

LUNDY WARDEN'S REPORT

2015 was an exceptionally busy year for the Conservation Team, with increased focus on the rhododendron and bracken management plans by the island's Rangers, and a higher demand for visitor engagement with the Wardens, along with a Puffin Monitoring Project.

Chloë Nicholson returned for a second season as volunteer Seasonal Assistant Warden and Robyn Evans joined us as the volunteer Seasonal Assistant Ranger. Both gained valuable experience in the positions and Chloë has since found work with Sheffield Wildlife Trust while Robyn has remained on Lundy as a General Assistant.

Visitor events occurred throughout the year with a major increase during the sailing season. The sailing season began with a Cadbury's Easter Trail, organised through the National Trust's collaboration with the chocolate giant. This ran exceptionally well and brought a number of new families to the island (thanks to Robyn, Leanne and Frances Stuart who supported the event and looked amazing in their pirate outfits and bunny ears!). Guided walks and talks were provided on nearly all sailing days which were supported by a volunteer Visitor Engagement Officer (Charlotte Eich) for the six week school holiday period. Snorkel Safaris were planned with at least four sessions each week from the beginning of June however the inclement weather conditions affected the number of successful sessions this season. The number of Rockpool Rambles increased and became more popular with visitors of all ages.

Splash In! took place on Saturday 1 August after being rescheduled due to an easterly blow. Sixteen participants fully captured the Marine Protected Area through their amazing images and then spent the evening enjoying a Lundy BBQ and music from Baz and Tony. The winners were as follows:

- **Overall:** *Jester's hat* by Jonny Aird – winning a Sunnto Eon Steel.
- **Marine Abstract:** 1st *Jesters Hat* by Jonny Aird – winning a Tough camera courtesy of Olympus; 2nd: *Anemone* by Mike Deaton – winning a Hoolis mask and matching cap courtesy of Oceanic; 3rd: *Anemone* by Andrea Bentote – winning an Ikelite PCa lite torch courtesy of Cameras Underwater.
- **Mega to Macro:** 1st: *Seal* by Mike Deaton – winning a Nexus Dive Computer courtesy of AP Diving; 2nd: *Anemone*" by Mark Lavington – winning a family day-trip to Lundy courtesy of the Lundy Company/The Landmark Trust; 3rd: *Glass shrimp* by Jonny Aird – winning an Ikelite PCa lite torch courtesy of Cameras Underwater.
- **Simply Marine:** 1st: *Seal at Brazen Ward* by Mike Deaton – winning an Aqualite-S90 degrees courtesy of Sea & Sea; 2nd: *Red eyes* by Mark Lavington – winning an Oceanic Cyanea mask and Lavacore booties courtesy of Oceanic; 3rd: *Mexican wave* by Maggs Ashton – winning a subscription to DIVER magazine.
- **Spirit of the Marine Protected Area:** 1st: *Yellow power* by Maggs Ashton – winning a Xenos wetsuit courtesy of Fourth Element. 2nd: *Pink sea fan* by Mike Deaton – winning a Travel lite bag courtesy of Beaver Sports; 3rd: *New life* by Owen Atkinson – winning an Ikelite PCa lite torch courtesy of Cameras Underwater.

Our thanks to all of our sponsors. All the images are available to view on the Lundy Conservation Team Facebook page and on the Lundy Warden Flickr channel. The 2016 competition will be run online, so please check the Facebook page for details if you wish to take part.

We received funding from Banrock Station, through the National Trust, to run a more in-depth monitoring study of the Puffin colony on the main slope of Jenny's Cove. This allowed us to buy new equipment to create time-lapse videos of a previously unmonitored area and to increase the monitoring effort undertaken by an enthusiastic group of volunteers (known as Team Puffin). The findings of the project have been very exciting as Team Puffin identified 198 burrows, of which 153 were apparently active. Of these, around 77% were observed to have fish taken into them; a sure sign of chicks being fed. The time-lapse images however brought the biggest surprise, with a further 66 apparently active burrows identified. We would like to thank everyone involved in the project. We have since been in discussions with a local university to continue the project in 2016 and 2017.

The Ranger team as ever focused on grounds maintenance, enhanced by all the hard work (and levels of enthusiasm despite inclement weather conditions) of the LFS working parties, whose support is invaluable.

The ongoing eradication of rhododendron is well on course for the island to become free of this invasive plant by 2025. All the stacks are gradually being burnt, so that the east sidelands changed even more in appearance during 2015. Seedlings are however still a concern and the Ranger team are working exceptionally hard to deal with them. As this project has moved on, so the focus of the Rangers has moved more towards bracken. In 2015 they increased efforts to reduce the spread of bracken across the plateau, with a particular focus on areas around some of the island's Ancient Scheduled Monuments. The success of this work can already be seen and we will be continuing with this in the years ahead. Head Ranger Steve Pratt has also been busy developing management plans with his assistants to look into other non-natives on the island, such as Spanish bluebells and Alexanders.

This is just a taster of what we have been up to in 2015. We look forward to seeing you on the island in 2016.

All the very best.

BECCY MACDONALD
April 2016