

# Notes of the 16th meeting of the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group

(formerly known as the Lundy Marine Consultation Group, of which this was the 34th meeting)

held on **Thursday, 18th April 2002** in the Meeting Room,  
Torridge District Council Offices, Riverbank House, Bideford at 7.00 p.m.

*Present:*

Keith Hiscock	(KH)	Marine Biological Association	Acting Chair
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	
Ben Samson	(BS)	Lundy Warden	
Mike Williams	(MWi)	Environment Agency	
John Heath	(JH)	Historic Wreck sites	
Chris Davis	(CD)	English Nature (Devon Team)	
Laura Heape	(LH)	English Nature (Devon Team)	
Dick Talbot	(RT)	Bideford Fishermen's Co-operative	
Mike Mallows	(MM)	South-West Federation of Sea Anglers	
Keith Bower	(KB)	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee	
Maurice Woodger	(MWO)	Charter skipper: <i>Our Unity</i> , Ilfracombe	
Don Burke	(DB)	<i>Our Unity</i> , Ilfracombe	
Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society & Marine Conservation Society	Secretary

1. *Apologies for absence:* Steve Waring (Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England); Sam Fanshawe & Bernadette Clarke (Marine Conservation Society); Colin Eastman (Charter skipper: *Lundy Murrelet*); Len Hawke (DEFRA).
2. *Notes on the last meeting, held on 18th October 2001:* These were accepted as being a true record of the meeting and were signed by KH, who had been asked to act as Chair for the meeting. KH thanked Liza Cole who had kindly acted as Secretary for the last meeting in the absence of Robert Irving.
3. *Matters arising:*
  - a. **Moorings:** The general feeling of those present at the last meeting was that there is no need for additional moorings. The conclusion was that whilst they might serve a useful purpose in providing a set point of attachment for a craft in preference to the use of an anchor (whose setting and lifting may damage the seabed), difficulties might arise with regard to maintenance and insurance liability. The best place for such a mooring around the island would be Gannets' Bay, but the seabed here, away from the boulder area adjacent to the low shore, was of soft mud with few vulnerable species associated with it – an area where anchoring was quite acceptable. KH explained that, when anchoring, rocky areas should be avoided wherever possible as these often had more vulnerable species associated with them. For instance, there were populations of sunset cup corals present in shallow water close to the shore off the NE coast. RI suggested it might be possible to indicate 'preferred anchoring areas' on the next edition of the Zoning Scheme. Later, CP asked if dropping a shot on the Gannets' Rock submerged pinnacle was acceptable. KH explained that a shot should only be dropped on the sloping sediment/rock interface to the south of the pinnacle, but not where a heavy shot would be at risk of falling down the vertical face of the pinnacle itself.

RT asked if anyone could put a new mooring in the Landing Bay. KH explained that the seabed in the Landing Bay was leased by the Landmark Trust from the Crown Estate (as indicated on a map in the MNR/SSSI Management Plan). One would need to ask the Landmark Trust/Lundy Company first for permission. CD suggested that the topic of moorings

and anchoring should be discussed at the next meeting of the Management Group.

- b. **No Take Zone:** it was agreed to follow up the discussion of the No Take Zone under 'Any Other Business'.
- c. **Sea fans:** KH reported that the condition of Lundy's sea fans had been mentioned in a presentation made by Chris Wood at a recent meeting of the Coelenterate Society. An MCS survey had been undertaken last year of all sea fans occurring in the south-west, and the condition of Lundy's sea fans was shown to be considerably worse than any others. KH asked for divers visiting the MNR this summer to inspect any sea fans they encounter for the small poached-egg shell *Simnia patula*, which feeds on the sea fan's soft tissue and may be responsible for their poor state of health.

Following on from the suggestion of a marine wildlife 'observation hotline' at the last meeting (for reporting observations under the ORCA survey scheme), KH reported that a 24 hour answerphone (under a project entitled 'Sealife Signpost') had now been set up at the Marine Biological Association in Plymouth, which was due to be launched in a couple of weeks' time. KH explained that self-adhesive stickers giving the telephone number and website addresses were now available for skippers to stick on their boats. Sightings of 'interesting' marine wildlife (including fish and invertebrates), cetaceans, basking sharks and turtles were being sought.

