

LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE ADVISORY GROUP

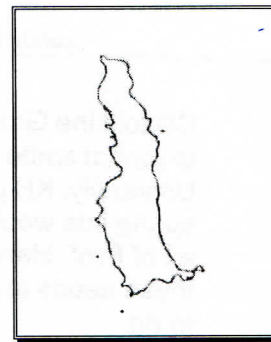
The Aims of the Group are: 1) to provide a nucleus of expertise on the marine habitats and waters surrounding Lundy; 2) to provide a forum for exchanging views on present and proposed activities around Lundy; 3) to safeguard the interests of all those who use the waters around Lundy and its natural resources;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

Established: 1985

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Notes of the 25th meeting of the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group

(formerly known as the Lundy Marine Consultation Group, of which this was the 43rd meeting)

held on **Monday, 23rd April 2007** in the Committee Room,
Riverbank House, Chanters Road, Bideford at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Keith Hiscock	(KH)	Marine Biological Association	Chair
John Butterwith	(JB)	Chief Executive, North Devon Fishermen's Assoc.	
Nicola Saunders	(NS)	Lundy Warden	
Clive Pearson	(CP)	Charter Skipper <i>Jessica Hettie</i>	
Chris Davis	(CD)	Natural England (Devon Office)	
Caroline Roberts	(CR)	Devon Wildlife Trust	
Tim Robbins	(TR)	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee	
Andrew Bengey	(Aby)	<i>Obsession</i> Charters	
Leigh Hanks	(LH)	<i>Obsession</i> Charters	
Mike Deaton	(MD)	Appledore S-AC	
Anthony Glover	(AG)	Severn Sea Shipping Co. Ltd.	
Chris Mandry	(CM)	British Sub-Aqua Club/Ilfracombe S-AC	
Keith Denby	(KD)	Ilfracombe S-AC	
Steve Ashton	(SA)	Ilfracombe S-AC, Chairman	
Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society & Marine Conservation Society	Secretary

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received from: Derek Green (Lundy Manager); Royston Johns (Torrige District Council); and Colin Eastman (Lundy Charters/Lundy Murrelet).
- 2. Notes on the last meeting, held on 19th October 2006:** These were accepted as being a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman, KH.
- 3. Matters arising:** (From section 4): KH informed the Group that as a result of various discussions, a costed proposal had been drawn up to look into the issue of contaminants within sediments and within a range of organisms. Between £15k - £40k would be required to obtain a sufficient number of samples, some of which could be frozen in case additional funding became available at a later date. CD replied that Natural England did not have the funds for this as yet but that Devon County Council had recently taken two benthic samples from the Landing Bay (coarse sediment) and from Gannets' Bay (fine sediment).

The following organisations sit on the Advisory Group: British Sub-Aqua Club * Devon Sea Fisheries Committee * Devon Wildlife Trust * English Heritage * Environment Agency * Landmark Trust * local dive charter interests * local diving clubs * local sea fishing interests * The Lundy Company Ltd. * Lundy Field Society * Marine Archaeological Interests * Marine Biological Association of the U.K. * Marine Conservation Society * Natural England * North Devon Coast and Countryside Service * North Devon Fishermen's Association * South-West Federation of Sea Anglers * Torrige District Council * Worldwide Fund for Nature (UK)

CD told the Group that Natural England were able to fund KH's proposed visit to the island to repeat some intertidal studies undertaken 50 years ago by Prof. Leslie Harvey of Exeter University. KH pointed out that the tides were not particularly good this year (i.e. the lowest spring tide would not necessarily expose much of the lowest part of the shore). However, all of Prof. Harvey's handwritten record cards were in his possession and the data from these needs to be transferred into a spreadsheet. This could be a job for a bursary student to do.

CD mentioned that Natural England were also funding a study into the decline of the sunset cup coral *Leptopsammia pruvoti* at Lundy. This Mediterranean species, which is nationally rare, was first discovered in British waters at Lundy by KH in 1969. A contract for this work would be let later in the summer.

KH mentioned that a student at Plymouth University, Rosalyn Wilkins, wanted to study fish populations at Lundy. KH had suggested to her that she first conduct a review of what's known and then, as she doesn't dive, to undertake a drop-down video survey of the red band fish population off the east coast. These were first surveyed in the mid-1970s. Changes in water masses, as predicted by the Russell cycle, may well be picked up in increasing fish populations first.

NS informed the Group that she now had 3 temperature loggers to put into place at the end of the jetty, on the wreck of the *Robert* and to keep one as a spare. An existing logger is already in place on the jetty, but the one lifted from the *Robert* last autumn is too old to download.

