



▲ A male Waxwing caught in Millcombe on 31 November (photo: Luke Marriner).

## November

The eleventh month opened with a late **Osprey** on the 1<sup>st</sup>, the fourth record of the autumn and the latest recorded for Lundy by five days. In Millcombe a **Woodlark** sheltered on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and a small **Woodcock** roost started to form. It was a quiet month for waders but included four **Golden Plover** passing west over the helipad on the 13<sup>th</sup> (between passenger flights). Barton's Field had been a magnet for **Jack Snipe**, but nocturnal surveys stalled owing to inclement weather or full moon phases. Feeding parties of 60 **Gannet** were a common feature off Lundy, sometimes accompanying a pod of 20 **Common Dolphin**. **Merlin** became a regular (if fleeting) sight over the village, along with an overwintering **Kestrel** and a **Peregrine**.

## December

A **Great Northern Diver** frequented the Landing Bay through the month, although appearances were sporadic. Further offshore, movements of auks peaked at 500 **Guillemot** and 200 **Razorbill** logged on Boxing Day. A big clear-out of passerines left Millcombe feeling like a ghost town, only the calls of squealing **Water Rail** and ever-present **Robin** song broke the silence. Two **Woodpigeon** remained faithful to the valley, as well as the small **Woodcock** day-time roost. Pondsbury remained quiet, acting as a day-time roost for **Snipe** and peaking at 11 **Teal** on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Island coverage waned but a late push of nocturnal surveys in late December ringed an additional seven **Woodcock**, eight **Jack Snipe**, four **Common Snipe** and a **Snow Bunting**.

## OTHER BIOLOGICAL RECORDS FROM LUNDY

The following reports have been compiled by the recorders for each group of organisms. Most of the records have been taken from the pages of the LFS Logbook not devoted to birds, and we thank all those who have taken the time and trouble to enter their observations of animals, plants, bryophytes, lichens, and fungi whilst on Lundy. We have not attempted to verify all the records, but unusual or interesting observations will have been checked with the originators. Most of the information will also eventually appear on the LFS website and on the various national databases.

**Please keep entering your 2024 sightings and sending us photographs that can be used to illustrate the 2024 AR!**

### MARINE SPECIES

*Compiled by Keith Hiscock*

There were no formal surveys of marine species in 2023 and so records are gleaned from the LFS Logbook (including Warden's records) and from observations made by the compiler. Records of commonly occurring species are not included unless there are unusual numbers or observations of breeding. Most records entered to the LFS logbook in 2023 were of cetaceans. A few records appear on iNaturalist. MARINElife survey reports (<https://www.marine-life.org.uk/survey-reports>) include records of cetaceans on the passages to/from Lundy which are summarised here but are not strictly from Lundy waters.

Names of taxa given here are the most recent (at March 2024). For authorities for each species and to check against changes to names, go to [www.marinespecies.org](http://www.marinespecies.org).

### ALGAE

#### OCHROPHYTA

##### **Wireweed** *Sargassum muticum*

A non-native species recorded at Lundy for the first time in 1999. Recorded in 2023 around Rat Island and in the Landing Bay and in pools south of the Lametor peninsula. Amounts seemed less than in some years generally but pools in Devil's Kitchen had a higher infestation, most likely because clearing plants from the pools stopped after 2021. (Keith Hiscock).

### MARINE INVERTEBRATES

#### GELATINOUS PLANKTON

The very few records of gelatinous plankton ('jellyfish' from various phyla) suggest that Lundy continues to attract 'oceanic' species. However, scyphozoan jellyfish were sparse in 2023 in south-west England in general and likely at Lundy. Especially notable is that there were no observations from Lundy of **Barrel Jellyfish** (*Rhizostoma pulmo*) that usually attract logbook entries.



▲ *Pandea conica*, one of the gelatinous plankton species to look-out for (photo: Nao Szulk).

◀ A small Portuguese Man O'War *Physalia physalia* at Devil's Kitchen on 21<sup>st</sup> January (photo: Stuart Cossey).

## CNIDARIA: HYDROZOA

### Portuguese Man O'War *Physalia physalia*

One small colony washed-up at Devil's Kitchen on 21 January (Stuart Cossey). Records have been very sparse throughout south-west England in 2023 and many were small colonies (Keith Hiscock).

### Rocket Jelly *Pandea conica*

Recorded in the Landing Bay on 21 and 24 July (Nao Szulk).

## CNIDARIA: ANTHOZOA

### Scarlet and Gold Star Coral *Balanophyllia regia*

A (new location) cluster of five in a crevice at the eastern end of Mermaid's Pool on 8<sup>th</sup> August (Nao Szulk).

### Sunset Cup Coral *Leptopsammia pruvoti*

Maggs Ashton reports (possibly 1<sup>st</sup> May) high numbers of very small *Leptopsammia pruvoti* corals on the Knoll Pins monitoring sites: significant because of the stark decline in abundance of this southern, and nationally rare, species at Lundy since the mid-1980s. An observation of small individuals in early May would likely reflect recruitment in 2022.

### Plumose Anemone *Metridium senile*

The abundance of Plumose Anemones on the wreck of the MV Robert off Tibbetts Point has declined greatly in recent years although images of the jetty piles in the Landing Bay in 2022 show strong growths. The species has shown reduced abundance at many locations inshore along the south-west England mainland (to be summarised in the [www.swmecosystems.co.uk](http://www.swmecosystems.co.uk) annual report for 2023). Observations from the MV Robert were confirmed by Maggs Ashton (Ilfracombe & North Devon Sub-Aqua Club) and from south-west England generally by Keith Hiscock.

