

LUNDY MARINE PROTECTED AREA ADVISORY GROUP

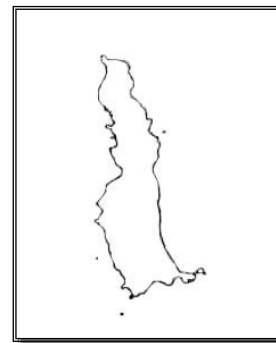
The Aims of the Group are: 1) to provide a nucleus of expertise on the marine habitats and waters surrounding Lundy; 2) to provide a forum for exchanging views on present and proposed activities around Lundy; 3) to safeguard the interests of all those who use the waters around Lundy and its natural resources;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

Established: 1985

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Notes of the 4th meeting of the Lundy Marine Protected Area Advisory Group

(formerly known as the Lundy Marine Conservation Zone Advisory Group, the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group, and originally the Lundy Marine Consultation Group, of which this was the 61st meeting)

held on **Wednesday 27th April 2016** at 7.00 p.m. on board the MS *Oldenburg* alongside Bideford Quay, Bideford.

Present:

Keith Hiscock	(KH)	Marine Biological Association – Chair
Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society – Hon. Sec.
Stuart Rose	(SR)	<i>Hampshire Rose</i> (Historic Lifeboat Tours)
Lauren Parkhouse	(LP)	Devon & Severn IFCA
Andrew Bengey	(ABen)	Lundy Diving
Tom Vance	(TV)	PML Applications Ltd.
Sarah Clark	(SC)	Devon & Severn IFCA
Dave Jenkins	(DJ)	Morte Wildlife Group
Chris Mandry	(CM)	BSAC
Martin Thorne	(MT)	Morte Wildlife Group
Rick Morris	(RM)	MARINELife
Clive Pearson	(CP)	Charter boat <i>Jessica Hettie</i>
John Fanthorpe	(JF)	Charter boat <i>Lundy Castaway</i>
Beccy McDonald	(BM)	Lundy Warden, Landmark Trust
Mel Parker	(MP)	Natural England
Mike Deaton	(MD)	Appledore Sub-Aqua Club
Robert Durrant	(RD)	Coastwise North Devon
Maggs Ashton	(MA)	Ilfracombe & N Devon Sub-Aqua Club
Shaun Galliver	(SG)	Ilfracombe & N Devon Sub-Aqua Club

The Chairman (KH) welcomed all to the meeting, especially the new attendees. The purpose of the Group, he explained, was to allow the users of the Lundy MPA to “have their say” and to raise any particular issues they would like to see addressed. Any concerns or matters of importance can then be conveyed to the Lundy Management Forum at their next meeting (usually the following day) by the Group’s Hon. Sec.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from: Derek Green (Lundy General Manager/Landmark Trust); Alison James (Historic England); John Balls (N Devon Fishermen’s Association/NFFO); Geoff Huelin (local pot fisherman, *Our Jenny*); Martin Legg (Chopper’s Crazy Boat Trips).

2. Notes on the last meeting of the MCZ Advisory Group, held on 6th October 2015

Copies of these notes had been circulated by the Hon. Sec. prior to the meeting. No amendments were raised by those present, so the notes were signed by the Chairman as being an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising: Access to the *Iona II* wreck by visiting divers has now been resolved. Following complaints to the Department of Culture, Media & Sport, some changes have been made to the national licensing system. The Lundy Company is now a licensee for both the *Iona II* and the Gull Rock protected wreck sites. Additional licensees can now be added to the Lundy Company's licence, so skippers now only have to provide Beccy / Derek with their name, address and qualification and she will add them. Then, as long as the licensees are on the boat with any divers that they take out to those wrecks, the divers are covered by the Lundy Company's licence. The Lundy Company, like any licensee, submits an annual report detailing who has dived the wrecks. If anyone would like to be on the Lundy Company licence, they should let Beccy or Derek know. Another option is that Dive Clubs or skippers can apply for their own licences if they prefer. They will have to provide their own annual report to HE if they chose this route.

