers were seen working well outside the reserve off the East Side.

Towards the end of August the skipper of a boat called *Prevail* (from Newlyn) contacted the Warden to check up on the restrictions within the MNR and informed her of his intentions to fish the area for porbeagle. The vessel has been seen in the area.

3. Diving Activity: Diving around the Island started towards the end of April and continued right up to the first week in October. Boats that brought divers out regularly were *Jessica Hettie*, *Lundy Murrelet*, *Our Unity* and *Sally Port* as well as the local dive groups from Ilfracombe and Appledore on *Brunel*, *Neptune*, *Frolica* and *Compass Rose*. Towards the end of the season the *Loyal Supporter*, a liveaboard, brought out several dive groups also. Add to this the fact that several groups came out on RIBs also and it becomes obvious that it was a busy year for diving.

The Archaeological Diving Unit attempted to come out to survey the *Iona II* in the spring but were blown out completely. Then later on in the season the Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit came out to survey her and managed to get some preliminary work done before they were blown out.

4. RIB: The RIB returned to the Island in May after her repairs but on the first trial run in the Landing Bay several faults became apparent. The most important of these was that the starboard engine's hydraulic tilt mechanism did not lock so that when the boat was reversed the engine flipped up out of the water. This meant that the engine had to be taken off the Island again for repair and it eventually came back, fully repaired, in the middle of August. This has meant that the RIB was not available to patrol the reserve for most of the season. However, it was available for use by the MCS diving working party in September.

5. Grey Seals: Seals have been very visible all around the Island all summer and towards the end of the season 50+ were regularly seen hauled out of the water at the North End. The first seal pup was seen by a climber in a cave to the south of St. Mark's Stone on 28/8/00. Since then there have been 7 other sightings: 5 in Halfway Wall Bay on 10/9/00; 1 south of St. Mark's Stone on 11/9/00 (possibly the same as that seen on 28/8 ?); and 1 at Brazen Ward on 13/9/00.

6. Cetaceans: There have been many more sightings of cetaceans than usual this summer with July being a particularly good month. On 16/7/00, 30 common dolphins were seen off the NE Point. On 25/7/00, 2 harbour porpoises were seen off the South End, one was much larger than the other so possibly a mother and young?. On 26/7/00, 12-15 bottle-nosed dolphins were seen about 1 mile south of Stanley Bank. On 28/7/00, 6 common dolphins were seen off Rat Island. Also, in July one of the local skippers described what had to be two killer whales that he had seen off Clovelly. Later that day the crew of the *Oldenburg* reported seeing them too. Interesting to know that they were in the vicinity! August was quieter with only one sighting of 15 cetaceans in the Landing Bay, the description was vague but they could have been either bottled-nose or atlantic white beaked dolphins. Then on 3/9/00 another skipper reported seeing a dead cetacean floating about 2 miles south of the Island. It was as big as the boat, i.e. c. 40 foot long, and the description sounded like a minke whale.

7. Basking Sharks: Basking sharks arrived late this year with the first one being sighted on 20/7/00. There was then a massive influx of sightings including a shoal of 28 beasts and a superb view of one breaching (twice!). In total there was 80 sightings in July and then the numbers dwindled to 17 in August and 3 in September; so a year total of 104 sightings.

8. Seabirds: Between 29th April & 13th May Tim Davis and Tim Jones came to the Island to try and obtain some breeding data in preparation for their forthcoming book, *Birds of Lundy*. During their visit they tried to get as much data on the breeding status of all birds on the Island but the following are the results for the seabirds. Fulmar, 31 nests/83 birds; shag, 26 nests; oystercatcher, possibly 13 territorial

pairs; herring gull, 474 nests/1039 birds; lesser black-backed gulls, 633 birds (too early for nest counts); great black-backed gulls, 40 nests/135 birds; kittiwake, 216 birds; guillemot, 591 birds; razorbill, 343 birds. It is important to note that these counts were done very early in the season but it will be interesting to compare these with the Seabird Census 2000 results when they have been collated.