4. *Matters arising from last Management Group meeting:* unfortunately, no one who had been at the last Management Group meeting was present so this agenda item was not covered. The next meeting of the Group, which was due to have taken place the day after this Advisory Group meeting (i.e. on Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2002), has now been postponed until July.
5. *Report from the Reserve:* as many of the Group were aware, Liza Cole left the island at the beginning of February to start a new job on the coast of Dorset (see below). The new Warden is Ben Samson, who only started work on the island last week. Ben introduced himself to those present. Prior to his new appointment he had been the Langstone Harbour Environment Officer for 18 months. He has a marine biology degree from Bangor University and a masters degree from Hull. He was looking forward to the coming summer on Lundy, but felt he was still getting to grips with the set up. He was due to have an assistant this summer, but the assistant's job would not start for at least another couple of months.

Liza Cole had kindly submitted the following report to the Advisory Group, covering the period from October 2001 – January 2002.

**Wardening the reserve:** Ian Reach, the Assistant Warden, left at the end of September 2001, after completing three seasons. He has moved on to take up the post of Marine Ecologist for English Nature based at Peterborough where he will be advising local teams on marine issues concerned with European Sites and undertaking monitoring work on these sites during the field season. As most of the members of the Advisory Group will appreciate, Ian has had an enormous impact on the summer wardening of the reserve during his time in post and will be severely missed.

At the beginning of November the Warden moved off the Island to spend the winter on the mainland being based at the Shore Office in Bideford. There were two main reasons for this trial "off-wintering": (1) to make it easier for the Warden to liaise with contractors over various projects that were to be carried out over the winter; and (2) to stop the warden going stir crazy in what would have been her 6<sup>th</sup> winter on the Island! During her time off the Island the Warden was in regular contact with the Island and returned for regular visits for a day or more, approximately once every two or three weeks. In the Warden's opinion, it was a successful trial but it will be up to English Nature and the Landmark Trust to discuss as to whether this is to be repeated.

The new year started with the Warden handing in her notice as she had accepted the post of Project Development Countryside Ranger for Weymouth and Portland in Dorset. She worked out a month's notice and finished on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 5 years and 2 months to the day from when she started! She

was sad to leave Lundy but felt that she needed to get back into the real world where seeing friends at the weekend or going to a movie was not out of the question! The new job she chose to take was deliberately very different to the post of Lundy Warden so that she could expand her horizons and try her hand at another side of countryside management. Rather than being "hands on" as on Lundy, she will be acting as more of a facilitator, working with local businesses and organizations to enhance the local economy through Sustainable Tourism initiatives based around the marine and coastal environments.

So the reserve was without a Warden of any kind until Ben started in early April 2002.

**Divers:** Numerous dive groups had booked up for summer 2002 by the time the Warden had left and local charter skippers were talking of it being a bumper season.

**MNR Video:** At the last meeting the Warden reported that the new MNR video had just about been finished. The footage is absolutely superb and should work as an excellent tool to promote understanding of the reasons behind the MNR with an aim towards increasing respect in those visiting the reserve. This is to be shown to the "captive" audience on the *Oldenburg* on the trip across to the Island and looped copies have also been produced to be played in the Shore Offices. *[The 12 minute video was shown to those present at the end of the meeting.]* The production of the video has been funded by English Nature, and 300 copies of the video have been produced. Members of the Advisory Group would be receiving complimentary copies in due course.

