

Warden's report (March 2014-OCT 2014)

1. Staff

1.1 Chloë Nicholson joined the Conservation Team in May as the Seasonal Assistant Warden. Both Chloë and Nick Herbert (Seasonal Assistant Ranger) will be leaving the island on the last boat (24th October). They have both been enthusiastic, hard working members of the team who will be missed and we wish them all the very best for their future careers.

2. Marine - general & monitoring

2.1 The application to North Devon was unsuccessful, however this has not affected our plans for a RIB which would be used to increase access to the marine environment for visitors and to increase their awareness of the island's protected statuses and wildlife. Works on the new RIB 'Islander' have begun and are due to be completed shortly ready for the 2015 season.

2.2 NTZ Infringements – there have been a couple of NTZ infringements which have been reported to Devon and Severn IFCA.

2.3 Seals – Population monitoring has continued throughout the summer season with two surveys per month. The highest population was recorded in August with 199 individuals observed. Two volunteers, Rachel Fell and Charlotte Eich, spent two weeks working on the island's seal image bank and were able to identify 99 individuals. This catalogue will be merged with Sue Sayers Lundy database.

Divers have presented skippers and wardens with new challenges, including the use of dog toys to play with the seals. The strong relationship between local skippers and wardens has enabled issues to be resolved quickly and the island's code of conduct is being positively promoted by all to the benefit of the Lundy seal population.

2.4 Seabirds – Productivity monitoring was carried out for Guillemots, Puffins and Kittiwakes throughout the breeding season. Razorbill monitoring sites were surveyed for suitability for monitoring in 2015.

Puffins – The number of confirmed breeding burrows increased slightly from 31 in 2013 to 35, however the success rate decreased from 0.71 to 0.43 (21 successful in 2013, 15 successful in 2014). A further 23 non-confirmed burrows were also successful during the season.

The population in Jenny's Cove has noticeably spread across the cove with puffins spotted in new areas throughout. The Puffin Monitoring Project starting next season will assist with further understanding of the spread of puffins across the island and more detailed study of their provisioning and productivity rates.

Guillemots – The colony on St.Marks stone was monitored closely throughout the season. In 2013, 16 sites were confirmed as active, this year 82 active sites were confirmed. Of these 82, 27 sites were successful. The colony was divided into 6 monitoring plots and of these two had a success rate of 0.5, the others were all around 0.2. The overall rate of 0.3 is lower than last year's rate of 0.4 however the number of active sites increased by 500% which is a very positive sign overall.

Kittiwakes – Data currently being verified

Manx Shearwaters – annual survey of six monitoring plots was completed at the end of May. These areas will be monitored each year in order to gain a further understanding of certain colonies.

RM has gained her 'C' permit for ringing Manx Shearwaters in order to assist voluntary work looking into the life histories of Lundy shearwaters.

Storm Petrels – Breeding has now been confirmed on Lundy with the discovery of the first Storm Petrel chick at the Old Light Manx Shearwater colony. The chick, with down on its belly, was discovered by LFS Bird ringers Luke Phillips, Tony John and Tony Taylor.

2.5 Historic wrecks: The Iona II Dive Trail was released at the Splash In!, however current issues surrounding licensing appears to be restricting the success of this trail. The majority of local skippers now hold licences to allow their divers to participate in the trail.

2.6 MARINElife have continued with their monthly surveys throughout the summer season and a report on their sightings can be found at the end of this report.

3. Terrestrial – General & monitoring

3.1 No rat related incidents have occurred. Permanent rat stations have been checked monthly and a new Biosecurity plan is being written for the island with the support of NE and RSPB.

3.2 Lundy and National rarities: Two Hoopoes remained on the island for most of March followed by a number of birds of prey including a red kite, a black kite, Marsh harrier, Hen harrier and Osprey. Other rarities included a Golden Oriole, Woodchat shrike, common Rosefinch, Great Skua and Turtle doves.

4. Education, interpretation & events

4.1 Warden events: Summer events have included walks (43), talks (33) and snorkel safaris (14). Talks have also been given by Lundy Field Society members on their areas of specialism which always prove popular with staying visitors.

4.2 Education programme: Francis Stuart and Simon Dell are both offering their support for future educational provision. Francis is also supporting RM with the development of the islands new Key Stage 2 education resource pack which is due for completion at Easter.

4.3 Work has begun on the new Lundy Cabbage leaflet and content is due to be finalised by March 2015.

4.4 The annual underwater photography competition Splash In! Took place on Saturday 14th June and was a great success with 20+ participants and the release of the Iona II Dive Trail. Coverage for the event was published in Diver and Scuba magazines. The 2015 event will be held on Saturday 20th June.

4.5 National Whale and Dolphin Watch Week: This year we participated with the support of Chris and Sharon Blackmore. Chris and Sharon ran the visitor events on the behalf of the Wardens at Castle Parade and many visitors enjoyed the opportunity even when, unfortunately, they were unable to spot any cetaceans.

5. MISC

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

5.2 Lundy received Dark Sky Discovery site status in September for the airstrip.

5.3 Lundy has been nominated one of the 100 Great Geosites of the UK by The Geological Society and awarded a 'Spectacular Scenery' badge.