

that not only did members of the Conservation Team spot this activity at the time but that several members of the public reported it to the Warden as well.

News from Historic England

Following some misunderstandings last year regarding permissions for individuals to dive on either of the two protected wrecks within the MPA, the Warden had prepared a spreadsheet which she had sent out to the local dive clubs and charter skippers for those intending to undertake dives under the Lundy Company's licence. This had been done in agreement with Terry Newman (Maritime Archaeologist at Historic England) and should help streamline the way the system works. The Nautical Archaeology Society (under the guidance of their Education Manager Peta Knott) held a Protected Wreck Day (PWD) in June, following on from four successful inaugural PWDs held during the Marine Festival in 2022. The plan had been for divers to undertake 'guided' dives (i.e. with laminated labelled diagrams) on the SS *Iona II* protected wreck and the HMS *Montagu* scheduled monument. Unfortunately, south-westerly winds meant that it was not possible to dive on the *Montagu*, so an alternative dive on the MV *Robert* off the east coast was undertaken instead. It is hoped these Protected Wreck Days will become an annual occurrence in the future.

Use of an underwater fluorescent marker by Historic England to deter thefts from Protected Wreck sites

Terry Newman informed the Group at the October meeting of a plan by Historic England to add forensic marking to valuable underwater artifacts associated with the country's 57 protected wrecks. The project has been 7-8 years in the making, most of that time being spent creating a suitable gunk-like substance that will work underwater. What has been created is similar to 'smart water' used to deter thieves from stealing items above water. The new product will be invisible underwater but will show up under ultra-violet light. It remains stuck to anything that touches it. Its chemical signature also makes the product site-specific, meaning it can tie the theft of an object (or even just of someone's presence at a site if they get gunk on themselves) to that site.

Terry explained that the product had been developed by the marine archaeology company MSDS (partly run by Alison James who used to represent Historic England on Lundy's MPA Advisory Group). He added that the Gull Rock protected site at Lundy could well be suitable for the use of this product, as several artifacts from that site had already gone missing since it was first discovered in 1968. It is likely that sites where the product will be applied over the coming years will be kept secret so that would-be thieves would be unaware of which sites have been treated and which have not.

Your input

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@sea-scope.co.uk.

References

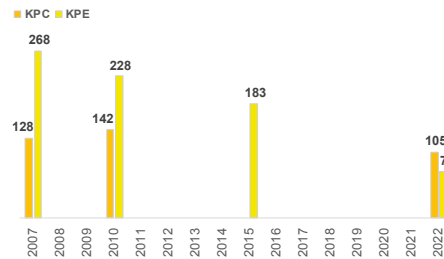
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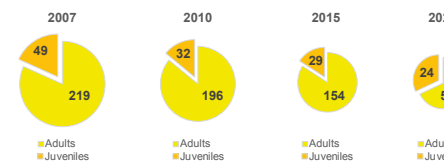
▲ Two Sunset Cup Corals *Leptopsammia pruvoti* joined at their bases, Knoll Pins, Lundy (Photo: Paul Kay).

THE LUNDY MARINE FESTIVAL 2022 - a correction.

In the account of the 2022 Lundy Marine Festival written by Robert Irving in the 2022 Annual Report, one of the figures was reproduced with part of it missing, for which the editor apologises. Robert has kindly supplied a correction, which appears below.



▲ Figure A. Total no. of Sunset Cup Corals by year (2007-2022) and by site. [KPC = Knoll Pins Cave; KPE = Knoll Pins East.]



▲ Figure B. Number of individual cup corals (adults and juveniles) from the Knoll Pins East site, 2007-2022.

'The figure in question (on p. 29 of the 2022 AR) related to the number of Sunset Cup Corals (*Leptopsammia pruvoti*) present at two monitoring sites at the Knoll Pins from 2007 until 2022. Unfortunately, the numbers for 2022 were missed from the histogram. The complete figure (Fig. A) is reprinted left. A second figure (Fig. B) is also included here which provides a clearer explanation of the study's conclusion'.

'Figure A shows that populations of the Sunset Cup Coral have continued to decline at both monitoring sites at the Knoll Pins. The Knoll Pins East site is most dramatic in its decline. Figure B separates out the 'adults' from the 'juveniles' at the Knoll Pins East site. The total number (as indicated by the size of the pie charts) drops over the years but note that the proportion of juveniles is higher in 2022 (at about 33%). It is hoped this might indicate the downward trend in numbers is starting to level off'.

Robert Irving
12th March 2024