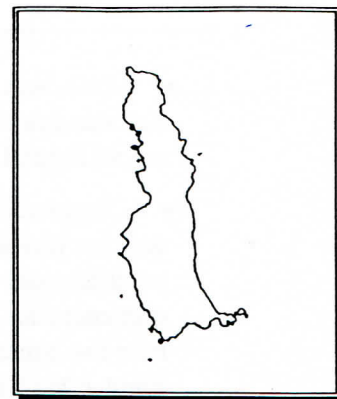


LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE ADVISORY GROUP



*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:

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Notes of the 14th meeting of the Advisory Group

(formerly known as the Lundy Marine Consultation Group, of which this was the 32nd meeting)

held on **Thursday, 19th April 2001** in the Meeting Room,
Torridge District Council Offices, Riverbank House, Bideford at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society/Marine Conservation Society	Acting Chair / Secretary
Colin Eastman	(CE)	Charter skipper: <i>Lundy Murrelet</i> , Clovelly	
Paul Roberts	(PR)	Lundy Island	
Chris Mandry	(CM)	British Sub-Aqua Club/Ilfracombe S-AC	
Clive Pearson	(CP)	Charter skipper: <i>Jessica Hettie</i> , Clovelly	
Royston Johns	(RJ)	Torridge District Council	
Keith Hiscock	(KH)	Marine Biological Association	
Liza Cole	(LC)	Lundy Warden	
Mike Williams	(MW)	Environment Agency	
Keith Bower	(KB)	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee	
Kate Arnold	(KA)	English Nature (Devon)	
John Heath	(JH)	Historic Wreck Sites	
Stephen Renfree	(SR)	MAFF Fisheries Office, Plymouth	
Maurice Woodger	(MW)	Charter skipper: <i>Our Unity</i> , Ilfracombe	
Don Burke	(DB)	<i>Our Unity</i> , Ilfracombe	
Kathy McGough	(KM)	Devon Wildlife Trust	

1. Apologies for absence: Apologies had been received from Laurie & Mark Winsborrow (local trawlermen), Jo Crix (English Nature, Devon) and Anthony Glover (charter skipper: *Sally Port*).

RI began the meeting by pointing out that the Group was presently without a Chairman. RI offered to act as temporary Chairman for the meeting, and asked that others consider putting themselves forward for the vacant position.

2. *Notes on the last meeting, held on 19th October 2000*: These were accepted as being an accurate account of the meeting and, in the absence of a Chairman, were signed by Paul Roberts.
3. *Matters arising*: There were no matters arising from the last meeting which, it was thought, would not be covered by the agenda of the present meeting.
4. *Matters arising from the last Lundy MNR Management Group meeting*: KA kindly went through the minutes of the last Management Group meeting held on 20th October 2000.
 - *Waste disposal*: a meeting between English Nature and the Environment Agency to discuss this matter was proposed but has yet to take place.

*The following organisations sit on the Advisory Group: British Sub-Aqua Club * Devon Sea Fisheries Committee * Devon Wildlife Trust * English Nature * Environment Agency * Hartland Heritage Coast Service * Landmark Trust * Local Dive Charter Interests * Local Sea Fishing Interests * The Lundy Company Ltd. * Lundy Field Society * Marine Archaeological Interests * Marine Biological Association of the U.K. * Marine Conservation Society * Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food * National Trust * South-West Federation of Sea Anglers * Torridge District Council * Worldwide Fund for Nature (UK)*

- *Mooring*s: No further progress had been made on this matter. The ‘test study’ set up in the Fal was due to be completed in the next few months, and the proposed mooring(s) at Lundy would depend upon the outcome of that study.
- *Suggested No Take Zone*: A proposal to exclude all fishing from the east side of the island was put forward. This ‘No Take’ policy would cover all means by which any form of marine wildlife could be taken – i.e. by commercial fishermen, by divers and by anglers. Collecting of specimens for research purposes would require licences. The area in question would be bounded by a line running W-E from Seal’s Rock at the NE Point and another running W-E from Surf Point at the SE extremity of the island. The ban would be in the form of a voluntary ‘gentlemen’s agreement’ and at this stage would not require the introduction of a new byelaw by the Devon Sea Fisheries Committee.

