

## Warden's report (April 2013-September 2013)

### 1. Staff

1.1 There have been no staff changes within the Conservation Team since the previous report.

### 2. Marine - general & monitoring

2.1 The RIB has been out of action for the monitoring season due to necessary repairs. This has not hindered the monitoring programme as other means have been available and utilised.

2.2 MARINELife monthly surveys have continued since the last report and have been circulated to Lundy Conservation Team Facebook page viewers.

MARINELife's Wildlife Officer programme for MS Oldenburg has been an success with many visitors interacting with the Officer throughout the sailing and whilst on Lundy. The Officers are providing an invaluable resource and we will be continuing this collaboration in 2014.

To support the collaboration, an A4 waterproof ID guide containing details of seabirds, marine mammals and fish which are likely to be seen on the sailing and surround the island has been produced. There have been some technical issues with its production, however it will be available to support the scheme next year.

2.3 A new Lundy Marine Life Logbook has been produced and is being well used by visitors (and staff). The logbook was developed as although the LFS logbook provided space for details, the information is more useful in a collated format and also, the Seal Logbook needed renewing.

The logbook has specific chapters on Seals, Other Marine Mammals, Basking sharks, Rocky shore and Below the tide line. Divers will be made aware of its presence in the new 2014 Lundy Dive Information booklet to try and encourage its use.

2.4 NTZ Infringements – all infringements have been reported to Devon and Severn IFCA and it is hoped that the new scheme that they are developing will support the enforcement of this area. However, occasional infringements by smaller private owned boats are of concern – suggestions welcome.

2.5 Seals – Twice monthly observations of the seal population around Lundy have been undertaken either on MS Oldenburg, Jessica Hettie or Lundy Castaway. The highest population count to date this year has been 180 individuals on the 26<sup>th</sup> June. Seven pups have been noted during the surveys and through the Marine Life Logbook outside the pupping season. At the time writing, two pups have appeared around the Landing Bay area and specific locations have been closed until further notice.

Libby Abbott, a volunteer, spent one week dedicated to the grey seal photo identification database and made excellent progress, identifying 98 seals from the plethora of images. Libby will be returning in the winter to continue this valuable work and there will be two other volunteers assisting before the end of the year. Throughout this process, images will be shared with Sue Sayer of the Cornwall Seal Group.

Concerns regarding snorkeler and diver conduct towards seals, particularly those seals that are hauled out. Therefore in response to this a code of conduct poster has been developed and is now being displayed on local charter boats, and used during their dive briefings to raise awareness.

2.6 Two students from Plymouth University, Rosie Graham and John Mellor, spent 6 weeks on the island monitoring the movements of cetaceans around the island. As part of their project, they will be analysing historic and recent C-POD data and we are expecting the reports shortly. Unfortunately, the 2012 students have yet to complete and

submit their reports. Two C-PODs have been deployed throughout the summer on MV Robert and the Ethel. One of these belongs to Simon Ingram (Plymouth university lecturer) as his students required the data from both areas.

At the last meeting of the LMF, we had just discovered that the C-POD attached to the Ethel was missing. It travelled to Galway, Ireland and was retrieved in August. However, it was found to be too damaged for future use. Through discussions with Chelonia, a new C-POD has arrived and there are plans to deploy it and the remaining original C-POD before the end of September. Retrieval will then occur once conditions are suitable in 2014. The data collected will be assisting Nick Tregenza with further development of the system and their understanding of the different signatures produced by the dolphin species that travel around Lundy.

2.7 All historical marine monitoring data has been collated as part of the NE Conservation Advice Review and will be analysed and reported on before the next LMF meeting.

2.8 Seabirds – it has been an amazing year for seabirds on Lundy with most species having increased further since 2004 and support the success of the islands Rat Eradication programme. Gull species are however on the decline, as has been noted across the UK.

Species	No. counted in 2013	No. counted in 2008	No. counted in 2004	Percentage increase since 2004 (post rat eradication)
Guillemot	4,114	3,302	2,321	+77%
Razorbill	1,324	1,045	841	+57%
Puffins	80	14	5	+1500%
Kittiwakes	127	151	148	-14%
Fulmars	209	170	178	+17%
Shags	112	63	63	+78%

It is possible that the numbers are higher as on one occasion we counted 120+ puffins on our monitoring slope (Jenny's cove) in July. One solitary Puffin was also observed, during a seal survey, defending a burrow on the East coast close to Tibbett's Point.