**Winter Projects:** There were three main projects, funded by EN, that the Warden was working on over the winter:

- **Interpretation Boards for the Shore Offices and the *Oldenburg*:** The aim of these was to provide a hierarchy of information about the MNR and the rest of the Island's ecology, building up from the Shore Offices at Bideford and Ilfracombe, to the *Oldenburg* and then leading onto the most detailed information contained in the Beach Building on the Island. Outside both Shore Offices there is a board to make people aware of the presence of a MNR around Lundy, the reasons for its being and what can and cannot be done in it. Inside, there is an eye-catching board to illustrate the variety of wildlife that can be seen on and around the Island. Lots of pictures, very little text to get the message over at a glance. Then on the *Oldenburg*, when people have more time to spare, there is an annotated map of the Island showing people where they can see various wildlife and at what time of year.
- **Education Packs:** These have been designed to encourage schools to visit the Island either for the day, or for longer, to study all aspects of the Island. It was decided to expand these from covering just marine aspects to act as a hook to schools who might not feel it was worth the time, money and effort just to study one aspect but would visit if they could kill many birds with one stone. Packs were produced for both Primary and Secondary Schools. This project was just about complete when the Warden left, with the packs virtually ready to go to press. Laura Heape (EN ACO) took over the project to bring it to completion. *[LH brought along some copies of the Packs. 250 Primary Packs had been produced and 50 Secondary Packs. These were to be sent out free of charge to all local schools].*
- **Dive Guide:** The aim of this publication was to give divers information *they* wanted to have (dive sites, tidal stream information, a basic ID guide) as well as information *we* wanted them to have (information on sensitivity, conservation, the zoning scheme). Progress on this project was slow for several reasons but most of the skeleton had been put together before the Warden had to hand it over to Laura Heape. Many thanks must go to Keith Hiscock for his help and advice on suitable species to include in the ID section and to Appledore SAC (especially Mike Deaton) for providing information for the dive site maps. Again, this needed to be completed in the 2001/2002 financial year. *[LH informed the Group that the Dive Guide was about to go to the printers and would be available shortly. All members of the Advisory Group would be receiving a complimentary copy.]*
- **Ilfracombe Aquarium:** Based in the old lifeboat house on Ilfracombe Quay, this Aquarium opened early last summer and the displays included 3 tanks focusing on life in the Lundy MNR

using specimens collected by potting boats in the reserve. The Warden was in discussion with the proprietor (Lawrence Raybone) from the start and in the coming financial year EN will be grant-aiding the aquarium so that they can provide suitable supporting interpretation for these exhibits. This will mean that people can visit and learn more about the marine life of the reserve without having to get wet or even having to visit the Island! The Education Packs will contain information about the aquarium also.

Finally, please pass on my thanks to all who attend the Advisory Group meetings for all their help, support and advice over the years. Also, say that they (and Lundy) won't get rid of me that easily and that no doubt I will see them round and about sometime!

Liza Cole 17<sup>th</sup> April 2002, Dorchester

CM asked that, on behalf of the Advisory Group, RI write to Liza thanking her for all her hard work over the five years she had been in post. She had done an excellent job on the island and her efforts have been much appreciated by all.

6. *Activities occurring within the MNR*: JH informed the Group that the Archaeological Diving Unit were planning to visit Lundy before the end of May. In particular, they were hoping to undertake a remote geophysics survey of the Gull Rock wreck site. Steve Waring has come across a reference which would indicate this wreck is even older than was first thought.

CD told the Group that in light of the rat eradication feasibility study undertaken last year, English Nature has ear-marked half of the funds required to carry out the eradication programme. However, it has still to be decided whether the programme will go ahead or not. If it does, it is likely to be undertaken in October. KH asked if the costings had included a monitoring element after cull, to ensure total eradication had been achieved. CD hoped this was the case and pointed out that the specialist contractors who would undertake the work come from New Zealand! CD also mentioned that an assessment of the populations of all mammals on the island was due to be carried out this year.

KH asked that a formal monitoring programme of the colonisation of the jetty piles be established. Up until now, casual 'natural history' observations had been made by himself, although RI pointed out that the MCS group last summer had taken species records and photographs of three of the piles. CD explained that English Nature staff were currently reviewing the monitoring programme for the whole MNR. KH was disappointed that the monitoring programme, which he helped to set up in the 1980s and which was modified in 1998, does not appear to be continuing.

RI mentioned that it was not yet known whether he would be leading another MCS group of divers to the island this summer.

