

REPORT OF THE LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE ADVISORY GROUP

By

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The Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group consists of representatives from a wide range of organisations, all of which have an interest in the waters around the island. Current 'membership' consists of representatives from the following groups (though interested parties other than those listed here are always welcome to attend meetings):

British Sub-Aqua Club; Devon Sea Fisheries Committee; Devon Wildlife Trust; English Nature; Hartland Heritage Coast Service; Landmark Trust; Local Dive Charter Interests; Local Sea Fishing Interests; The Lundy Company Ltd.; Lundy Field Society; Marine Archaeological Interests; Marine Conservation Society; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Environment Agency; National Trust; South-West Federation of Sea Anglers; Torridge District Council; Worldwide Fund for Nature (UK).

Meetings of the Advisory Group take place twice a year. In 1996 the meetings were held on 18th April and 17th October in Bideford. The agenda for each meeting varies depending on what matters are of current interest, but always include a 6-month report from the Marine Nature Reserve (MNR) given by the Warden (see Warden's Report, this volume). Meetings of the MNR Management Group are planned to take place soon after those of the Advisory Group, so that relevant matters which arise during Advisory Group meetings can be taken up and discussed at Management Group meetings. Meetings of the Management Group took place on 10th May and 18th November.

The main points which have been discussed by the Advisory Group during the year are summarised below:-

Sea Empress oil spill - The *Sea Empress* ran aground in Milford Haven on 15 February 1996. The resulting oil spill led to fifty-six dead oiled seabirds being washed up at Lundy, with a further 165 oiled birds requiring first aid treatment. Small amounts of oil came ashore around the south-east corner of the island, with some rockpools being heavily covered for one tidal cycle. A survey of these rockpools in Devil's Kitchen in March, however, found no adverse effects to their communities. The island's grey seals appeared not to have been adversely affected by the oil. Earlier in the winter, another oil spill of unknown origin in the Bristol Channel had caused large numbers of oiled seabird casualties between 16-20 November 1995; a small number of these (<10) were washed up at Lundy.

Remote mapping of sea bed habitats - this is reported by Paul Gilliland elsewhere in this volume.

Fishing pressure within the MNR - Concern over the level of potting was raised once again. There are fears that too many lobsters and crabs are being taken from within the MNR, with no limits being imposed. It has proved difficult for the Devon Sea Fisheries Committee (DSFC) to assess the numbers of crustacea caught inside the MNR (as opposed to outside it), as boats are not required to keep separate records of catches. It is estimated that as many as 500 pots may be set within the Reserve boundary, with 4000 set beyond the boundary. The DSFC are continuing their liaison with fishermen, who are co-operating with this work.

EN initiatives - During the year, English Nature purchased two new TV screens for use on board the MS *Oldenburg*, as well as £150-worth of marine related books and posters for use by passengers during their passage to/from the island. In addition, four new interpretative boards have been prepared to be displayed in Bideford, Ilfracombe and on board the MS *Oldenburg*.

Bristol Channel Marine Aggregates: Resources and Constraints Research Project -

this is a major three-year project which began in September 1996, overseen by the Welsh Office and funded by the Department of the Environment and the Crown Estate. The consultants appointed to undertake the study, Posford Duvivier and ABP Research and Consultancy, embarked on a wide consultation exercise with all interested parties at the end of 1996, which included the Advisory Group amongst the 224 organisations and groups contacted.

Lundy on the Internet - thanks to Keith Denby, a member of the Ilfracombe and north Devon Sub-Aqua Club and a computer communications specialist, Lundy now has its own web site. Information about the island, and the MNR in particular, is now available to anyone in the world with access to the Internet. The address is: www:/bigweb.castlelink.co.uk/gratton/ilfsac/lundy.htm

MCS Diving Working Party to the MNR, 22-29 June 1996 - this is reported elsewhere in this volume.

If there are any points which members of the LFS would like to see raised at future meetings of the Advisory Group, they should contact the Group's Hon. Secretary, Robert Irving, at the address given above.