

## FERAL FERRET ON LUNDY

BY CHRIS C. BAILLIE

On 12th April 1981 at the Quarter Wall gate (east) fresh tracks of a Mustelid were found by C. C. B. and other observers. The tracks were in good condition being in soft mud. Notes, sketches, and measurements were made, and these were later used to identify the tracks as having been made by a ferret (*Mustela furo* L.). Lawrence and Brown (1967) was used as the reference work.

Ferrets have been used in recent winters for flushing rabbits. Mr. S. Wing reported having seen what he thought to be a ferret bolting down a rabbit burrow near the water tanks (Airfield) a few weeks previously.

Ferrets have colonised several British islands (Walton) including moorland habitats. more information on island colonies is being sought, with particular reference to burrow-nesting seabirds.

### REFERENCES

- Lawrence, M. J. & Brown, R. W. (1967) *Mammals of Britain, their tracks, trails and signs*. Blandford, London.  
Walton, K. C. in *Handbook of British Mammals* (Corbet, G. B. and Southern, H. N. eds.) (1977) Blackwell, London.

### Rep. Lundy Field Society. 32

## MARINE LIFE ON THE WRECK OF THE M.V. "ROBERT"

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### INTRODUCTION

On January 21st 1975, a small coastal vessel, the M.V. "Robert", sank off Lundy. The exact location of the wreck remained undiscovered until 1979 when it was found lying intact on its starboard side on the level seabed at 19m below Chart Datum about 1km east of Tibbets Point. The "Robert" is now buoyed at the beginning of each diving season by Bristol Channel Divers who own the wreck and is a further fascinating aspect of the appeal of Lundy to divers.

The plant and animal communities living on the "Robert" have many features of great interest to biologists. The wreck is a dated object on which the progress of colonisation and the growth of species can be studied. Wrecks and other artificial structures appear to have very distinctive communities and the "Robert" provides an opportunity to describe one such community. Also, the different communities which colonise different parts of the wreck, particularly on vertical, horizontal and hold surfaces, can be described. The hold is similar to a large cave and some species normally restricted to caves might be expected to occur there. The flat surfaces presented by the hull of the "Robert" are ideal for quantitative sampling and testing of sampling methods.

During the past three years, I and my colleagues have dived on the wreck many times to describe, sample and photograph the communities present. In 1980, a sampling programme aimed at studying optimum sampling size for homogeneous communities was undertaken using the horizontal surface of the hull.

### COMMUNITIES PRESENT ON THE "ROBERT"

Very similar communities have been seen in each of the three years of study. A summary of the main conspicuous species present is given in Table 1.

Horizontal surfaces of the wreck appeared at first glance to be colonised by a sparse patchy cover of erect bryozoans (sea-mats) and hydroids (sea-firs) with a few scattered algae, but closer inspection has revealed an almost continuous crust of