

## LUNDY MARINE CONSULTATION GROUP - 1994

By

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Following a report on the first five years of the statutory Marine Nature Reserve (MNR) around Lundy (Irving 1991), it was suggested that a regular report should be contributed to the Field Society's Annual Report on points of discussion that were raised at the spring and autumn meetings of the Group each year. This is the first such report and covers developments discussed at meetings held in Bideford on 24th March and 29th September 1994.

English Nature introduced a number of new initiatives during 1994. Central to these was the publication of a new Management Plan for both the MNR and the island's terrestrial Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Anon 1994). Besides describing the historical, physical and biological importance of the island and its wildlife, the Plan sets out a number of objectives and, perhaps most importantly, how these objectives can be achieved. This document will be essential in the development of the island's future nature conservation management needs. Associated with this Plan is the establishment of a Management Committee for the MNR, consisting of representatives from English Nature, Devon Sea Fisheries Committee, Landmark Trust and National Trust. This Committee will be responsible for the implementation and review of the Management Plan. The Consultation Group is now to become the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group (LMNRAG), which, besides providing a forum for general discussion, will be able to offer advice to the Management Committee.

In conjunction with the Management Plan, English Nature have introduced several improvements to the interpretation of the MNR. A new Zoning Scheme has been introduced (see Plate 3, 1993 LFS Annual Report), designed in such a way to aid the understanding of the MNR's byelaws and code of conduct, especially for divers and fishermen. There are new signs advertising the MNR on the quayside at Bideford & Ilfracombe; five new introductory leaflets to the MNR for visitors; a weatherproof display board for use by the Warden; a waterproof Snorkel Trail leaflet; and a 13-minute video explaining the delights of the MNR for passengers on board the MV Oldenburg.

At both meetings of the Consultation Group in 1994, the topic of marine aggregate dredging in the Outer Bristol Channel and also in Bideford Bay was discussed at some length. There was widespread concern, particularly from local divers, that the increase in suspended sediment load that would materialise from these operations, may well effect sea bed communities at Lundy. In light of these discussions, the Secretary wrote to the Department of the Environment (Minerals Division) on behalf of the Group, expressing members' reservations. In reply, the Group was assured that studies had indicated the increase in suspended sediment created by dredging operations would be extremely small (at least within the Bristol Channel as a whole); and that Lundy was sufficiently distant from the dredging area north of Ilfracombe to avoid any smothering effects which may occur in the immediate vicinity.

1994 saw a change to the island's Warden: Andrew Gibson left the island in September to take up an appointment in the Isles of Scilly and Emma Parkes was appointed in his place. We wish them both good luck in their new jobs.

The following organisations are represented on the Advisory Group: British Sub-Aqua Club; Devon Sea Fisheries Committee; Devon Wildlife Trust; English Nature; Hartland Heritage Coast Service; Landmark Trust; Local Sea Fishing Interests; The Lundy Company Ltd.; Lundy Field Society; Marine Archaeological Interests; Marine Conservation Society; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; National Rivers Authority; National Trust; Royal Yachting Association; Torridge District Council; Worldwide Fund for Nature.

As Honorary Secretary to the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group, I would be pleased to hear from any member of the LFS who may wish to raise a discussion point at a future meeting of the Group.

#### REFERENCES

Anon. 1994. *Managing Lundy's wildlife. A Management Plan for the Marine Nature Reserve and the Site of Special Scientific Interest*. English Nature, Okehampton

Irving, R.A. 1991. Lundy's Marine Nature Reserve - five years on. *Annual Report of the Lundy Field Society* 42, 85-89