4. **Matters arising from the Lundy Management Forum meeting (held on 24th April 2007):**
[Note – this meeting took place in Exeter on the morning after the Advisory Group meeting and was attended by RI (on behalf of the Advisory Group) and KH (on behalf of the Lundy Field Society). It seems sensible to include the main points of discussion relevant to the MNR/SAC here, rather than report on them in six months' time].

- Note the new name for this group (formerly known as the Lundy Management Group), reflecting its make-up of statutory bodies and advisory bodies. The Terms of Reference for the Forum were further discussed.
- KH raised his proposal to study marine contaminants (as reported earlier).
- It was confirmed that a new agreement between Landmark Trust and Natural England had been signed which would last for 3 years (2007-10). One aspect of this was the provision of a full-time assistant warden post.
- The NTZ monitoring to be undertaken this summer would involve sample potting (from 29 June – 5 July) and separate diving studies looking at benthos and scallops (21 July – 10 August).
- A study assessing the extent and distribution of seabed habitats was to be undertaken using drop-down video, effectively ground-truthing the remote hydrosurvey study that was carried out in 2006.
- When the Marine Bill becomes law (possibly by early 2009), the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which set out provisions for the establishment and management of marine nature reserves, will be repealed. Its byelaws (as overseen by NE & DSFC) will also be revoked. A transition period will make sure there are no gaps in the subsequent legislation. All signage will need to be changed as the 'MNR' name will change. NE will propose to change its functions and instead of being Managers they will be Advisors. A new Marine Management Agency will control all activities (e.g. recreation, licensing, moorings etc.) with the exception of fisheries, which will still be controlled by DSFC.
- CD pointed out that a review of the MNR/SAC Management Scheme was overdue, and that he would also like to see a review of the control of activities within the SAC boundary.
- Mark Dunkley from English Heritage referred to the arrangements concerning divers being allowed to dive on the *Iona II* protected wreck site. The arrangement is for a nominated

diving supervisor (from a dive club) to be issued with a licence which others within that club could dive under. For charter skippers, who are likely to have a different group of divers on each outing, a list of named individuals would need to be submitted in advance.

- The date of the next Management Group meeting will be on 26th October 2007.

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

Warden's Report (October 2006 - April 2007)

5.1 Staff

- 5.1.1 There have been no staff changes since my last report in October. The Memorandum of Agreement between Natural England and The Landmark Trust was due for renewal and the new agreement has been finalised and signed. It now makes provisions for a permanent Assistant Warden, so Sophie has now become a permanent addition to the team, and Lundy now has two full time Wardens.

5.2 Human Activity

- 5.2.1 **Fishing and potting activity:** Land based patrols of the MNR have continued throughout the winter season. Minimal activity was recorded between October and April, although pots were present until December and the first pots of 2007 were recorded in March, with the recent good weather activity has increased rapidly over the past two weeks.

- 5.2.1.1 As well as fortnightly surveys, any NTZ activity of note has been recorded. A number of trawling vessels have been recorded off the east coast of Lundy between October and March, none of which were operating fishing gear. However, on 21 January trawler *Arca* from Zeebrugge, was motoring up and down the east coast between 5am and midday with booms down. I spoke with them on VHF and advised them they were in a NTZ and they said they were not fishing. At 12:30 they anchored off within the NTZ and began angling off the back of the boat. I attempted to call them on VHF again and they did not respond. Photos were taken of fish being caught and I passed this information on to DSFC.

- 5.2.1.2 This is the only know incident of illegal fishing since my last report.

- 5.2.1.3 In my October report I mentioned a Charter boat, Anchorman III, which had been fishing off Brazen Ward. Clive Pearson informed me there was a photograph in the November issue of 'Sea Angler' of a vessel fishing off the East Coast of Lundy. The picture shows an angler holding a Red Band Fish, with the caption "This 1lb 2oz red band fish was caught by Mark Watson, of Barry, while fishing off Lundy Island. He was aboard Anchorman III, out of Barry". For those who know Lundy it is unmistakably on the east coast within the NTZ.

DSFC wrote to the owner, who has since claimed he was unaware of any infringement, but has been informed, so we shouldn't have any further problems.

- 5.2.1.4 **Angling:** There has been sporadic angling from the jetty throughout the winter and it is picking up now that the spring has arrived.

- 5.2.2 The RIB was booked in for its annual service in January. Unfortunately, due to a combination of weather and the ongoing road works, we were unable to get it across to the mainland until 15 March. It is being serviced now and should be back on Lundy by the end of next week when boat surveys of the MNR will commence.