## NEMERTEA

### A parasitic nematode worm ?*Anisakis* sp.

Anisakid worms are parasitic in fish and appear to be an increasing problem in Bass at least. The worm was identified in a bass caught by Rob Waterfield in August. The identification is tentative.

► Railings on the MV Robert dominated by Plumose Anemones on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2008 (photo: Keith Hiscock).



▲ *Onchidella celtica*: a pulmonate gastropod found at new locations in 2023 (photo: Keith Hiscock).

## MOLLUSCA: GASTROPODA

### Celtic sea slug *Onchidella celtica*.

There were 35 individuals counted at the Devil's Kitchen site (where they were first found on Lundy in 2020) on 17 April (Rosie Ellis). A further (new) location was found in 2023 at Mermaid's Pool south of the South Light where nine were counted on 11 June (Tara McEvoy-Wilding) and more were found along that coast on 31 July including below 'the rope' (Matthew White).

## MOLLUSCA: BIVALVIA

### Pacific Oyster *Magallana gigas*

A non-native species first recorded at Lundy in 2020 and destroyed where found at Rat Island. A further single large individual was found on the wall of Christie's Quay on 25 August and destroyed (Nao Szulk).

## MOLLUSCA: CEPHALOPODA

### Curled Octopus *Eledone cirrhosa*

One seen and photographed off the west coast on 30 April. An infrequently recorded species at Lundy (Maggs Ashton).

## BRYOZOA

### Red Ripple Bryozoan *Watersipora subatra*

A non-native species first found at Lundy in May 2021 in the cave behind the arch on the north side of Rat Island. In 2022, it was found in extensive patches at 'Anemone Cave' about 20 m west of the 2021 location where it continued to be present and had expanded further in abundance and extent in 2023.



▲ A Curled Octopus *Eledone cirrhosa* off the west coast (photo: Maggs Ashton).



◀ *Red Ripple Bryozoan Watersipora subatra* (the dark red patches) extending into 'Anemone Cave' at Rat Island on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023. The transect line is re-established between two stainless steel screws placed in 1986. (photo: Keith Hiscock).

## CRUSTACEA: DECAPODA

**Montagu's or Furrowed Crab** *Xantho hydrophilus* Reported as more than usual. Some berried females. Noted on 17<sup>th</sup> April and 5<sup>th</sup> May (Rosie Ellis).

**Risso's Crab** *Xantho pilipes* Reported on 17<sup>th</sup> April including berried females (Rosie Ellis).

## CHORDATA: PISCES

### Basking shark *Cetorhinus maximus*

One seen between the Sugar Loaf and Landing Bay on 8 August (the Mellowdew Family, Shaun Barnes, Darren Dowding). Basking Shark sightings have declined enormously throughout south-west England since about 2011.

### Sunfish *Mola mola*

One off Gull Rock on 11 September (Gary and Donna Dexter).

### Atlantic Bluefin Tuna *Thunnus thynnus*

One observed leaping out of the water off Battery Point on 22 August (Anon.) and another photographed by Barry Edwards on 25 September off the North End. The carcass of a Bluefin Tuna was photographed in the Landing Bay on 17 October by Tim Jones. Atlantic Bluefin Tuna have steadily returned to south-west waters and in large numbers in some areas since about 2015.

▼ *An Atlantic Bluefin Tuna hunting garfish off the North End on 25<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023* (photo: Barry Edwards).



## CHORDATA: MAMMALIA WHALES, DOLPHINS AND PORPOISES (CETACEANS)

Overall, the number of records and of individuals seen of **Harbour Porpoise** and **Short-beaked Common Dolphin** were smaller than in 2022. There was one sighting of a Bottlenose Dolphin in 2023 (one in 2022, none in 2021 and one in 2020). There were no recorded sightings of **Minke Whales** on the passage to/from the island (MARINELife surveys) compared with one in 2022, two in 2021 and one in 2020.

MARINELife record sightings of cetaceans on ferry trips between Ilfracombe/Bideford and Lundy. The number of sightings are reported on their website - <https://www.marine-life.org.uk/survey-reports/categories/ilfracombe-bideford-lundy>.

### Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

One in the Landing Bay on 30<sup>th</sup> April (maybe: 'Ocean Nova crew')

### Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

There were four days on which there were logbook entries for Common Dolphin including two that were for 'dolphin sp.': many less and in fewer numbers per sighting than in 2022. Notably, at least six were seen off Quarter Wall on the east coast in a 'feeding frenzy' accompanied by diving Gannets on 13 September (Anon.) and a large pod was reported off Quarry Bay broken into groups of three or four and many breaching (Joanne Wilby). MARINELife report up to 10 (including sightings of 'dolphin') individuals on eight of 61 crossings where observations were made.

### Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

There were 15 days on which there were logbook entries for Harbour Porpoise, mostly single or two individuals. A dead porpoise was washed-up near the jetty on 13 May (Jackie Watt).

Thanks to all of those that reported sightings.

## CHORDATA: PINNIPEDIA

### Atlantic Grey Seals *Halichoerus grypus*

A full account is given later in this Report.



▲ *Common Dolphin* (photo: Paul Dean).