

LUNDY WARDEN'S REPORT

This year saw the completion of the new beach building interpretation displays with the official opening on 15 May. There are etched murals around the lower levels, with seven display panels, an interactive compass and a feature display on the back wall. The new displays are attracting more visitors into the beach building on arrival, thus giving visitors a broad introduction to Lundy's wildlife

The display panels have also been re-produced for the new helicopter departure lounge at Hartland.

As an extension to this project we have re-designed many of the mainland interpretation and media boards. With a further six new designs we have just put in an order for the production of 17 new display boards which will be put up in various locations before the beginning of the sailing season. Most of these are standard poster size, with the exception of the 'panoramic', which will be three metres long and will be sited on the outside wall of the Ilfracombe shore office.

The Marine Guide is now well underway and we are hoping that it will be ready for publication by May 2011. The preview for AGM attendees illustrated how the guide is split into three sections, with an information booklet and two identification guides, one for underwater species and another for rockpooling and snorkelling species.

The 2012 calendar has just come off the press and is available – this is the fifth consecutive year for the calendar, which has gone from strength to strength and is becoming quite a collectable item. This year we had to select the 15 main images from an incredible 1120 images that were submitted! Thank you to all of you who have contributed.

As well as all of this, we have just commissioned a local company called BlueSoup who will be designing a new Marine Conservation Zone website for us during early 2011. This site and the publication of the new Marine Guide are excellent projects to celebrate the 40th anniversary of marine conservation on Lundy in 2011.

Lundy's second underwater photography competition went well, with some good publicity from the event. We were donated £2,400 worth of prizes so there were some very happy winners of the competition. Those attending the AGM were shown a small selection of some of the entries from the 2010 'Splash-IN'

Cetacean sightings were good for 2010 with over 80 reported dolphin sightings, from MS *Oldenburg* and local charter and dive vessels. A further 30 sightings were recorded in the log book with pod sizes from one individual up to 200.

We had eight Minke Whale sightings over six days between 8 June and 28 September, and a Pilot Whale was seen from *Obsession II* on 11 June.

Disappointingly there were no basking sharks sightings reported in 2010.

The productivity of Kittiwake, Guillemot and Fulmar were surveyed across six sites in 2010. Fulmar and Guillemot productivity showed similar results to those for 2009. The Kittiwakes had a far better year in 2010 with a marked increase in the productivity at the main breeding colony at St Mark's inlet. Their average productivity increased to a far healthier 0.67 compared to 0.28 in 2009. We also saw an increase in the number of breeding attempts at this colony.

The Puffin surveys and observations for 2010 were very encouraging. A full report summarising the 2009 and 2010 surveys appears elsewhere in this Annual Report, but in summary, the survey results for the last four years show an increase in breeding pairs to 16 in 2010.

Mid June saw an influx of Puffins with a high count of 74 records on 13 June; with records of 30-60 individuals recorded daily for two weeks. On 25 June there was a count of 50 on land at Jenny's Cove.

The 2010 mammal count estimated the rabbit numbers in to be in the region of 13,000. There were counts of 140 Soay sheep, 33 feral goats, and we had a maximum count of just 52 Sika deer. However, from other work we have done we believe this count is not as accurate as it could be, as we believe there are a minimum of 100 on the island.

We have come to the end of an era with the Rhododendron clearance. In January 2010 the only large stand that remained was 'Stand 12' just south of the quarries. With working holidays through spring and autumn and the early holidays we have had so far in 2011, there is very little land-based clearance remaining. All of this area has now been cleared and all of the accessible Rhododendron will have been cleared by the end of March 2011, leaving just the cliff work to be done.

Whilst this is a major milestone, we are far from finished; and there is plenty more work to be done. We will now be concentrating on clearing a lot of the dead hedged material that has been stacked in areas 10 and 12. And we will begin the next phase of the project, which will be eradication. This will be a lengthy process, and our current target for complete eradication is 2025.

This is a fitting point to mention Chris Flower. As many members will know, Chris left Lundy in January. Chris was ranger for just under five years. He led the Rhododendron clearance and his determination and enthusiasm have been instrumental in getting us to the position we are in today. But Chris was also passionate about Lundy and the island's conservation and he instigated numerous conservation initiatives in his time as ranger, including the restoration of the Millcombe gardens and tree planting to name just a couple. I'm sure members will agree that Chris has done a superb job and his hard work over the years is greatly appreciated by all.

Steve Pratt was our seasonal volunteer in 2010 and worked alongside Chris, assisting with ranger duties. He was retained over the winter season in a maintenance capacity. The seasonal volunteer position was established to provide the conservation team with assistance during the busy period, and also to give the volunteer an opportunity to gain hands-on experience, thus helping them get a foothold within the conservation sector. Consequently, when the ranger vacancy became available it seemed fitting that we should appoint Steve as ranger. He has a good working knowledge of Lundy and has already taken the lead on the Rhododendron clearance and other outdoor conservation tasks.

Sophie Wheatley has been on a sabbatical since November 2010 and is due to return to work in March 2011. With just one warden and a new ranger in post it has been quite a hectic winter with very little 'breathing space', so I am pleased that Sophie is due back soon. In March 2011, Steve will be joined by Reece Woolgar who has been offered the position of seasonal volunteer and the team will be back up to capacity for the busy season ahead.

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March 2011