From May onwards the Assistant Warden carried out a puffin survey. This was after a suggestion made in the rats/seabirds meeting that surveying should start in May rather than June as has been done previously. Counts were low compared to last year with a maximum of 21 on one survey and an overall average of 11 (cf. last year's average of 25). It was very apparent that numbers were low quite early on in the season, and on many occasions no puffins were seen on Seabird Walks.

In June the Seabirds Census 2000 team came to the Island to carry out total counts of all the seabirds. I have not received their analysed results as yet, but the gut feeling was that kittiwake numbers were down. Whilst they were on the Island they also found time to try and ascertain if manx shearwaters were breeding, and if so, where. They did this by playing recordings of shearwater calls at the entrance of burrows and listening for a reply. From the number of replies received it was apparent that shearwaters are at least attempting to breed, with a tentative estimation of 300-400 nesting pairs as extrapolated from the results.

9. Unusual Marine Sightings: There have been 5 sightings of sunfish this summer all around the Island. In June John Heath reported that there was an increased number of red band fish at the site south of the Knoll Pins. His dive group also saw two lesser octopuses, one on a reef south of the Knoll Pins and one at the south end of Halfway Wall Bay. On the down side the amount of *Sargassum muticum* in the Landing Bay has increased markedly since it was first seen last year [see additional comment under 8. Any Other Business].

10. Marine litter & other pollution: Any netting and other marine litter has been removed from the strand line when it has been washed up to prevent harm to marine life.

I mentioned in the last meeting that we were hoping to be able to recycle a lot of our rubbish and then send the remainder off in skips. However, this turned out to be impossible as this would have caused unsolvable problems with collection from Bideford Quay. So we were in the situation where we had to send all our rubbish off in skips without recycling. This worked OK at the start of the season when the Island was not busy, and most of the sailings were from Bideford. However, as the season progressed, more sailings were from Ilfracombe and the quay was condemned, so we were not allowed to use it for any cargo. This meant that skips full of rotting rubbish were sitting on the Island for longer and longer periods of time. This, of course, was a great attraction for flies and so the skips were going back on the *Oldenburg* riddled with maggots. This was not acceptable from a human health point of view as our food comes out on the *Oldenburg*.

We have now purchased an incinerator that can burn up to 50 kg at a time and as soon as we have this up and running we intend to burn all the paper and cardboard and send the rest off in skips. Then in the height of the season we will separate out glass, plastic and cans, which will eventually be sent off in skips but will not rot in the meantime, and just send off the waste that can decay. We are confident that this should be the practical answer to our problems.

11. Raising Awareness: This summer has seen the completion of a wildlife information book which has been put in all the properties, on the *Oldenburg* and in the Tavern for reference. Many people have commented on how useful it was to them during their visit. A photocopied form has been sold in the shop and this appears to be popular also. In addition to this I have advised on the wildlife content of a Landmark press pack for the Island; dealt with the media on various occasions (look out for a baywatch babe on the BBC Holiday programme next March!); and Ian and I have carried out the usual walks, talks and snorks which continue to be popular.

After the seabird season had finished, Ian and I accompanied visitors on round the Island trips on a small boat from the mainland whenever time allowed. This was an excellent way of raising awareness of the MNR and will be repeated as much as time allows in the future.

In addition to this work has started on the layout and content of the interpretation area in the new beach building.

12. Grant Projects: The delays in completing the beach road, constructing a new slip and laying the foundations for the beach building had a knock-on effect and work on constructing the beach building itself did not start until June 1st. However, the skeleton went up very quickly but then works were further delayed by the fact that the building firm went bust! Work recommenced in mid-July and the building was all but complete by the end of September. However the final touches were delayed as some boarding got storm bound on the wrong side of the water. This work should be completed over the next couple of months. Then the generator, compressor and winch will be installed and lastly the interpretation which will be installed just before the first official sailing of the *Oldenburg* next March. At present, work on the content of the interpretation area is coming to the end of the planning stage. The building looks superb, and blends in very well with the scenery. It is going to make an enormous improvement to the facilities we can offer to divers from next season onwards.

Over the summer some reparation work has taken place on the network of footpaths that enable most visitors to access and enjoy the reserve, but most will be taking place this winter when contractors will be coming to the Island to carry out this work.

Liza Cole, October 2000.

