

LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE ADVISORY GROUP

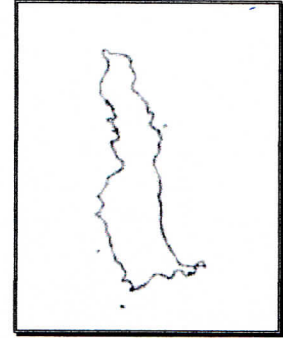
The Aims of the Group are: 1) to provide a nucleus of expertise on the marine habitats and waters surrounding Lundy; 2) to provide a forum for exchanging views on present and proposed activities around Lundy; 3) to safeguard the interests of all those who use the waters around Lundy and its natural resources; and 4) to advise the Management Group for the Reserve.

Established: 1985

Please reply to the Hon. Secretary:

Mr Robert Irving
Combe Lodge
Bampton
Devon EX16 9LB

Tel. 01398 332267
Mob. 07713 114006
e-mail: Robert@sea-scope.co.uk



Notes of the 19th meeting of the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group

(formerly known as the Lundy Marine Consultation Group, of which this was the 37th meeting)

held on **Wednesday, 7th April 2004** in the Meeting Room,
Civic Centre, Barnstaple at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Keith Hiscock	(KH)	Marine Biological Association	Chair
Chris Mandry	(CM)	British Sub-Aqua Club/Ilfracombe S-AC	
Margaret Ashton	(MA)	Ilfracombe & N. Devon Sub-Aqua Club	
Keith Bower	(KB)	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee	
Laura Heape	(LH)	English Nature (Devon Team)	
Anthony Glover	(AG)	Severn Sea Shipping Co. Ltd. / <i>Datchet</i>	
Stephen Perham	(SP)	Clovelly Harbour Master	
Mike Williams	(MW)	Environment Agency (Exeter)	
Ben Samson	(BS)	Lundy Warden	
Keith Denby	(KD)	Ilfracombe & N. Devon Sub-Aqua Club	
Royston Dennis	(RD)	Fisherman / <i>Betty Louise</i>	
Colin Eastman	(CE)	Charter boat skipper: <i>Lundy Murrelet</i>	
Barbara Haddrill	(BH)	Devon Wildlife Trust	
Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society & Marine Conservation Society	Secretary

1. **Apologies for absence:** John Heath (Historic wreck sites & Appledore SAC); Chris Davis (English Nature, Exeter); Simon Brockington (English Nature, Peterborough); Miles Hoskin (MER Consultants, Falmouth).
2. **Notes on the last meeting, held on 10th April 2003:** These were accepted as being a true record of the meeting and were signed by KH. RI pointed out that the meeting which was due to have taken place last autumn had had to be cancelled owing to the failure of certain key members of the Group being able to attend.
3. **Matters arising: Pt 6.** KB informed the Group that the new byelaw prohibiting "the removal of any sea fish" from within the No Take Zone (Byelaw No. 28) had now been 'tidied up' to overrule an earlier byelaw (No. 14b) which permitted netting and potting by islanders within a small rectangular area to the north of the Landing Bay.

Pt. 7. RI had written to Dr Simon Brockington, Marine Monitoring Officer at English Nature's headquarters in Peterborough, regarding the Group's concern about the frequency of the monitoring of the rocky reefs within the cSAC. By law, the minimum level of monitoring required was once every six years, whilst the Group felt it should be undertaken more frequently than this. RI had

recently received a reply back from Simon Brockington (SB), who had been invited to attend this meeting of the Advisory Group, which he unfortunately had had to decline as it clashed with another meeting he was organising on monitoring within cSACs. In his reply, SB pointed out that he felt English Nature “is acting in accordance with both the letter and the spirit of the Habitats Regulations at Lundy”. As things stand at present, English Nature has no intention of increasing the frequency of the cSAC monitoring studies at Lundy. It was agreed that RI and KH would jointly write a response to SB. [Copies of the correspondence between RI & SB are available to any members of the Group who may wish to see them from RI.] KH proposed that English Nature (Devon Team) be asked to host a meeting of individuals concerned about the monitoring programme (i.e. Keith Hiscock and Robert Irving) with relevant EN staff (i.e. Laura Heape, Chris Davis and Simon Brockington), in order to discuss issues related to monitoring.