The No Take Zone proposal would provide a number of benefits:

1. It would ease the fishing pressure on the MNR as a whole, allowing stocks of commercial species (primarily lobster & crab) a ‘refuge area’. However, little potting activity takes place off the east coast at present.
2. Commercial stocks may be enhanced by individuals migrating from the ‘refuge area’ to the fished area, especially if the ‘refuge area’ was to be artificially seeded with young lobsters.
3. Species of high nature conservation importance present off the island’s east coast would avoid disturbance from pots being set and lifted.
4. The No Take policy would affect all users of the area, thereby encouraging all to help in its protection.
5. The Zoning Scheme map could be made simpler.

This proposal was put to a number of Ilfracombe fishermen by English Nature and Devon Sea Fisheries representatives (Jo Crix and Kate Arnold [EN] and Keith Bower [DSFC]) at a meeting on 30 March 2001. At first there was scepticism, but when mitigation measures were suggested, the response was surprisingly receptive. In lieu of the imposed restricted access to fishable areas, it was suggested that the exclusion area could be seeded with juvenile lobsters (available from a hatchery in Padstow), with selected adults being V-notched or micro-tagged. As there are slight genetic differences between lobster populations (which reflects their geographic separation), MAFF are keen to ensure that any seeded lobsters are derived from Lundy parent stock. This could mean a delay of up to 2 years before any seeding could take place.

KB pointed out that up to 1500 pots may be present off the west side of the island at the peak of the season and that individuals may well migrate from the east side to the west side over time. CM asked when the No Take Zone would be introduced [KB replied that it would not be until next year (2002) to allow time for full consultation to take place]; and if this would be before the programme of lobster seeding was started [KB & KA could see no reason why not]. KA stated that English Nature would seek to gain as much publicity for this initiative as possible. This would also ensure that visiting divers were fully aware of the proposals.

- *Rats vs. seabirds debate*: An EN/RSPB-funded feasibility study is due to take place on the island in June. An RSPB contractor, Mike Bell, will assess the population size of both the black rat and the brown rat on the island at a time of year which coincides with the seabird breeding season. Amongst a number of questions which it is hoped this study will answer are: is total eradication of the rats possible?; and how much will this cost? KH pointed out that a summary of the Lundy Field Society debate on this topic, held at their AGM on 6 March 1999, can be read in their 49th Annual Report¹. The RSPB will also be carrying out a study of Manx shearwaters on the island (primarily to assess their numbers) just prior to Mike Bell’s stay.

¹ For those wishing to read this summary, photocopies can be requested from the Group’s Secretary.

- *Revision of the Management Plan:* KA was putting the final touches to the revision of the Management Plan (which included SAC requirements as well as the MNR). It will be published in a loose-leaf format and be available at the end of May. KH pointed out that key points (for divers in particular) from the Management Plan could be put on the internet. PR added that the island's web site (www.lundyisland.co.uk) is being re-vamped at the moment and would be up and running by the end of the month. All agreed that links between these various sites would be important.
- *The island's new Interpretation Centre:* This is due to open officially on May 10th after various set-backs to its completion (see also the Warden's report below).
- *Intertidal monitoring:* A small team from English Nature were due on the island on 22/23 May to complete the intertidal monitoring studies which were left unfinished last October.

5. Report from the Reserve, October 2000 – April 2001 – by Liza Cole

5.1. Assistant Warden: I reported at the last meeting that Ian Reach had secured a 12 month contract at the JNCC and so I would be looking for a new Assistant for the coming season. However, I am pleased to say that the pull of Lundy has proved too much for him and that he will, in fact, be coming back for a third season starting on 8th May until the end of September.