7. *Activities occurring within the MNR during the summer:* As mentioned in the Warden's Report, the Marine Archaeological Diving Team were thwarted in their attempts to get over to the island this summer.

The MCS group of divers (led by RI) fared a little better, but they too had to re-arrange their trip from early July to early September as a result of strong winds. Their group consisted of 8 divers and they came over on the liveaboard *Loyal Supporter* with AG as First Mate. They continued the study of the condition of sea fans along the east coast from previous years; searched (unsuccessfully) for red band fish burrows in the vicinity of the Knoll Pins; continued the count of yellow cup corals north of Gannets' Rock; and noted down the maximum depths of certain seaweeds (a study linked with water clarity). RI explained that a summary report of the group's findings would be available shortly. English Nature had awarded a grant to the group, and JC thanked RI for his efforts in encouraging volunteer divers to assist with these projects within the MNR over the past few years.

Dr Keith Hiscock had managed a brief biological survey of the new jetty piles during a visit to the island on 27th August. In his absence, RI read out some brief extracts from his report:

"The jetty constructed during the winter of 1998/1999 provides a new habitat for marine life at Lundy that is significantly different to any existing habitat. There are two main substrata – square section hardwood set into metal baseplates bolted into the seabed, and metal piles driven into the seabed. Other wooden beams, which act as fenders, extend near to the seabed. The areas of bedrock near to the jetty piles have communities that appear to be largely undisturbed by the construction, with a shallow forest of kelp and, notably, significant populations of the nationally scarce trumpet anemone *Aiptasia mutabilis*. There were no plants of the non-native wireweed *Sargassum muticum* observed [which have been reported from the intertidal near here].

Wooden piles were colonised by small bivalve molluscs and by keeled tubeworms, amongst other encrusting organisms. The round metal piles had a similar array of organisms, with a few species of seaweed growing at around low water level. Significant numbers of spiny starfish were present

too. Vertical struts between the piles were colonised by a fine filamentous hydroid. There were shoals of two-spot goby and large ballan wrasse swimming between the adjacent kelp forest and the piles.

This survey was very brief and at a fairly early stage of development of the jetty pile communities. I have investigated similar pilings in more sheltered conditions in Milford Haven which had a much richer fauna and flora. Certainly, additions to the biota can be expected, perhaps especially mussels which are typically late colonisers. The pilings offer an attractive habitat for fish species.

The impact of building the jetty seems to be very local to the pilings. There is an area about 1.5 m away from some of the round piles apparently of a clayey material which is uncolonised, and there was some debris from construction still present."

8. *Any other business:*

- PR informed the group that a new incinerator had been bought for use on the island and was awaiting shipping over to Lundy on board the *Oldenburg*. The incinerator was fitted with two after-burners and was suitable to deal with burning paper and cardboard refuse. At present he was awaiting appropriate discharge consents for its use from the Environment Agency and Torridge District Council.
- MW asked about the significance of wireweed *Sargassum muticum* (also known as japweed) being present at Lundy. JC explained that it was an invasive, non-native 'pest' species which grew rapidly in shallow sheltered waters, where it could tangle boat propellers and out-compete other seaweeds. It is thought to have arrived at Lundy by means of the rigs used for the construction of the jetty. RI agreed that its spread needed to be closely monitored and checked if at all possible. However, attempts to halt its proliferation elsewhere had usually failed.
- HS reported that a white-sided dolphin had been washed up dead on Croyde beach recently. This particular species of dolphin had not been seen in the area since the early 1970s. Staff from the Natural History Museum, London, inspected the corpse and removed its head for later detailed examination of its teeth. [RI has since heard from the NHM that this was probably a white beaked dolphin].
- JC reported that the Zoning Scheme leaflet was due to be reprinted shortly and that the Management Plan was in the process of being updated.
- RI asked that the question of potting on the east side of the island be looked at again by the MNR Management Group. Further information had now been acquired regarding the density of 'delicate' species in the vicinity of Gull Rock, and the depth at which these species were found. In the light of these findings he considers it inappropriate for pots to be set here. He agreed to prepare a report which could be submitted to the Management Group before its meeting next spring.

9. *Date of the next meeting: Monday 2nd April 2001*

R.A. Irving

Hon. Sec., LMNRAG

30 October 2000