KH passed around copies of a recent paper he had written for the Lundy Field Society, which summarised the changes he had noted over the past 25 years in the abundance of certain marine species. The general discussion moved on to observations made by other individuals. CM pointed out that he had been seeing more crawfish recently between Jenny’s Cove and the North End of the island than in the past, and CE added he had seen some on the Knoll Pins too. KH pointed out that crustacean larvae do not mature until stage 6 of their development (the settlement stage) if the surrounding water is too cold. New larvae may well be being brought in from Brittany, or there could simply be more settlement taking place from planktonic larvae.

BS asked if the Group as an entity in its own right could bid for grant money from English Nature in order to establish a monitoring base using volunteer recorders. KH cautioned against this, as little credence could be put on scientific information collected by unqualified surveyors. CM asked where relevant observations of marine wildlife should be sent to – there seemed to be so many different organisations interested in different things. KH pointed out that sightings should be reported to the Warden (Warden@lundyisland.co.uk) but also that his organisation (*MarLIN*) issued a leaflet last year entitled ‘Sealife Signpost’, providing information for charter skippers (and others) to be able to ring a 24hr ‘hotline’ should they come across interesting sightings.

Pt. 12 CM asked if BS had got any further with establishing a means of keeping weather records (particularly barometric pressure readings) on the island. BS said he had made some initial investigations, but that an automatic station would require electricity for 24 hrs a day, which the island could not provide. KD suggested that the South Light would have a 24 hr power source, and that to find out if this would be available, BS should make enquiries through Trinity House.

4. ***Matters arising from the last Lundy MNR Management Group meeting (held on 10/11 November 2003 on Lundy):*** MW reported that this had been a productive meeting. Both terrestrial and marine matters were discussed. Much of the issues relating to waste management had now been sorted. KH asked if there was an oil spill contingency plan for the island. LH agreed to ask CD to check on this. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency would be responsible for co-ordinating the response to an oil spill. KH mentioned that the Joint Nature Conservation Committee are currently updating their 12 year old Oil Spill Contingency Atlas at present. He also stated that, if possible, dispersal at sea would be the best option to deal with any major spills. BS pointed out that there was no equipment kept on the island for dealing with oil spills. LH, MW and KB all agreed to raise this issue at the next Management Group meeting, due to take place tomorrow (8th April).

5. ***Report from the Reserve:*** the following report was presented by Ben Samson, Lundy Warden.

As usual activity within the MNR was low through the winter months although there were significant developments in terrestrial conservation and waste management which will impact on the MNR and its users. I have therefore widened the scope of this report to include terrestrial conservation. This should help to integrate marine and terrestrial management and keep members of the advisory group informed of activities above the high water mark.

5.1 Human Activity:

- 5.1.1 Fishing and potting activity: There was a small amount of angling from the jetty and Landing Beach through the winter but no commercial fishing recorded after October, although there have been old pot marker buoys, two at the North End and one in Jenny's Cove, remaining right through the winter months. The only recorded instance of fishing in the No Take Zone was on 28th March, with two men angling from a small, anchored motor vessel "Edna May" close inshore about 50m north of the Sugarloaf. On being warned that they were in breach of the MNR byelaws they moved on, motoring out of the reserve.
- 5.1.2 Marine litter and other pollution: All man-made litter was removed from the Landing Beach and Devil's Kitchen as and when it was washed up. Other than this there have been no recorded pollution incidents.

5.2 Wildlife:

- 5.2.1 Grey Seals: Late pups were recorded in October and early November including one successfully raised in the Devil's Kitchen.
- 5.2.2 Seabirds: Three oiled guillemots were seen in the landing bay over the winter: one dead and the others too lively to catch. Gulls, shags and fulmars are at their nesting sites, auks have been seen prospecting and shearwaters are gathering offshore.
- 5.2.3 Other Marine Sightings: Occasional dolphins and porpoises have been seen from the Island and helicopter over the winter.
- 5.2.4 Vegetation: Large areas of heather appear to have been killed following a hot, dry summer with similar events reported elsewhere in the west of Britain. The dry summer rapidly gave way to a long cool winter with very little plant growth. With feral animal numbers (including rabbits) very high, overgrazing is much in evidence and animals are struggling to find forage.
- 5.2.5 Feral Mammals: Rabbit numbers have remained very high for the past three years and there is evidence that they are expanding their range, especially on the eastern and western sidelands. Although there doesn't seem to be any disease about, large numbers have been dying through the late winter and early spring, apparently from a lack of food. This is also evident with the large feral mammals are ranging more widely across the Island than usual. The goats causing damage around Millcombe and St Johns Valleys and Sika deer are active all day right across the plateau. Many of the soay sheep look in poor condition and several corpses have been recovered.
- 5.2.6 Rats: With the team of contractors and volunteers resetting the bait grid in November and baiting from December, a few small areas with rat activity were soon discovered and the rats killed. There hasn't been any rat sign for two months now and it appears that Lundy is rat-free although I will be conducting monitoring at various points around the Island for the next two years to be sure. Baiting around the jetty, Beach Road and farm buildings (likely places for rats to arrive) will be baited in perpetuity and suitable stocks of bait and bait stations stored to deal with possible future return. Although it is unlikely that small boats will harbour rats, it is important that all boats arriving on the Island should check before docking for any sign of rats and take practical precautions to minimise the chance of unwanted stowaways. Overnight mooring on the jetty is not allowed.