5.2. Fishing and potting activity: I have seen no fishing in the reserve this winter.

5.3. Diving Activity: The first divers seen around the Island this year were at the Easter weekend off the liveboard, *Pride of Bristol*. These were totally self sufficient. Divers staying on the Island and using the Island's facilities start in mid-May and then there are groups most weeks until the beginning of October.

5.4. Grey Seals: Nothing remarkable to report about seals except that they have found a new haul out site, the jetty! On 11/4/01 we found a youngster basking on the sun-warmed concrete of the new jetty just as the *Oldenburg* was approaching. It had to be chased off before the *Oldenburg* landed in case it bit any passers by!

5.5. Seabirds: All the seabirds have now returned to the Island and are busy getting themselves sorted out for the breeding season. This coming season the puffins will be monitored as usual and a team from the RSPB will be coming over to carry more work on the Manx shearwaters. They have even got small optical fibre cameras for looking into the burrows. Then in June a feasibility study will be carried out on the rats, getting an idea as to how many there are of each species, their distribution and whether it would be physically possible to eradicate them from the Island and if so what resources would be needed. So, hopefully by the autumn we should be armed with enough information to make a policy decision as to what we are going to do to manage the seabird population on the Island.

5.6. 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. There has been one oiled bird this winter, a guillemot.

5.7. Raising Awareness: This winter a lot of time has been spent working on the information boards and displays for the new Beach Building. Kate Arnold, from English Nature, has done all the hard graft for this with advice from Paul Roberts and myself. It was hoped to get all of it installed by the beginning of March and everything was going according to plan until the Foot & Mouth crisis started and we put the Island into precautionary quarantine. This has knocked installation back until 10th May. As far as content is concerned there will be 5 display boards explaining why Lundy is so special for wildlife; what to see, where and when; the various threats and what visitors can do to help. There will also be interactive displays for kids, a 2m long aquarium and a central podium highlighting the different zones of marine life.

Other projects have been a complete overhaul of the Lundy Island website (www.lundyisland.co.uk). I provided the website designer with updated text concerning Lundy's wildlife and various activities such as climbing, diving etc. There will be direct links to the LFS site (www.lundy.org.uk) via highlighted words in the text and he has also been given a list of links to other relevant websites. This work is still progressing but is due for completion shortly.

I have also been discussing display panels about the protected wrecks in the reserve with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. They have been erecting panels at sites overlooking protected wrecks all over the country. Of course, this is not appropriate for Lundy, and a display panel in the Beach Building would have ruined the flow and been of a different style to the other panels, so we settled on producing a number of laminated posters. These will be put up in all sorts of strategic places around the Island and in the Shore Offices at Bideford and Ilfracombe. They give the history of the wrecks and highlight the fact that a licence is needed to dive them.

5.8. Grant Projects: The Beach Building is having the final touches added to it as we speak. The compressor, air bank and generator will be being installed at the end of the month and the first divers will be using it in the second week of May.

Over the winter a lot of footpath work has been carried out by a contractor, Rod Dymond, advised by myself. All the drainage has been sorted out on the upper and lower east side paths and the rhododendron has been cut right back on the lower path to allow free flow of air to dry the surface naturally. The pitching on the Battery path was completed by the specialist contractors and then Rod re-turfed a stretch above it to make good damage caused by the movement of stone down the path for the pitching work. Also, I have applied for Scheduled Monument Consent to carry out drainage work on the path at Quarry Pond. All this will help visitors' access and enjoyment of the MNR.

The acquisition of a new boat for the MNR now seems unlikely. Various envisaged difficulties have led us to believe it is likely to be more trouble than it would be worth. The alternative idea of a large RIB has also been dropped. Instead, visitors will be given the opportunity of being taken around the island from time to time on board one of the visiting charter boats.