3. Matters arising from the last Lundy Management Forum meeting on 7th October 2015

- 3.1. In the absence of DG, KH summarised the marine 'highlights' of the last LMF meeting held on 7th October 2015 in Exeter. The next meeting of the Forum will be held tomorrow (28th April 2016) on Lundy. The Forum is a partnership of all the stakeholders in Lundy and includes the Devon & Severn IFCA, the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England, Landmark Trust, the Lundy Field Society, the National Trust, the RSPB and the Lundy MPA Advisory Group.
- 3.2. RI reported on what had been discussed at the Advisory Group meeting the previous evening.
- 3.3. Updates were given on various monitoring projects including seal monitoring; and subtidal and intertidal monitoring. Mel Parker (NE) gave an update on the Conservation Advice package which is being prepared for the whole of Lundy (including the surrounding waters). It will include a 'Advice on Operations' section. Completion of the Conservation Advice package will *precede* a Management Plan to be completed by BM for the marine aspects of the island by the end of March 2016. KH also gave an update on Lundy Field Society activities, including one conservation working parties to the island in September 2015. The Society had contributed £1000 to the work of the Warden during 2015.
- 3.4. DG explained that the Steering Group responsible for fundraising for the church project had decided to defer the second round bid to Heritage Lottery for 9 months. £100k had been raised so far (of a target amount of ~£400k). They are still confident of achieving the full amount, but this will allow more time for project development.
- 3.5. Update from the Management Forum meeting held on 28th April 2016. The Anthony Gormley sculpture is due to be removed at the end of May 2016. Whilst there had been some scepticism surrounding the project at the start, it had generated a lot of publicity for the island and proved popular with the vast majority of visitors. RI suggested that the Warden's RIB should be clearly marked with 'Warden' on the tubes, if only to indicate its presence when on the water. The MCZ website was now out of date and due for renewal. The plan is for it to be incorporated in the main Lundy website and rebranded as the MPA website. SC said that Spiny Lobster sightings recording forms weren't available at the end of last year, but that they are now almost ready. She circulated a draft copy to those present and requested any feedback. She also reported that the IFCA have received anecdotal reports of lots

(60-70) of small Spiny Lobsters around the South Devon Coast.

4. Warden's Report

BM presented her report (attached as Annex A). She then added the following:

- 4.1 Unfortunately, there will be no funding from Natural England for monitoring studies this year (and probably for some time in the future), so many of the existing monitoring studies will not be able to be addressed this year.
- 4.2 KH asked what the situation now was regarding rat traps. He was aware that the regulations regarding these (and the use of poison bait in particular) had recently changed. BM explained that rat bait is now a controlled substance and can only be put out if a rat has been seen within the past 35 days. Whilst this might be appropriate for use in most situations, on Lundy, where rats have not been seen for 12 years, the situation is a little different! Should a rat be seen on the island, there is clearly a need to deal with it as quickly as possible, before it has a chance to become established and multiply. As a result of this 'special' situation, BM is seeking an exemption for all islands where rat extinction programmes have been undertaken.
- 4.3 KH also asked about the Warden's RIB and what its intended use was. BM explained it would be used for monitoring work (seabirds, seals etc.), to access remote sites and for occasional paying-visitor trips around the island (max. of 4 passengers). SC added that the IFCA were also keen to use the RIB (and the Warden) to do more of their work around Lundy. This could involve monitoring fishing effort around the island, starting this summer. It will also be important for the Warden in apprehending any boat suspected of illegal fishing practices. The IFCA is willing to pay for use of the boat and the Warden's time to do this.
- 4.4 RD asked whether BM considered last year to have been a successful year for breeding seabirds on the island. BM replied that it had been mixed: guillemots had not fared so well, but puffins had done particularly well and even kittiwakes, which had suffered considerably in recent years, had showed improved fledging success.

5. The Lundy MPA Marine Management Plan (Beccy MacDonald)

- 5.1 The MPA has not had a Management Plan for some time. The last such Plan was produced in 2001 by English Nature (prior to even the designation of the No Take Zone and the Marine Conservation Zone) and so has been out-of-date for several years. A new Plan has been discussed for a number of years now but Natural England had stated that it would be produced after the 'packages' for the SAC and the MCZ had been agreed.
- 5.2. BM has been working on preparing the new Marine Management Plan over this past winter, with funding from Natural England. She has now produced a first draft which has been distributed to all members of the Lundy Management Forum (including Keith Hiscock & Robert Irving) for comment. Initial reaction to it has been that the updated format is welcomed but that the content still needs some improvement. BM will now be incorporating the comments she has received into a second draft for re-circulation. Her intention is to have an agreed final draft ready for publication by the end of May.
- 5.3. The Plan has been designed to be a working document, with its content accessible for all users of the MPA. It will be updated in future as and when necessary to incorporate new developments and changes.