Monitoring of the seabird colonies in years to come will prove the success or otherwise of the Seabird Recovery Project.

5.3 Environmental Protection

- 3.1 Patrol boat: Following the disastrous season for water based patrols last season, with one mechanical problem after another preventing the use of the RIB, English Nature have obtained the JNCC RIB "Aplysia" to replace the old "Lundy Warden". This swap-over is scheduled for
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mid April and should mean that the Wardens have a far more visible presence on the water in the coming season.

5.4 Environmental Monitoring:

4.1 Marine temperature logger: The shallow water logger was attached to the jetty piling at the beginning of April and will record the temperature every four hours. The deep water logger is ready to be placed on the 'Robert' at the earliest opportunity. I have purchased a third unit to enable replacement and download of data with a single visit and no break in recording.

5.5 Raising awareness

5.5.1 Events: With the winter helicopter service extending the season, Warden-led walks and talks are now provided year round.

5.5.2 Panels and Posters: The new interpretative material has now arrived and should greatly help raise awareness of the MNR in general and the NTZ in particular.

5.5.3 Electronic Media: English Nature's website, english-nature.org.uk is now home to a virtual tour of Lundy, both above and below sea level. This is a hands-on, interactive site and although there are some teething problems to be sorted out, it should further help to enhance public knowledge of wildlife in the area. In another major step, there will soon be an underwater webcam showing a glimpse of life in the MNR. A stainless steel base for the camera is in place (in a gully between Rat Island and the jetty) and the rest of the infrastructure will be installed soon.

5.5.4 Media coverage: The appointment of new maintenance staff on the Island has created a baffling amount of media interest through the winter but in the next couple of months there will be two TV crews staying on the Island focussing on the natural history again, one for BBC southwest as a slot in a major series on Britain's landscape and the other for a programme on the top 10 natural jewels of the UK.

5.6 Waste Management:

5.6.1 Rubbish: Things have moved a long way since the practice of burning waste in an open incinerator and pushing the remains off a cliff. The incinerator was demolished in the spring and all rubbish is now taken off the Island for disposal in landfill after recyclables have been separated. There are plans afoot in the near future to install a "Rocket Composter" capable of disposing of all food waste, and a shredder to convert paper and cardboard into animal bedding.

5.6.2 Sewage: December saw the first transport of sludge from the main septic tank off the Island, with the Datchet chartered to ship 10 tonnes of waste in tanks to be processed through the mainland sewage system. This was an interim measure and the intention in the future is to screen and then compost the sludge on the Island for use as a soil improver. Previously, the plug had been pulled on the tank letting the sludge run untreated to sea – not exactly sending the message we would want about the importance of the MNR and the end of this practice is therefore another major step in the right direction.

Ben Sampson, Lundy Warden

CE asked if BS could change his day off. Last summer it was on Sunday, which is often the busiest day for visiting divers to the island. It was suggested that both Wardens be available for both weekend days. CM asked if any progress had been made with the suggestion of making dive charter boat skippers auxillary wardens? Some discussion was had regarding the legal aspects of this and KH suggested it be raised at tomorrow's Management Group meeting. KB pointed out that it would not be possible for 'auxillary wardens' to patrol the No Take Zone (NTZ) and have powers to enact the DSFC byelaw covering the NTZ. On another matter, BH asked if BS kept a record of the items of litter he found on the beach, which may tie-in with other national litter surveys. BS replied that he didn't, in part because of the infrequent nature of the collections and because of the small quantity collected.