Productivity monitoring was carried out for Kittiwakes, Puffins and Guillemots with the following results:

- Guillemots
  - St Mark's stone: 19 fledged from 27 active sites (productivity = 0.70)
  - Inland of St. Mark's stone: 7 fledged from 13 active sites (productivity = 0.59)
- Kittiwakes – Data under analysis
- Puffins
  - Jenny's cove site: 22 successful sites from 31 occupied nests (productivity = 0.70)

The Manx Shearwater survey (playback calls), lead by Helen Booker and David Price, was undertaken in June. The population increase has surpassed all expectations as the estimated 1,105 pairs of 2008 have now increased to an estimated 3,155 breeding pairs; an increase of 179%.

The island's climbing restrictions, put in place to reduce disturbance to seabird colonies, were extended this year as many chicks were still occupying nests well into August. Therefore the restrictions remained in place until the end of August with the support of many of the island's regular climbers who have chosen to come to the island in September instead.

2.9 Cup corals: The population beneath the Jetty has been monitored since May to determine the variability in the population throughout the year. This will continue until May 2014. However, it has become apparent that there are

issues with the monitoring of this species due to siltation as individuals cannot be found from one month to the next. There are also concerns that should this siltation continue, it may have long-term implications for the populations.

The annual survey of the Devil’s Kitchen populations took place in August and those visible were counted and measured:

	2013		2012	
	No. of Scarlet & Gold cup corals	No. of Devonshire cup corals	No. of Scarlet & Gold cup corals	No. of Devonshire cup corals
Site 1	23	3	33	6
Site 2	86	5	94	None

The counts suggest that the population of Scarlet and Gold cup corals have decreased in sites 1 and 2 since last year, and that the number of Devonshire cup corals has increased at site 2 but decreased at site 2. It is possible that individuals were not visible due to siltation as a count of Scarlet and Gold cup corals by RM and KH in April found only 15 at site 1 and 61 at site 2.

A site of 70+ Scarlet and Gold cup corals was found by KH under the Jetty in April, has now diminished to approx 10 individuals as the site has been colonised by kelp and other seaweeds. This site will be visited over the winter (weather permitting) to see if the colony re-establishes itself over the period.

2.10 Composition of rockpool communities: The rockpool locations in Devil’s Kitchen have been determined and GPS positions taken for each pool. The survey was undertaken over the September spring tides and many of the species seen in previous years were found along with other species. A full report on the communities will be produced over the winter.

2.11 Divers: Due to the excellent weather we have had this dive season, 38 dive groups have used the facilities and stayed on the island. Many more groups have come over on day trips.

Feedback from charter skippers regarding the organisation of the dive services offered by the island (RM & JA) has been very positive and we look forward to another good season next year.

2.12 Historic wrecks: Alison James has now left on maternity leave and her position is now in the hands of Terence Newman who can be contacted on [terence.newman@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:terence.newman@english-heritage.org.uk)

English Heritage are developing a dive trail for the Iona II wreck and the tender for this has been awarded to Wessex Archaeology. To develop the trail they will be working closely with RM and TN to ensure that the trail contains elements that are of assistance to the monitoring of the wreck itself and its marine life. Licensing for the wreck will remain the same, however divers can register their details with RM on the island in order to dive the wreck at short notice.

### 3. Terrestrial – General & Monitoring

3.1 Sward management: The Highland Steers have moved from Brickfield into Middle park where they are contentedly grazing alongside the Lundy Ponies to tackle the tall grasses and shrubs.

3.2 Rabbits and feral stock: The numbers of rabbits are slowly increasing and will be monitored and managed as necessary over the winter.

3.3 Working parties: The LFS working party joined the Ranger team in September to assist with maintenance works and burning of the Rhododendron brush piles.

3.4 Rhododendron management:

Established stands along east-coast sidelands (Areas 1-16): A total of 12523 seedlings were pulled and 1480 plants/seedlings were stump treated. A check in June found 8 plants within stacks that required flower heads removing. No plants allowed to set seed.

Intermediary Areas along east-coast sidelands (Areas Int1 – Int17): A total of 69 seedlings were pulled, 38 plants/seedlings were stump treated, and no flowering plants located.

Plateau: Final sweep of north section and Tibbets east: 13 plants found and treated north of quarter wall, 7 plants found in Tibbets north, 0 found in Tibbets South. No flowering plants found.

Ropeworks: In June a cliff access team cleared the east coast of flowering heads as per visual survey completed from the sea.