6. Presentation of the findings of the SAC sublittoral rock monitoring (Dr Tom Vance, PML Applications Ltd.)

- 6.1 Tom Vance was welcomed to the Group by the Chairman. The initial findings of his team's work had been presented at the Group's last meeting in Ilfracombe in October, so he intended to bring those present up to date with the other outcomes.
- 6.2 TV explained his team had encountered various difficulties (particularly strong easterly winds during 2014) which had meant that the work had spanned two summers (2014 and 2015) instead of just one. They had been contracted by Natural England to undertake this work, which was a statutory requirement of the Habitats Directive to assess the condition of certain features of the SAC at least once every six years.
- 6.3 The overall aim was to obtain standardised biological information for the sub-features of the Lundy SAC; and to assess the condition of these sub-features against previous survey data. The sub-features/tasks in question were: (1) kelp forest communities; (2) vertical and over-hanging circalittoral rock; (3) subtidal bedrock and stable boulder communities; (4) the density and condition of sea fans; (5) photographic survey of sunset cup coral populations; and (6) the maximum depth of foliose algae.
- 6.4 **Kelp forest communities.** There was found to be an increase in the proportion of the southern kelp *Laminaria ochroleuca* at Rat Island, compared to that of the northern kelp *L. hyperborea*. It was not possible to link this finding directly with changes in annual mean water temperatures at Lundy. As *L. hyperborea* has many more epiphytic species associated with it (as compared to *L. ochroleuca*), this alteration in constituent proportions may have an impact on associated infralittoral communities in the longer term, but for now this sub-feature was regarded as being in favourable status.
- 6.5 **Vertical and over-hanging circalittoral rock.** TV pointed out that there was little previous data on this sub-feature other than data associated with the populations of the sunset cup coral *Leptopsammia pruvoti* (see 6.8). Many of the species associated with this sub-feature had been shown to be long-lived and all species which were expected to be present were found to be, and in similar abundances. This part of the sub-feature was therefore regarded as being in favourable condition.
- 6.6 **Subtidal bedrock and stable boulder communities.** The epifaunal species found in these communities were very similar to what had been recorded before, with only minor changes in abundances (some positive; some negative). Comparisons were made with data collected during the monitoring of the NTZ in 2003/04. This sub-feature was therefore regarded as being in favourable condition.
- 6.7 **Density and condition of sea fans.** There was a wide variation in the density of sea fans at various sites, with a notable decrease in abundance at some and a definite increase at others. Their overall distribution was described as patchy. However, the overall condition of the sea fans was considered to have improved since the last monitoring assessment, so the sub-feature was regarded as being in favourable condition.
- 6.8 **Photographic survey of sunset cup coral populations.** The numbers of sunset cup corals at the Knoll Pins monitoring sites were found to have continued their decline by an alarming 57% compared to numbers in 2010. No corals were found at either the Gannets' Rock Pinnacle site nor at Anchor Lump, where small numbers had been found previously. This part of the 'Vertical and over-hanging circalittoral

rock' sub-feature was therefore regarded as being in unfavourable condition.

- 6.9 **Max. depth of foliose algae.** Two sites were revisited: Dead Cow Point off the west coast, and the Knoll Pins off the east coast. The deepest depths at which red algae (20.7 m bcd), brown algae (20.2 m bcd) and kelp plants (11.2 m bcd) were found were measured using diving depth computers. These depths were found to be within acceptable shallower/deeper limits when compared to those recorded in 2010. The point of this exercise is to assess the overall clarity of the water affecting the island – the clearer the water, the deeper the algae would be expected to grow.
- 6.10 One other aspect of the monitoring study that PML Applications Ltd. were asked to undertake was an assessment of sessile invertebrates (a total of 15 species) within (& outside) the No Take Zone. The NTZ has been in existence since 2003. The results showed that there was very little difference between the community structure found in 2004 and that present in 2014, both inside and outside the NTZ. These results confirm the long-lived and stable nature of these communities.