7. *Any Other Business*:

**No Take Zone**: KB brought the group up to date with the state of play regarding the proposed No Take Zone (NTZ) off the east coast. English Nature had formally requested the Devon Sea Fisheries Committee introduce a byelaw which would prohibit the taking of any species off the east coast of the island. The area in question would be bounded by the coastline, the boundary to the reserve, a line running E/W from Seal's Rock at the NE tip and a line running E/W from the Sugar Loaf, north of the Landing Bay. (Note that this southern boundary has been moved further north from off Surf Point, in light of comments made by anglers wishing to fish from the Jetty and elsewhere in the Landing Bay). KB explained to the Group the background to the establishment of the voluntary reserve in 1973 and the statutory reserve in 1986, from the perspective of the commercial fishing fraternity. He also explained the lengthy procedure for introducing new byelaws, saying that it may take three years for a byelaw to come into force. The NTZ proposal had been put before the DSF Committee, who had responded favourably. However, unease had been expressed by trawlermen (who kept their nets in the water while turning after fishing over the Stanley Bank), as the NE corner of the proposed NTZ would prevent them doing this. To address this point, the NE corner has now been excluded from the proposed NTZ.

Inadvertently, the local north Devon press had got wind of these discussions and, following an article, KB had received a number of objections to the NTZ proposal. He was planning to visit several of the places from where these objections had arisen (including Bideford and Watchet) in order to present the *full* story to those concerned. He explained that it would be useful if he could take with him the consensus view of the Advisory Group, as the organisations represented on the Group were effectively the 'stakeholders' of the MNR, and that the NTZ would only be introduced with the co-operation of the stakeholders. Those attending were asked to mark on photocopies of the MNR where they thought the boundary of the proposed NTZ should be.


MM asked if the NTZ meant 'no take' or whether anglers could still catch fish from this area but return them to the sea alive. KB explained that no fishing would be allowed at all within the area. This was because of the difficulty of policing such a zone – any vessel with fish on board within the NTZ would be found guilty of breaking the byelaw. CP found it hard to understand why the area had to extend so far offshore, when its prime purpose was apparently for the protection of the lobster stock found close inshore. MM also asked that if the measures were designed to protect lobster stocks, which presumably were more vulnerable at certain times of the year, why did they have to be in place for a full 12 months of the year? CD explained that English Nature are keen to promote an NTZ not just for the benefit of commercial species, but for other vulnerable species of nature conservation interest which may be damaged by certain fishing gear. He also explained the positive results which an NTZ was likely to bring, particularly in increased lobster and fish catches around the edges of the NTZ. KB also pointed out that in the not-too-distant future, both the UK government and the EC in Brussels are likely to be encouraging the establishment of NTZs throughout Europe. At this point, KB mentioned he had found the recent Marine Conservation Society's *No Take Reserves* report very useful in researching this topic, and KH distributed a number of photocopied papers and website downloads on NTZs which he had found helpful. MM wondered if this was just 'the thin edge of the wedge' and that in due course the whole of Lundy would become an NTZ.

In light of the concern expressed by anglers, CM wondered if the proposed eastern boundary to the NTZ could be brought further west. This would still ensure that the areas of interest to English Nature (the nearshore rocky reefs and the muddy gravel plain, both of which featured species of international importance) were within the NTZ, while the less interesting sandy seabed areas were excluded. MM pointed out that the area did contain large specimens of cuckoo wrasse which, if caught, were likely to provide a British angling record. It was quickly pointed out that the Code of Conduct for the MNR specifically requested anglers *not* to target cuckoo wrasse (and all other territorial species). MM explained that he would wish to seek the views of other committee members of the South West Federation of Sea Anglers before supporting any proposed NTZ. MWO pointed out that angling boats only visited the island for four months during the summer, and that most of these came from either Watchet or from south Wales. RT asked if angling from Brazen Ward would be prohibited and was told that it would be.

In conclusion, KB thanked the Group for the points raised during the discussion and that he'd put the proposed new boundary to the representatives of the fishing interests he planned to consult in the next few weeks. (*A proposed new boundary to the NTZ, agreed by the majority of those present, is given on the attached sheet*).

**The position of Chairman of the Advisory Group:** KH (as acting Chairman) raised the subject of formalising this position within the Group. The position had been vacant since October 2000 when the Rev. Bill Blakey had stepped down. It was agreed by those present that the position of Chair should be on a three year rotational basis. KH kindly agreed to continue as Chairman for the first three year term.

8. The new Lundy MNR 12 minute video '*Lundy – an island to treasure*' by English Nature was shown at the end of the meeting.
9. *Date of next meeting:* **Thursday 17th October 2002**, same time (7 pm), same place (Riverbank House, Chanters Lane, Bideford).

  
17/10/02