

REPORT OF THE LUNDY MARINE PROTECTED AREA ADVISORY GROUP

The Lundy Marine Protected Area Advisory Group (LMPAAG) provides a forum for the discussion of all matters relating to the island's waters and shores. The Group includes representatives from the Island (the Lundy Company/Landmark Trust), Natural England, the Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (D&SIFCA), Historic England, the Marine Management Organisation, Torridge District Council, the Lundy Field Society, the Marine Biological Association, MARINELife, local nature conservation groups, commercial fishing interests, dive charter boat skippers, local dive clubs and local sailing clubs.

The Group meets twice a year: in 2017 it met on 15 May on board the MS *Oldenburg* alongside Bideford Quay, and on 17 October at the Ilfracombe and North Devon Sub-Aqua Club, Ilfracombe. The Lundy Field Society provides the secretariat for the LMPAAG. Through the Secretary, the Group brings matters of importance to the island's Management Forum (which also meets twice a year, usually immediately after the Advisory Group meetings), the decision-making body which manages both terrestrial and marine aspects of Lundy.

During the two meetings held in 2017, a variety of issues were brought to the attention of the Group and discussed. These are summarised below:

A change of Warden

We welcomed Dean Jones as the new Warden to his first meeting of the Advisory Group in May (although he had been in post since the end of January). The Group's Secretary sent a letter of thanks on behalf of the Group to Beccy MacDonald for her considerable contribution to 'all things marine' on and off the island over the past 3½ years.

New mooring at Brazen Ward

A new mooring was set in place off Brazen Ward at the start of the 2017 diving season, after considerable delays. It was well used during the summer and Derek Green in particular would like to thank Andrew Bengay, Leigh Hanks and others for sorting this out and for covering its cost. As archaeological repair work has been undertaken to the Brazen Ward defensive platform this summer, for which all materials had to arrive by sea, the mooring has proved particularly useful.

The updated (2017) Marine Management Plan for the MPA

Following on from the work done by Beccy MacDonald on updating the existing Marine Management Plan in 2016, some further additions and editing work were completed by Robert Irving early in 2017 on behalf of Natural England. The Plan has now been officially 'signed off' by the island's Management Forum.

The main additions to the 2016 Plan are:

- a new section (2.4) explaining the day-to-day management of the MPA
- a table detailing the various designations and their monitoring/reporting requirements
- an infographic on how each feature page of the document is set out
- the addition of research references relevant to each feature
- the addition of a Glossary of terms and abbreviations
- the splitting of the cetacean and basking shark entries

- the withdrawal of the Devonshire cup coral as a feature and the insertion of branching sponges in its place
- a review of seabird sections (with RSPB and LFS approval)
- inclusion of the Code of Conduct, definitions of 'important' species & tidal stream information as Annexes
- a revised Zoning Scheme diagram (when it becomes available)

The intention is that the Lundy MMP is a living document which can be updated and changed in the future, as and when necessary and when resources to do so are available. The Marine Management Plan (2017) is now available on-line at: www.landmarktrust.org.uk/globalassets/lundy_marine_management_plan_2017.pdf.

Update to the MPA's Zoning Scheme

As mentioned above, in light of the new edition of the Marine Management Plan and changes to various D&SIFCA byelaws, it had been agreed to produce an update to the existing MPA Zoning Scheme (the last such update being in 2003 following the introduction of the No Take Zone). However, unexpected postponements of meetings of the IFCA's byelaw sub-committee had led to delays in agreeing the new byelaws, and so a re-drawing of the Zoning Scheme had had to be delayed too. It was hoped this would now be completed in 2018.

Natural England's concern about anchoring within the MPA

The new Marine Management Plan makes mention of the possibility of introducing No Anchoring Areas within the MPA if it is shown that damage is being caused through the deployment of anchors to delicate benthic species such as branching sponges and sea fans. It was suggested that the whole MPA could be regarded as a No Anchoring Area, but this was felt to be excessive by both local dive clubs (who wanted to be able to anchor close to favourite dive sites all around the island) and by yacht owners (who wanted the opportunity to anchor in the lee given strong winds and choppy waters). It was agreed that an assessment be made of where anchoring currently takes place (at least where the most popular sites are), prior to raising this topic again at a future meeting of the Group.

Marine archaeological matters

Unfortunately, plans to undertake an archaeological survey in September of what remains of the wreck of the HMS *Montagu* had to be postponed due to adverse weather conditions. The intention is to try again in 2017. The survey has been commissioned by Historic England after the possibility was raised (at the Advisory Group meeting in October 2016) of the wreck being designated a Protected Wreck, should it be found the additional protection this affords be warranted.

Regarding one of the island's other protected wreck sites, Alison James from Historic England indicated there were no plans to produce a virtual (on-line) tour of the *Iona II* wreck site, as had been done with several other protected wreck sites elsewhere off the English coast. These can be viewed on their website (<https://historicengland.org.uk/get-involved/visit/protected-wreck-dive-trails/>). However, the *Iona II* dive trail can be viewed at: www.landmarktrust.org.uk/lundyisland/iona-ii-dive-trail/.

Offshore sediment survey

A major seabed survey was undertaken this summer using the vessel *Severn Guardian*. Clare Miller (Natural England) later clarified that Defra had funded a drop camera and benthic grab

survey in 2017 which was undertaken by the Environment Agency in conjunction with Natural England and the Devon and Severn IFCA. The grab samples were taken off the east coast from nearshore to offshore areas and, off the north and west coasts from deep offshore sediments. The drop camera sites were mainly off the north, west and south coasts. Sediment samples will be analysed for their fauna, for particle size and five stations for polychlorinated biphenyls, polyaromatic hydrocarbons and heavy metals. Particular note was made of any invasive species and of any crawfish encountered. Results are due in 2018.

MARINELife survey report

Each year, Rick Morris of the charity MARINELife provides the Group with a report of sightings of marine wildlife (chiefly cetaceans and seabirds) that have been seen from the *Oldenburg* during crossings to and from the island. A sightings volunteer is on board once a week during the summer months. The results of sightings made in 2016 are to be found elsewhere in this report, or can be found at: www.marine-life.org.uk/ilfracombe-or-bideford-lundy.

Welcome to new representatives and visitors

Having had no representatives from the yachting or boating fraternity for quite a number of years, we were delighted to re-establish contact with two local clubs this year (North Devon Yacht Club and Ilfracombe Yacht Club) and to welcome their representatives to the October meeting.

We were also pleased to welcome Sue Wells from the National Trust (Marine Project Manager) to our October meeting. One of Sue's tasks is to see how the National Trust might expand its support of marine conservation and of MPAs in particular. It may come as news to many that the Trust is interested in marine matters, but this is largely due to the considerable length of coastline it now owns (778 miles). It also owns areas of the intertidal (often associated with coastal properties) and even some subtidal areas. Sue was also interested to observe how the MPA management structure at Lundy worked.

If there are any matters which LFS members would wish to have addressed at the Advisory Group meetings, I would be happy to raise them on your behalf.

ROBERT IRVING
Honorary Secretary
Lundy Marine Protected Area Advisory Group
Robert@sea-scope.co.uk
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