3.5 Bracken management: The focus has been on reducing percentage cover north of three-quarter wall and north of the Old Hospital, however the late breeding season for ground nesting birds, along with delayed growth of the bracken, meant that bruising and control was delayed until August.

3.6 Invasive species: Since the last report the programme for the eradication of Spanish Bluebells *Hyacinthoides hispanica* and Hybrids *Hyacinthoides* × *massartiana* has continued. AM, under the guidance of SP, produced a management plan for the control of Alexanders *Smyrnium olusatrum*.

3.7 There have been no rat related incidents since the last report and the permanent boxes around the South of the island are checked and maintained once a month and those on MS Oldenburg are checked and maintained weekly.

3.8 Lundy and National rarities: A number of rarities have been seen this year on Lundy. Most notably, the Chough brought a large number of people to the island but left again in May. Other rarities included Hoopoe, Golden Oriole, Hen Harrier, Osprey, Long-tailed Skua, Black Guillemot, Pectoral Sandpiper and Wryneck.

Proposal with Bird Alert: Currently RM is discussing the possibility of a Lundy as a zone for the 'Rare Bird Alert' network to raise awareness of Lundy and National rarities when they are on the island.

3.9 Isabel Whiney's report:

We monitored 180 sparrow broods this year. This is the highest number of broods we have had since 2005, and reflects the healthy population of breeding adults: 74 breeding males and 77 breeding females of known identity. This is about double 2012 but about 1.4 times the number of adults we had breeding in 2011 (as for further back - I don't remember because I wasn't doing the project!).

Throughout Europe, people have been talking about the poor summer and the late start. It is true that we had slightly lower numbers of chicks this year compared to 2011, the last relatively normal summer. We had 3.5 chicks per brood this year versus 4.7 chicks per brood in 2011. At the same time, this reduced breeding success could well reflect the higher population density of this year and therefore food availability and more.

This summer, IW was supported by Andreas Carvajal and from this December, Alfredo Sánchez Tójar will be taking on the sparrow research as IW is now writing up her thesis.

3.10 Pygmy Shrew research query – the mystery has been solved. Tails were collected for Professor Jeremy Searle of Cornell University whilst he was a visiting lecturer at the University of York. Prof. Searle is presently looking into the research.

3.11 Lundy Cabbage: Roger & Rosie Key along with Steve Compton completed the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Cabbage counting this year. 12,952 plants were in flower out of an estimated population of 15,000. This is the largest number recorded in flower to date.

The current leaflet on the cabbage is currently being reviewed and will be updated to produce a new version for 2014.

Lundy Cabbage weevil nomenclature – at the Lundy Cabbage meeting, questions were asked regarding the scientific name of the weevil as it has been shown to be its own species. Roger Key is currently investigating as its name will become *Ceuthorhynchus pallipes*, however at present it will remain *Ceuthorhynchus contractus* var. *pallipes*.

## 4. Education, interpretation & events

### 4.1 Warden events:

- “Above and below the waves” – the 24 visitor talks have been well attended throughout the season. The majority have been delivered by AMF in order to develop her interpretation experience.
- Guided walks – many visitors have participated in the 25 walks provided by AMF, SD and RM.
- Rockpool Rambles – not many of these events (6) have taken place this summer due to the tides and the overwhelming popularity of the Snorkel Safaris. When the Rambles have gone ahead they have been either well attended or with no attendance which is probably due to timing, therefore this will be considered when planning the events for 2014.
- Snorkel Safaris – all but two of these events (10 in total) went ahead this summer season. All were fully attended and normally oversubscribed. Also there has been a demand for them on sailing days therefore when planning summer 2014’s events, more will be made available and on sailing days when possible.

### 4.2 Education programme:

- SD has continued to offer outreach talks to schools and other groups. During this HLS year, he has delivered 7 to schools and 14 to other groups.
- RM, AMF and SD have delivered 11 island activities to visiting school groups during the same period.
- RM has completed a CEVAS course as required by the HLS.
- To develop the education programme offered by the island, RM is working with local schools to produce activities that are appropriate to their learning objectives and curriculum requirement. Alongside this, RM is developing a Teachers information pack with teaching and learning resources to support their visits.
- RM is developing educational/research visits with two groups from PETROC, Falmouth Marine School,.....

