

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 1997 the meetings were held on 15th April and 16th October at the offices of Torridge District Council 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 3rd March and in early November.

The main points which have been discussed by the Advisory Group during the year (other than those included in the Warden's Report) are summarised below:-

Adoption of the existing Advisory Group as the Advisory Group for the candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) – the proposed new designation of the waters surrounding Lundy as a SAC, under the EC Habitats Directive, was discussed at the April meeting. The boundary for the cSAC will be the same as for the MNR; indeed, there will be few changes to the present system of management. However, the Group had to agree formerly to acting as the Advisory Group to the new cSAC, which was duly done.

Fishing pressure within the MNR – the Warden had kept an account of the boats setting pots around the island during the course of the year. Concern was expressed about pots being set off the east coast within the Refuge Zone. It transpired that these were set only at times when the weather prevented access to the west coast. The fisherman in question agreed to avoid setting his pots in areas known to possess delicate species growing on the sea bed. Strings of pots

were not always able to be associated with a particular boat. There was a general consensus amongst pot fishermen that they would like to see further conservation measures introduced to limit the fishing effort on lobsters. This was encouraging to hear.

Work within the MNR – English Nature had planned to undertake some diving work during September to re-establish the sublittoral monitoring sites off the east coast. However, bad weather prevented this from happening and the work will now take place in early summer next year. New interpretative panels about the MNR have been erected on Ilfracombe and Bideford Quays and on the Oldenburg. The MNR Zoning Scheme, which was introduced in 1994 and which was due to be reviewed during 1997, will now be reviewed during 1998 after the review of the Management Plan had taken place.

Gull Rock protected wreck site – it was reported that this site, whose artefacts date from the 16th century, had been vandalised during the summer. Damage had been done to one of the canons and one of the stone canonballs *may* be missing. A discussion ensued as to whether it would be possible to lift important artefacts from the site and display them on the island somewhere. Policing of the site was extremely difficult.

Bristol Channel Marine Aggregates: Resources and Constraints Research Project - this major three-year project, which began in September 1996 and is overseen by the Welsh Office and funded by the Department of the Environment and the Crown Estate, has continued. A report is due from the consultants undertaking the study, Posford Duvivier and ABP Research and Consultancy, towards the end of 1999.

MCS Diving Working Party to the MNR, 10-15 August 1997 – a summary of the work undertaken by this group is given 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.