

Warden's report (October 2013-March 2014)

1. Staff

1.1 Nick Herbert is joining the Conservation Team as the Volunteer Seasonal Assistant Ranger on 1st April and the Volunteer Seasonal Assistant Warden position is being advertised for interviews on 16th April.

2. Marine - general & monitoring

2.1 The RIB provided by NE is fully repaired and ready for use. An application to North Devon FLAG has been made by DG and BM in order to provide the island with its own RIB which is to be used to increase access to the marine environment for visitors and to increase their awareness of the island's protected statuses and wildlife.

2.2 NTZ Infringements – no infringements have been reported since the last report.

2.3 Seals – monthly surveys of the seal population continued when the weather allowed. The pupping season continued until the middle of November with approximately 30 pups born at Lundy in 2013.

2.4 Annual reports on the seal population, cup corals and rockpool communities have been produced for NE. Alongside this a Marine Monitoring Handbook has been developed to ensure that all future surveys are replicable. Reports using all available Lundy data on the rockpool communities and Lundy's seal population have also been produced for NE.

2.5 Seabirds – the first puffin was spotted on 18th March in a burrow at Jenny's Cove. Productivity monitoring is being organised for the 2014 season for puffins, kittiwakes, guillemots and razorbills.

In March, BM was invited to a rat incursion workshop on St. Agnes in the Isles of Scilly by the Isles of Scilly Seabird Recovery Project, to learn more about new monitoring strategies and changes to legislation affecting the use of rat bait. St. Agnes has not had any evidence of rats since the first week of November and aims to be classed as rat free from November 2015 (a period of two years must pass as this is the lifespan of a wild rat).

2.6 Historic wrecks: Wessex Archaeology are working hard on the *Iona II* dive trail and Peta Knott has been liaising with local dive groups and charter boat owners throughout the trail's development. The release date of the trail is Saturday 14th June, coinciding with the annual underwater photography competition, Splash In!

3. Terrestrial – General & monitoring

3.1 Rabbits and feral stock: The rabbit population was estimated at approximately 100 individuals at the end of 2013 and whilst there are more sightings, the population is still very low. Lundy Co. is currently awaiting the cullers' report from their visit in March. Due to concerns raised in the NT Vegetation Monitoring report, the stomach contents of all the culled animals were checked for the presence of heather though no evidence was found.

3.3 Working parties: In February two National Trust working parties joined the Conservation Team to carry out practical conservation tasks including rhododendron burning, seedling searches, tree planting and a feral stock count. A working party from the Lundy Field Society is presently on the island working on Millcombe gardens and burning the Rhododendron stacks.

3.4 Rhododendron management: Work continued throughout March with the assistance of the NT working parties. Seedling eradication took place in Plateau West 1 with 515 seedlings found and treated. Four days of burning took place with an estimated 125m of the rhododendron stacks burnt and area 10 has had its stacks arranged for further burning.

A specialist team from Ropeworks visited in late March treating and clearing the largest remaining cliff section below quarter wall cove.

3.5 Other invasive species: SP and the NT working parties spent time removing seed heads from Alexanders *Smyrniolum olusatrum* and is currently developing management plans for the continuing eradication programme of Spanish Bluebells *Hyacinthoides hispanica* and Hybrids *Hyacinthoides* × *massartiana*.

3.6 No rat related incidents have occurred. BM undertook rat incursion training as commented on earlier. Permanent rat stations have been checked monthly.

3.7 Lundy and National rarities: Towards the end of the autumn migration, a Yellow-rumped warbler made a brief appearance on Lundy and created some excitement. However as all the charter boats and MS *Oldenburg* were in dry dock, only the original spotters were able to see the bird. Two Hoopoes appeared in mid March and are still on the island.

4. Education, interpretation & events

4.1 Warden events: Walks and talks have continued over the winter period and a summer programme of events has been developed ready for the season.

4.2 Education programme: Francis Stuart of the LFS has kindly offered her assistance in the development of Lundy's educational access pack and along with Simon Dell the programme being offered to schools in 2014 is progressing well.

4.3 The Lundy Cabbage leaflet is currently under development along with the island's Wildlife leaflet.

4.4 DG has produced three new interpretation boards: Lundy and The Landmark Trust, Hartland Heliport and The Landmark Trust and MS *Oldenburg*.

4.5 The Lundy Calendar 2015 is now available to buy from the shop and the shore offices.

5. Media

5.1 The 'Letter from Lundy' has been produced every month and is available on the lundymcz.org.uk website.

5.2 TV & Radio: Overall the winter period has been quiet. However the Bristol Channel earthquake created some attention with the Journal quoting Tavern staff member Ben Clarke's reaction and BBC Radio Bristol/Devon/Gloucestershire/Shropshire airing interviews with BM.

5.3 Magazine articles:

- Exmoor magazine published an article on MS *Oldenburg* in their Spring issue.

6. Miscellaneous

6.1 Work has continued on collecting data for the IDA's International Dark Sky Reserve application.

6.2 Lundy has applied for Dark Sky Discovery site status. BM was made aware of the national initiative through the NT's initiative for their properties across the country. We are currently awaiting a decision on our application.