- 5.2.3 **Diving activity:** Dive charters have begun visiting. Although we've not had any resident groups yet, bookings are looking very good, with our first group in a couple of weeks.

Divers staying on the island this season will have to bear with us, as ongoing road works will reduce road access for the next month. This should not cause too much disruption but will need co-operation from visiting groups, as it is likely we will only be able to have set opening times for divers to access the beach.

- 5.2.4 **Litter and marine pollution:** Small amounts of litter have been washed ashore especially after Easterly winds, regular beach cleans have been done as and when required.

5.3 Wildlife

- 5.3.1 **Grey Seals:** A seal pup was born in mid February. Although an unusual occurrence at this time of year, 'he' did extremely well. We closed access to Quarry Beach and observed the pup and mother on several occasions and he was last seen on 26 February.

- 5.3.2 **Cetaceans:** Our first porpoise sighting of the year was reported on 14 April, and on my way back on the *Oldenburg* on Saturday 21st April we had six sightings of porpoises.

- 5.3.3 **Seabirds:** In my last report I mentioned that we were looking into the possibility of recruiting a Seabird volunteer to assist us with our surveys. I am please to say that interviews for a volunteer took place on 10th April and Sarah Dalrymple will be starting on 15 May. The RSBP and Natural England have funded the purchase of a new caravan to accommodate the volunteer and she will spend 3 month with us surveying the seabirds.

- 5.3.3.1 **Puffins:** First Puffin sighting was on the 5th April. We have begun regular checks of the known nesting sight so that accurate records can be built up.

- 5.3.3.2 **Guillemots:** Guillemots and Razorbills have been present since January, with regular sightings and large numbers visiting the nesting cliffs with increasing frequency.

- 5.3.3.3 **Manx Shearwaters:** The first Manx Shearwaters were seen from the *Oldenburg* on 28th March, and over a 1000 on 14th and similar numbers on 21st.

5.4 Monitoring

- 5.4.1 **Temperature loggers:** New temperature loggers have been purchased and are ready to go into place.

- 5.4.2 **Weather Station:** Trinity House donated us the weather station from the South Light. Unfortunately there was no corresponding software and we were unable to get it operational. Natural England kindly funded a new weather station, which I have just managed to get into place. It is an excellent piece of equipment and has the capability of making a live connection to the web, I am currently familiarising myself with it and am hoping that we can link it to the Lundy website to provide a weather page with current information.

5.5 Raising Awareness

- 5.5.1 **Events on the Island:** The usual programme of talks, and walks continued throughout the winter and the first Rocky Shore Ramble was on 30th March. Seabird Walks will begin in the next week or so and Snorkel Safaris will be programmed in over the next few months. In a bid to increase visitor attendance we have produced new display boards to advertise events well in advance;

- 5.5.2 **Media Interest:** We had no media visits between October and the end of March. Two journalists have visited Lundy so far this month and another 3 media visits are scheduled between now and June. Enquiries for the coming season are increasing, and I expect we will have another busy year.

- 5.5.3 **School Visits:** I did a week of school visits in November which were a huge success,

and Sophie followed this up with a second week in February. We visited 14 schools and saw over 800 children between us. Following on from this, I've put together a programme of 'Education Days' on Lundy. We have sent aside 13 days and programmed in Warden-led events specifically for school groups. To date we have had 4 bookings, and our first 'Education Day' will be in May.

Nicola Saunders, Lundy Warden

The following discussion points were raised at the end of the Warden's Report:

JB added to what was known about the beam trawler *Arca*. She is 30m long Belgian vessel and uses otter trawls. She has been around since last summer. She is known to Cornwall, Devon & S. Wales Sea Fisheries Committees as she has infringed various regulations. The skipper has recently been fined £2k for illegal fishing in the Trevoze Box. She is only allowed to fish outside the 6nm limit, and Lundy has its own 6nm limit around the island. JB has discussed his concerns about this vessel with the then Fisheries Minister Ben Bradshaw, but apparently he is powerless to do anything about it.

DG informed the Group that by the end of May there would be complete pedestrian access on the Beach Road. Next winter (October '07 – June '08) there would be work undertaken to upgrade the slipway next to the jetty. He asked if any of the Group would object if the central support at the end of the jetty is removed to allow NS to launch the RIB from there at all states of the tide. There were no objections.