Liza Cole, April 2001.

Projects for the coming year:

- 1) Beach Building opening on 10th May
- 2) RSPB etc. monitoring shearwaters (19th-26th May)
- 3) EN littoral monitoring team (22nd-26th May)
- 4) Mike Bell, rat feasibility study (20th-30th June)
- 5) *Dive International* (diving magazine) visit to MNR (20th-23rd June)
- 6) MCS diving party (30th July-3th August)
- 7) Successful bids for: an MNR Dive Guide; a new MNR Video; a schools Curriculum Pack; an MNR Board replacement for Bideford Quay; and Interpretative panels for the Ilfracombe Shore Office.

Comments arising from the Warden's Report: KH thanked both Liza Cole and Ian Reach (assistant Warden) for making visiting diving groups welcome to the island/MNR, and for being available to assist such groups when called upon. He was also pleased to see a greater amount of interpretive material being available.

PR wished to add his thanks to all the diveboat skippers and to visiting diving groups for their co-operation and understanding in making the MNR 'work' in recent years.

CM asked if David Harvey's idea of appointing a number of voluntary 'auxillary' wardens (such as the diveboat skippers) had been taken any further. KA replied that it had been discussed at the last

Management Group meeting, but English Nature envisaged difficulties with health and safety aspects and training requirements.

KH pointed out that Mark Groves (a diving instructor on the Isles of Scilly) had recently acquired a large RIB and that his experience of taking groups of visitors on sight-seeing trips around islands may be of value to Lundy.

RI asked how the air bank would operate. LC replied that a meeting of visiting diveboat skippers had been held on the island on 17th November to discuss this and it was agreed that two of the skippers would be trained to use the air bank (in the absence of the Warden or Assistant Warden).

RJ asked if the refuse problem had been solved. LC & PR replied that the latest plan was to have three skips available for non-burnable refuse. These would be used in rotation. Some emergency burning had taken place over the winter, to avoid health hazards from rotting refuse. One full skip had been brought across from the island on the *Oldenburg* today.

6. *Any other business:*

- PR wanted to emphasise his gratitude to all those present in assisting with making Lundy a 'going concern'. It was good that everyone seemed to be pulling in the same direction.
- CP asked what arrangements were in place re. camping on the island at present. PR replied that there was no camping at present due to the Foot & Mouth restrictions. The camping field may be needed as a holding ground for sheep. The availability of this field would be up to the farmer. LC added that all persons coming on to the island had to wash all footwear they had with them in a trough at the top of the Landing Beach. CE offered to ask his passengers to dip their footwear in disinfectant at Clovelly before their passage over to Lundy.
- KH asked if visiting divers could be asked to help with a new recording scheme which his organisation (the Marine Life Information Network or MarLIN) and WWF-UK had devised. Those charter skippers present agreed to have the forms on their boats, and LC agreed to have some on the island. RI also added that the Marine Conservation Society were piloting a new Seasearch recording scheme for divers this summer, and a new seafan recording scheme, and that recording forms for these projects would be available to visiting divers too.
- RI will once again be taking a group of MCS divers on a liveaboard to the island between 31 July – 3 August, to undertake various conservation projects within the MNR.
- KH asked if English Nature's sublittoral monitoring studies were due to take place again this year, but KA thought they probably were due to take place next summer.
- RJ asked if the work on the pier at Ilfracombe was affecting sailings to/from the island. PR replied that sailings had indeed been affected, with daytrips from Ilfracombe to the island being cancelled. As the *Oldenburg* was unable to get alongside the pier, the island's open boat, the *Wendy*, had been used to ferry passengers from the pier to her. Work on the pier had been delayed because of bad weather over the winter, and they were now awaiting the delivery of imported wooden fenders to fix to the superstructure of the pier.

7. *Proposed date of the next meeting:*

Thursday, 18th October 2001 at 7.00 pm. at Riverbank House, Bideford.