6. *Activities within the MNR/cSAC:*

6a NTZ Monitoring studies: It was hoped that Dr Miles Hoskin from MER Consultants would have been able to tell the Group about the monitoring studies within the No Take Zone, but sadly he had been unable to get to the meeting. RI agreed to invite him to the next meeting. KH briefly informed the Group of the proposed studies, as he was involved in the consortium undertaking this work. KB pointed out that permission from the Devon Sea Fisheries Committee was necessary before any scientific study which involved the removal of 'sea fish' (which includes crustacea) could be undertaken within the NTZ. RI expressed his concern and disappointment that studies of near-shore fish populations were now to be excluded from the project on the grounds of financial savings.

6b cSAC Monitoring studies: In the absence of Chris Davis from English Nature, LH reported that all she knew of this was that more sites were due to be covered at Lundy (compared to other cSACs) because it was an MNR. The programme of cSAC rock habitat monitoring studies were not completed last year due to inclement weather and two weeks of further fieldwork were due to take place this coming summer.

7. *Other activities planned for 2004:* RI stated that he planned to take another group of Marine Conservation Society divers over to the island from 7-11 June to carry out a number of conservation tasks, though this would be dependent on receiving financial support from English Nature to help subsidise the trip. [In mid-May, RI heard from English Nature that his grant request had been turned down, so he had to cancel this proposed trip at short notice].

KH reported that English Nature had just launched its interactive Lundy MNR website, which had gone 'live' in the past couple of days. LH added that the Zoning Scheme was missing and needed to be included. KD, who works in the field of web site design, pointed out that this had been a missed opportunity for English Nature. The site could have been set up to be more expandable, with an opportunity to update the database behind the 'front' of the site. There should also be cross-links to other Lundy sites, particularly the site run by the Lundy Field Society. KH suggested more input to the site could be provided by Advisory Group members.

8. *Moorings proposal:* A Seaflex mooring had been ordered by the English Nature (Exeter) office and was due to be fixed to the seabed in Gannets' Bay sometime in the next couple of months.

9. *Re-drafting of the Zonation Scheme:* This had now been completed and English Nature had printed a number of sticky-backed maps which could be stuck over the top of the old Zoning Scheme maps.

10. *Mapping European Seabed Habitats (MESH) project:* LH reported that the Joint Nature Conservation Committee were embarking on a 3-year project to do with mapping of seabed habitats around the whole of the UK. Other European countries with coastline bordering the NE Atlantic were undertaking similar exercises. £21k had been ear-marked for seabed habitat mapping around Lundy. KH pointed out that any remote sensing data must be ground-truthed with drop-down video or diver surveys. The earlier Rox-Ann survey of Lundy had featured a number of errors in the identification of seabed types. LH said that she would be happy to e-mail further details of the project to Advisory Group members.

11. *The seabird recovery project:* - see earlier comments included in Ben Samson's report.

12. *Any other business:* The following points were raised:-


- John Heath had informed RI that he had found a dead seahorse washed up on Woolacombe beach sometime in March 2004.
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- KD suggested that an internet group be set up which would allow for the exchange of sightings/observations of marine wildlife around Lundy, for all those interested that were 'on line'. It was agreed this was a good idea and KD agreed to set the group up. The address for this is now: lundymarinelife@lists.eddystone.com.
- CM pointed out that one or more of the potting boats which set pots around the island last year was using long green floating lines. These provided a considerable safety hazard to other near-shore boat traffic, as the lines may snag around propellers. KB would look into this. The problem might be floating line between pots which came to the surface at times of low water, but which was covered by water at other states of the tide.
- BS pointed out that he had received notification of an aggregate dredging licence application for the Culver Sand area (Area 472), though he thought this was sufficiently far away from the island not to have an influence on the MNR/cSAC and its marine communities.

At the end of the meeting, RI gave a short PowerPoint presentation on the studies on the sunset cup coral *Leptopsammia pruvoti* he had been carrying out at Lundy over the past few years with the help of volunteer divers from the Marine Conservation Society.

Date of next meeting: In view of the need to ensure that the Warden, Ben Samson, would be able to get to meetings of the Advisory Group on the mainland, it seemed prudent to arrange all future meetings to coincide with sailings of the *Oldenburg*. As BS did not have a copy of the sailing times with him, he agreed to notify Robert Irving of possible dates in October as soon as he had checked the sailing times.

[Later in the summer a date of **Monday, 4th October 2004** was suggested for the next meeting, to be held in Bideford.]


4/10/04