KH asked what had happened to the NTZ display board prepared by Dr Miles Hoskin. NS explained that the board was on the island but was extremely heavy to move about and had not found a permanent home. KH wondered if it could be used somewhere on the mainland instead, perhaps at Ifracombe Aquarium.

CM welcomed the appearance of easy-to-see marker flags attached to Dan buoys on strings of pots set by a Cornish boat within the Reserve. He also said that he had spent an hour cleaning off kelp growing on the underside of the mooring buoy in Gannets' Bay.

6. Natural England projects:

6a Update of NTZ monitoring: CD explained that the monitoring studies were going to continue this summer, using Anthony Glover's boat *Datchet*. This would be for 7 weeks in total, from 6th July until the second week in August. This would be the last year of the present funding arrangement. CD asked for the Advisory Group's thoughts on how the monitoring should be continued. He believes the diving studies (epifauna and scallop surveys) are not showing much change, but that it would be useful if the potting continued. It is planned for the work to be written up over the next 2 years and for one or more scientific papers to be published. CD would invite Miles Hoskin along to the next meeting of the Group to present the results of the NTZ monitoring so far. KH suggested a copy of Miles' poster could be sent to NS for possible display at the back of the Church.

6b Side-scan survey of the Reserve: CD informed the Group that funding was now available to complete the side-scan survey of the whole Reserve. This would then need ground-truthing and a drop-video survey would also be undertaken this summer to identify seabed types.

6c Interpretive material: Plans were afoot to update all of the interpretive material on the island, providing a 'standard' format and common design to all. An update of the Dive Guide was planned which would include snorkelling and rockpooling. KH offered his collection of intertidal photos to Paul Kay if he needed any further ones for the new edition.

6d New promotional video: A new video was being planned which would supersede the existing one currently being shown on the *Oldenburg* (filmed in 2002). This was being filmed by an underwater cameraman who had worked on the BBC's Blue Planet series.

7. Other activities for 2007: KD said that he was hopeful of being able to use a multi-beam sonar in surveying the wrecks of the *South Australian* and the *Iona II* this summer. KH wondered if the equipment could also be used to look for black bream nest sites in areas of gravel. The bream clear circular patches of the seabed up to 1m across, which should show up on the sonar. RI & CM also asked him to look at the seabed off the NE & N coasts.

SA mentioned that a new member of the Ilfracombe SAC, Crystal Stacey, would be taking over the role of Seasearch co-ordinator for the Club. KH said that he thought there were various volunteer diving projects at Lundy which could be undertaken.

A survey of the island's sunset cup coral *Leptopsammia pruvoti* population would be undertaken later in the summer, funded by Natural England. KH added that he was hoping to acquire some clippings of the tentacles of some of the corals for DNA analysis.


8. Species declines in the MNR: KH has written a draft paper on the decline of various species at Lundy. This is available for members of the Group to see. Please contact KH or RI for a copy.

9. Seaflex moorings: CD explained that Natural England had funding for up to 5 more Seaflex moorings to be put in place this year (as had been used in Gannets' Bay), if the Group thought this was appropriate. In addition, NS explained, a new annual licensing system for moorings in the Landing Bay was due to be introduced this year. Any new Seaflex moorings in the Landing Bay would require a concrete block at their base. CP thought that this would be unsuitable in the Landing Bay where a concrete block would just disappear under the sand. CM also wondered who would service and clean each of the moorings, and if there would be any liability issues regarding their use. After several minutes of discussion, it was felt that there was no need to add any new Seaflex moorings into the Landing Bay, other than perhaps one for the Warden's RIB. It was suggested that the money for the moorings would be better spent upgrading the ladder at the end of the jetty to make it more user-friendly. KH suggested a survey should be undertaken to assess the impact on the seabed of the Gannets' Bay mooring. One additional site outside the Landing Bay could be at Rattles Anchorage off the south coast.

10. Any other business: The following points were raised:-

- KH pointed out that the Marine Bill white paper is now available for comment (to Defra by 4th June). The term 'Marine Nature Reserve' will be dropped and something else put in its place such as Marine Conservation Zone. CD has been contracted by Defra to sort out an Action Plan to ensure a smooth transition re. changes to existing byelaws etc.
- CP queried the extent of the exclusion zone around the Iona II. Was it 50m or 150m?
- KH asked for interesting marine natural history sightings from the Reserve to be recorded (there's a log in the Tavern); and CD asked for any sightings of illegal fishing within the NTZ to be reported to NS.

9. Date of next meeting: Thursday, 18th October 2007 to be held at 7.00 pm in Torridge District Council's Committee Room, Riverbank House, Chanters Lane, Bideford.


17/04/08