### 4.3 Splash In!:

- Splash In! 2013: This years’ event was an amazing success with 21 participants. Winners were as follows:
  - Marine Ambience:
  - Marine Abstract:
  - Mega to Macro
  - Overall winner: Mike Deaton
- Splash In! 2014: The date has been set for June 14<sup>th</sup> and 16 spaces have already been booked.

4.4 The Seabird interpretation board produced by Chris Baillie (LFS) with assistance from RM, Tim Davis, Richard Campey, Anna Taylor and Andy Lester is now displayed in the church. CB has plans for further boards that are currently under further discussion.

4.5 The Bird Ringing leaflet is now available for visitors from the Tavern, shop and shore offices.

4.6 Grant Sherman provided visitors with an astronomical experience in August through an illustrated talk and opportunities to view the Perseid meteor shower in August.

4.7 The Lundy Calendar 2014 is now available to buy from the shop and the shore offices and entries for the 2015 Calendar are being received ready for judging in January.

4.8 Lundy Olympics: The ranger team organised the activities which included individual and team games such as Rhody Quoits and a four-legged race. The events were run by the Conservation Team plus Emily (Head Housekeeper) and Pete Lambden (Maintenance). The overall winner was Aaron Jones (Cargo & Maintenance).

4.9 Lundy Conservation Team Facebook page: At the time of writing, the page had 315 likes however we are aware that there are a large number of people who regularly check the page who are not Facebook members. Luckily Facebook is able to track this and the largest number of people to view any one post was 706.

## 5. Media

5.1 The 'Letter from Lundy' has been printed every month since the last report. It has also been made available on the [lundymcz.org.uk](http://lundymcz.org.uk) website to reach a wider audience.

5.2 TV & Radio:

- BBC Spotlight – Matt Woodley from BBC Radio Devon visited the island for the first time (with a crew in tow) and recorded a piece about his first visit with interviews with DG, Kevin Welsh (Farmer/Foreman), Reg Tuffin (Postmaster), RM and some visitors. The piece went out on BBC Spotlight and BBC Radio Devon in early August.
- BBC Points West – Jeremy Toogood interviewed Tony Taylor (LFS Bird Ringer) and RM along with some photogenic Manx Shearwaters to produce a piece on the Shearwaters and the rat eradication. This was shown in September.
- BBC Coast – A crew including presenter Mark Horton came over to the island for a piece on the history of mankind in August. Jim Parry (NT Archaeologist) kindly assisted with organising the necessary artefacts. The piece will be shown in Spring 2014.
- ITV Countrywise – Ben Fogle was due to come over in September to snorkel and discuss the MCZ with RM, and find out more about the postal service with Reg Tuffin, however the weather turned and this has now been put on hold until the 2014 series.
- National Public Radio (USA) – The UK correspondent Phil Reeves and the Producer Azfar Ahmed visited Lundy for a piece based on shipping forecast areas. The piece included interviews with DG, Reg Tuffin (Postmaster) and Kevin Welsh (Farmer/Foreman).

5.3 Magazine articles:

- Diver – a 4-page spread on the Splash In! based on the events press release written by RM
- Exmoor magazine – An article based around MS Oldenburg with elements of the Warden role is being produced by Exmoor magazine for their Spring 2014 issue after visiting the island in September.
- Devon Air Ambulance Helipad magazine – In response to a few call outs for the Air Ambulance, the Devon Air Ambulance Trust requested an article from RM regarding the importance of the service for the island for their new Helipad magazine.
- Vogue – the Snorkel Safaris were advertised in the June issue of Vogue which did create some interest.
- Lonely Planet – Lundy featured in the June edition of their magazine Lonely Planet Traveller in the 'Mini guide to Coastal Devon'.

## 6. Miscellaneous

6.1 Research proposal form: In order to understand the extent of research on the island, a Research Proposal Form has been produced and is available from RM. This form was produced as it became apparent that a considerable amount of interesting research was being undertaken on the island without the knowledge of the Conservation Team or interested stakeholders, which in some cases posed an issue as areas being research required formal consent and licensing.

Overall, the form has been welcomed and many have completed it allowing RM to have a greater understanding of the current research and how the findings can influence the management of the island and its designations. Once the new Lundy Island website is complete, the form will be available through the site as well as from RM.

6.2 Work has begun on producing an application for the IDA's International Dark Sky Reserve Program as Lundy's nightscape meets the criteria for the Gold Tier Designation. Grant Sherman and Joshua Day (NT Ranger) have been assisting with the collation of images for the Night Sky Survey.