7. Natural England (NE) report (Mel Parker)

- 7.1. MP reported that Natural England had undergone cutbacks in their overall funding from Defra in recent years (government austerity) and Lundy was no exception. Consequently, those responsibilities which had been NE's had now been moved to other organisations such as the Marine Maritime Organisation and Devon & Severn IFCA. For the past couple of years, NE had been unable to fund the Warden's post (now taken on by LT/Lundy Company with additional input from D&SIFCA).
- 7.2. However, NE had set aside funding for the completion of the Marine Management Plan and MP expressed her thanks to BM for all the work she had put into this over the winter.
- 7.3. MP also thanked those who had commented on the two Marine Conservation Advice packages for Lundy (one for the MCZ and one for the SAC). The comments had been taken into account and the packages were soon to be put up on the NE website.
- 7.4. KH asked if there would be any opportunity within Defra's third tranche of MCZ site designations to add to the meagre one feature (spiny lobster) listed for the Lundy MCZ. MP thought not, as it was considered that the other special features of the Lundy MCZ were already included within the SAC designation.
- 7.5. A new SAC was currently being proposed, solely on behalf of the harbour porpoise, which would extend from the north coasts of Devon and Cornwall northwards across the outer reaches of the Bristol Channel to the coasts of S Wales and Pembrokeshire. Lundy would be included within the eastern boundary of the SAC. Consultation on the SAC was due to end this coming Tuesday (2nd May).
- 7.6. MP mentioned that Cefas had been commissioned by Defra to report on Highly Protected Marine Areas, and that their report was due out soon.
- 7.7. KH pointed out that it was important to continue monitoring studies wherever possible, as long-term data sets in the marine environment were rare things and their value was much reduced if gaps appeared in their coverage.

8. D&SIFCA report (Sarah Clark)

- 8.1 Spiny lobsters. SC explained that she is keen to acquire more data on the distribution and size of crawfish within the whole of the D&SIFCA district. She asked if it was

possible for divers to measure the carapace length when they come across crawfish on the seabed, but was told it was difficult, particularly if the individual was partially hidden in a hole. The best way was to use hand length as a guide to estimate size. SC then asked if divers could bring them to the surface for measuring back on board a boat, but ABen explained that no divers on board his boat were allowed to do this at Lundy! SC sought the help of divers to assess the crawfish population at Lundy, and SG & MA indicated that the Ilfracombe & N Devon Club would be keen to help with this. SC would like to tag individuals if possible.

- 8.2 Diving permit byelaw. Application forms for permits are available for those seeking to remove shellfish. The regulation had now been in force for a year. KH asked if there would be any requirement for those holding a permit to report what they had taken over the course of a year. SC replied that that was not required at present, though the byelaw would be reviewed in a few years time, and that reporting of catches by divers may be considered sensible then.
- 8.3 SC pointed out that the MPA's Zoning Scheme required updating to reflect the recent alterations to closed zones. She was in consultation with BM about this.
- 8.4 Bass fishing regulations. As a matter of information for those present, SC explained that the regulations affecting the taking of bass had recently been changed, to reflect declines in populations. All bass caught by recreational anglers up until 30th June had to be released alive back into the sea. Thereafter, only one fish/day could be caught. Commercial fishermen were not allowed to take any bass during the months of February or March this year.
- 8.5 LP then brought the Group up to date with her work on the Habitats Regulation Assessments for European Marine Sites (which included the Lundy SAC). Out of a total of 196 possible interactions between fishing gear and named features (for the Lundy SAC), she had now completed 194, the two remaining relating to towed gear on sandbanks. Once these are completed, she'll then just have the 'spiny lobster feature' of the MCZ to assess. SC added that this had been quite a task to undertake, though Lundy had been relatively straightforward as so much was known about its marine habitats. Lundy is just one of several SACs, SPAs and MCZs within the D&SIFCA district, with many of the others having far more complex matrices to address, all of which had to be completed by the end of this year.
- 8.6 KH thanked SC & LP for bringing the Group up to date on these matters and for the D&SIFCA for their considerable input in recent years to the Lundy SAC.

9. English Heritage report (Alison James in absentia)

- 9.1 Unfortunately, AJ was unable to attend the meeting. The main point which she wanted to raise was on the new licensing system for divers wishing to visit the protected wreck sites. This is covered in section 2 of these notes.

10. Report of marine wildlife sightings by MARINElife officers (Rick Morris)

- 10.1 RM went through the various sightings of cetaceans and seabirds seen from crossings of the *Oldenburg* on trips to and from Bideford/Ilfracombe and Lundy. These were reported in the notes of the last meeting.
- 10.2 RM suggested that if there was ever any space on board charter boats heading over to Lundy, he or one of his colleagues would be happy to take the place in order to acquire more sightings data. ABen pointed out that he already submits his sightings made throughout the year to BM.

