

The refurbishment of St Helens was completed and the church proudly opened its doors on the 30th June. The occasion was marked with a beautiful service taken by the Right Reverend Robert Atwell, Bishop of Exeter on a fine summer Sunday. As well as the refurbishment of the building, new interpretation panels were installed to help visitors understand more about the island history, wildlife, communities, and many other features along with the history of the church.

Mobility on Lundy was improved with the introduction of our 2nd 'Tramper' to assist less able staying visitors get around the island. Our thanks go to Rachel Johnson for tirelessly fundraising to provide the means to lease both vehicles.

Back on the mainland, the marketing team visited all of the notable events with our exhibition trailer across the summer, flying the flag for Lundy amongst the large number of visitors to the region enjoying the fine weather.

As we enter our 50th anniversary year, talks with the National Trust continue to renew the lease of the island. New Director General Hilary O'Grady and Dr Anna Keay visited Lundy in 2018 and held productive talks to help drive the complicated process forward.

Finally – I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the islanders, ship's crew and shore staff for their good work during a challenging year and the Field Society for their ongoing support and advice. We look forward to continuing to work in close partnership with you during the coming year.

All The Very Best,

DEREK GREEN
June 2019

CONSERVATION TEAM REPORT

As I sit here in my cosy office, distracted by the sound of scuttling Pygmy Shrews navigating the wall space, I am trying my best to reflect upon the many delightful happenings throughout the year. Once again I am reminded of so many wonderful experiences, wildlife highs, meteorological delights and water level woes, as well as an odd shipwreck thrown in for good measure. We of course have also had many a celebration and meeting of friends in the Marisco but for me to cover ALL these events I would need my own personal annual report so instead I will paint the seasons for you all in brief.

Winter on the island this year was a harsh but exciting affair, and one that will be forever rooted in my memory. At times you could have mistaken Lundy for an island in the Svalbard archipelago as thick sheets of ice adorned the cliff sides and snow drifts towered over village gates. As Lundy luck goes this was of course the perfect time for two of our generators to pack it in, leaving most of the staff and visitors with no electricity or heating for a number of days, a challenging accompaniment to the lack of running water due to frozen pipes. Luckily we were all able to seek sanctuary in the warming embrace of a log fire and comforting hot spiced cider shared with great friends in the trusty Marisco Tavern. A delight that was also shared by the hardy frost bitten LFS work party volunteers, thirsty and cold from a busy afternoon making snowmen inside the Barn with snow breached through the wind-blasted windows. As horrible as it sounds it was truly awe-inspiring to see the island in this inhospitable manner reminding me that nature is truly in control here rather than us blue shirted Landmark folk.



*The Conservation Team in 2018.
Chris Jones, Siân Cann, Nick
Herbert, Dean Jones.
© Dean Jones*

These cold winter conditions then merged somewhat haphazardly into a very much anticipated spring. Strong, bitterly cold winds occurred spontaneously throughout the start of the season which unfortunately caught some of the island's early African and European migratory birds. Luckily for us (and the migrants) these cold spells were rather short lived and before we knew it the island was rewarded once again with longer days, floral scents, plankton blooms, and of course some smashing vagrant birds. This spring also brought with it some truly special events,



The west coast looking across Jenny's Cove on 18th March. © Dean Jones

in particular the onset of the sailing season on what was a very special year for our beloved MS *Oldenburg* – her 60th year of life!

Then summer approached and as if every droplet of moisture was used up in the winter flurries, barely a mizzle graced our now dry little isle, blistering the land and transforming some areas akin to that of a mini Serengeti. Superb conditions for the sandal-clad day tripper but not so much for some of the island's wildlife or the very sweaty ranger team adorned in full spray suits to treat Rhododendron on the sidelands. In spite of these harsh working conditions Nick Herbert and Chris Jones from the Ranger team and associated volunteers did a stellar job finding and treating 5682 plants in total throughout the year! It just goes to show that although we've been tackling Rhody on Lundy for a number of decades now, this resilient plant is still hanging on meaning there's still much to do with regards to this ambitious project. Special thanks also to Angus Tillotson and the rope team for helping us tackle plants on the East cliffs!

Out on the heat scorched ledges and slopes, most of our seabirds had another fairly productive year in particular our lively Puffins who managed to get a superb 129 Pufflings out of 235 active burrows! Unfortunately the same can't be said for our most of our gulls, where we have seen dramatic reductions in breeding numbers (e.g. Herring Gull numbers have dropped more than 70% on Lundy since 2000) coupled with a rather unproductive year for raising and fledging chicks, particularly Kittiwakes. Surveying the seabirds this year were our fantastic long-term warden volunteers, I'd like to take the opportunity to say a special thanks to Kathryn MacKinnon, Rob Andrew, Joshua Harris and Esther Fritzel-Armitage for all their help and enthusiasm with regards to this year's surveys! In addition to our monitoring, the summer on 2018 brought with it the highly awaited grand opening of the newly refurbished St Helen Church which now acts as the islands information and education hub, an ideal spot to help inspire and educate the next generation of Lundyites and Wildlife Conservationists, a very exciting new chapter of Lundy indeed!



Effects of a dry summer on the island's vegetation on 2nd May. © Pat Doody

Although we are always sad to see the summer go, the autumn brings with it great excitement, particularly for us birders as we start to dream and conjure up fantasies of rare birds in the field. This year was no exception and by October the island was blessed with some truly wonderful vagrants such as Green Warbler, American Robin and Red-eyed Vireo as well as some spectacular non-avian beasts like the colossal Convolvulus Hawkmoth. Autumn was a much more pleasant this year weather wise and although we did have some stormy days typical of the season, 2018 was nothing like the unyielding wrath of Ophelia and Brian from 2017, fabulous news for the islands new-born seal pups wriggling away on the foreshore, most of which were able to survive up to weaning. In fact 2018 turned out to be a superb season for these playful pinnipeds with record counts of animals come mid-August and at least 28 seal pups dotted around the islands conspicuous bays and coves!

By late November Lundy's coastline becomes much quieter as the bays become devoid of howling seal pups and the passage of migratory birds slows to a trickle. The pace of Lundy life also slows down a tad, though guided walks, illustrated talks and the island's biosecurity monitoring continues as always. This period allows us to fully reflect on the year gone by and plan for the year ahead but there are still amazing wildlife still to be seen for those willing to brave the cold, like this year's Basking Shark off Rat Island. Remember if you would like to contribute any marine records or photographs, we have the Lundy Marine Sightings Facebook page and/or the Lundy Field Society Logbook located in the Marisco Tavern; please do share your observations! This year, as always we were amazed at how quick the year has passed, 2019 is already looking to be a super busy and exciting year once again. A massive thank you to all in the LFS as always for your support, love and dedication to our little piece of heaven here in the Bristol Channel.

All the very best,

DEAN WOODFIN JONES
Lundy Warden
May 2019