11. Any other business

- 11.1 The proposed new mooring at Brazen Ward. ABen wondered what was stopping this from proceeding. It had been given the go-ahead this time last year. KH pointed out that the boulder on the seabed to which a fixed chain would be attached would need to be inspected first to make sure there was no sensitive/delicate marine life attached to the boulder – something he was willing to assist with. MP pointed out that the MMO would need to issue a licence for this to go ahead, but that could be (hopefully) hurried through. RI agreed to raise the matter at tomorrow's Management Forum meeting.
- 11.2 RI wanted to ask if anyone would have any objections to the notes of these Advisory Group meetings being put up on a website. Records of the 60-odd meetings stretch back 30 years and they make a valuable historical record. No-one indicated their disapproval and several present thought it was a very good idea. RI would follow this up with BM, though she indicated the existing MCZ website was likely to be undergoing some changes soon.

12. Date of next meeting: **Tuesday, 11th October 2016** at 7:00 pm at the Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club Clubhouse, Ropery Road, Ilfracombe EX34 9EF. *[Note that this date is different from that suggested on the Agenda].*

Annex A Warden’s report (Oct 2015-Mar 2016)

1. Staff

1.1 Conor Willmott joined the Conservation Team as Seasonal Assistant Warden at the end of March. Luke Knowles is due to join the team as Seasonal Assistant Ranger during May. Chloë Nicholson, previous Assistant Warden has taken on a position in Sheffield as a Landscape Management Assistant and Robyn Evans, previous Assistant Ranger, has stayed on Lundy as a General Assistant and is currently working on the farm.

2. Marine - general & monitoring

2.1 Seals – Only one funded survey took place between October and March due to inclement weather conditions:

Date	Number of:						Total number of individuals
	Males	Females	Juveniles	Weaners	White coats	Unknown sex	
25/2/16	2	17	1	0	0	0	20

Funding for surveys is not available for the 2016-17 period.

2.2 Seabird productivity monitoring data for 2015 have been analysed with the following results:

- Guillemots at St.Mark’s Stone: 88 active sites, 28 fledged = 0.32
- Puffins at the main slope in Jenny’s Cove: 42 active burrows, 36 fledged = 0.86
- Kittiwakes at Grand Falls Zawn: 98 active nests, 46 fledged = 0.47

2.3 The MARINELife surveyor course in June became fully booked in January and we will be running another in June.

2.4 Cup coral surveys are no longer funded.

2.5 Rockpool community surveys are no longer funded.

2.6 Marine Management Plan – the plan has made excellent progress with the final draft currently being circulated to all Lundy Management Forum stakeholders. The plan is on target to be completed in May.

2.7 Lundy & North Devon Biosphere Accreditation Scheme – the first round of training was attended by 13 skippers on 21st January. There are plans to engage with more skippers and train them during the early summer months. A press release for the scheme is due to be released at the end of April ready for the summer season.

3. Terrestrial – General & monitoring

3.1 Rabbits: The rabbits are back! Numbers are on the up and the rabbits are again a common sight.

3.2 Working parties: Two LFS and one NT working party joined Steve, the Ranger, to assist with various tasks including Rhody burning, seedling searches and dry stone walling. A small group from the March LFS working party assisted the Wardens with the creation of 30 artificial Manx Shearwater boxes which have been located in different areas on the west coast.

3.3 Rhododendron management: Nearly all of the stacks have now been burnt and the programme has moved forward considerably. The focus now is to find and treat/remove seedlings and already far fewer have been found this spring. Rope works visited the island in March and

worked on the lower cliff sections. Works will continue in their second visit in May. An application to fund a new Lundy Cabbage leaflet has been sent to the LFS .

- 3.4 Rat free status: The revised Biosecurity Plan is currently being completed and is due for circulation amongst the LMF shortly. RSPB ran a workshop in April to begin the development of a rat incursion response group in the southwest who could visit Lundy or the Isles of Scilly quickly to assist with a response.
- 3.5 Bracken management: The impacts of the works carried out last summer are showing to have been successful.
- 3.6 Non-native species: Progress this has been made this spring towards the Spanish bluebell and Alexanders management plans, particularly in the Millcombe area.

4. Education, interpretation & events

- 4.1 Warden events: Since October there have been 37 guided walks, 33 visitor talks and 1 Rockpool Ramble. Other events included Halloween pumpkin carving and 3 Easter Trails.
- 4.2 Education programme: One school visited in October with 101 children.
- 4.3 Splash In! 2016 will be an online event. The details for this are currently under review and will be released on the Lundy Conservation Team Facebook page in early May.

5. Media

- 5.1 The 'Letter from Lundy' and 'Lundy Boarding' appear monthly in the North Devon Gazette and My Town supplement.

6. Miscellaneous

- 6.1 A mooring will be positioned this summer in Brazen Ward to protect the reefs and kelp forest in the area – details of which will be circulated once it has been installed.