

BIOLOGICAL RECORDS FROM LUNDY

The reports that follow 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 of those who have taken the time and trouble to enter their observations of animals, plants, bryophytes, lichens and fungi while 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 various national databases.

All visitors to Lundy have a wonderful opportunity to contribute something truly worthwhile to our knowledge of the natural world. Please keep entering your 2025 sightings and sending us photographs that can be used to illustrate the 2025 Annual Report!

MARINE SPECIES

Keith Hiscock

Records in 2024 benefited especially from entries in the LFS logbook by Assistant Warden Tara McEvoy-Wildling. Those records were mainly from seashore safaris and provide a list of 'usually seen' species against which unusual records will stand out. In late June, I was assisted by members of an LFS Conservation Break searching around Rat Island and at Quarry Beach to document the status of non-native marine species. While a very few (*Wireweed Sagassum muticum* and Red Ripple Bryozoan *Watersipora subatra*) were highly conspicuous and widespread around Rat Island, some others recorded in previous years were not seen (Pom-pom Weed *Caulocanthus okumarae* and Harpoon Weed *Asparagopsis armata*) although the latter species continued to be abundant subtidally around Landing Bay Jetty. Searching for the Australasian barnacle known as 'Darwin's Barnacle' found only one individual (in about 45 mins searching) at Quarry Bay where no other non-native species were found.

Records from subtidal seabeds were exceptionally sparse in 2024 and I had only one dive off Gull Rock on 6th June in 2024.

There were three highlights in 2024. The description of a previously undescribed species of polychaete worm, *Arabella ampulliformis*, was published in 2024 (Darbyshire & Kara, 2024). The worm was sampled during the Lundy Marine Festival in 2022. A nationally rare species of nudibranch seaslug, *Trapania tartenella*, was photographed on the wreck of the MV Robert by Rollin Verlinde. As in most years, Lundy attracted unusually high (for south-west England) numbers and species of 'gelatinous plankton': the most spectacular and unusual one being the Spiral Salp *Pegea confoederata*.

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

ALGAE

OCHROPHYTA

There were no unusual species recorded. Wireweed, *Sargassum muticum*, was in usual (sparse) numbers floating at the surface at low water from Landing Bay Jetty and was conspicuous in rockpools at Devil's Kitchen.



▲ Accumulation of 'gelatinous plankton' among drift seaweed at the foot of Christie's Quay in the Landing Bay on 25th June. The species present include Crystal Jellies *Aequorea* sp., a likely Blue Jellyfish *Cyanea lamarkii*, Moon Jellyfish *Aurelia aurita* and Northern Comb Jellies *Bolinopsis infundibulum*. (Photo: Keith Hiscock).

MARINE INVERTEBRATES AND ASCIDIANS

GELATINOUS PLANKTON

Lundy attracted a wide range of gelatinous plankton species most often seen on snorkel safaris but visible to anyone swimming, diving or looking along the water line – especially in the cove adjacent to Christie's Quay. Gelatinous plankton are listed together (not in taxonomic order with other groups) here. Many of the species were present around Landing Bay Jetty area for most of the summer.

CNIDARIA: HYDROZOA

By-the-wind Sailor *Velella velella*

Stranded on the beach behind Landing Bay Jetty on 24th April (Anon.).

A hydrozoan *Neoturris* sp. Recorded on 5th August and also likely this species on 30th August during Snorkel Safaris around Landing Bay Jetty (Tara McEvoy-Wilding: hereafter TM-W). Identified as *N. pileata* in previous years.

Crystal Jelly *Aequorea* sp.

One noted on 3rd July (TM-W). Much less common in 2024 than in recent years but there were many at the foot of Christie's Quay on 25th June (Keith Hiscock).

A phylonect siphonophore *Nanomia cara*

Likely this species seen in two 'strings of red beads'. Recorded on 2nd June during a Snorkel Safari around Landing Bay Jetty (TM-W).

CNIDARIA: SCYPHOZOA

Blue Jellyfish *Cyanea lamarkii*

Recorded off the Landing Bay Jetty on 4th May and 3rd July ('lots') (Joe Parker and TM-W) and noted as present amongst other gelatinous plankton at the foot of Christie's Quay on 25th June (Keith Hiscock).

Purple Jellyfish/Mauve Stinger *Pelagia noctiluca*

In the Landing Bay on 4th May (Joe Parker and TM-W). Recorded on 2nd June (about 10 with associated small fish) and 3rd July ('lots') during Snorkel Safaris around the Landing Bay Jetty (Tara McEvoy-Wilding). *P. noctiluca* was widespread and often in very large numbers throughout the summer in south-west England.

Compass Jellyfish *Chrysaora hysoscella*

Recorded on 2nd June and 3rd July during a Snorkel Safari around the Landing Bay Jetty. Significant numbers and large with long trailing tentacles and associated small fish. Also in the Landing Bay on 1st-5th June (Steve Evans). Also on 3rd July (TM-W).

Moon Jellyfish *Aurelia aurita*

Recorded on 2nd June during a Snorkel Safari around Landing Bay Jetty (Tara McEvoy-Wilding) and on several days off the east coast 1st-5th June (Anon.).

Barrel Jellyfish *Rhizostoma octopus*

Two off Quarry Bay on 22nd April (Thomas Weston). A further record from the same area on 23rd April (M. Allen). Offshore of The Quarries on 12th October (Paul & Jackie Holt).



CHORDATA: ASCIDIACEA

Spiral Salp *Pegea confoederata*

Several seen and photographed from 13th August to the end of August between the Knoll Pins and Gannets Bay with another likely record in the Landing Bay. Doubtless present elsewhere around the island (Kirsty Andrews, Rollin Verlinde and an anonymous snorkeler).

CTENOPHORA

Sea Gooseberry *Pleurobrachia pileus*

Recorded on 2nd June (abundant midwater) and 3rd July (one) during Snorkel Safaris around the Landing Bay Jetty (TM-W).

Northern Comb Jelly *Bolinopsis infundibulum*

Recorded on 2nd June during a Snorkel Safari around Landing Bay Jetty – very abundant on 3rd July (TM-W). Present in an accumulation of gelatinous plankton at the foot of Christie's Quay on 25th June (Keith Hiscock).

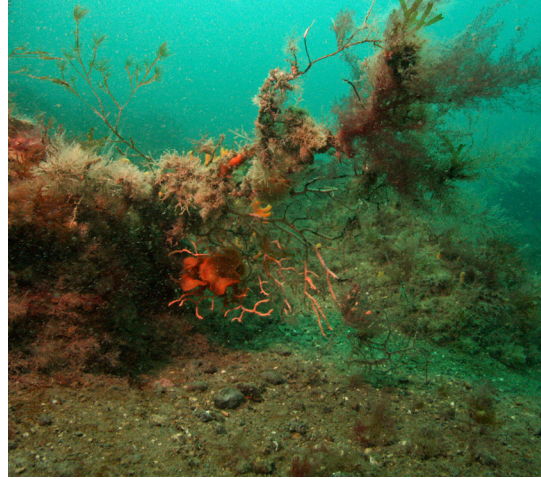
◀ Spiral Salp *Pegea confoederata* off the east coast on 13th August (photo: Rollin Verlinde).

SEASHORE AND SEABED SPECIES

CNIDARIA: OCTOCORALLIA

Pink Sea Fan *Eunicella verrucosa*

The abundance of Pink Sea Fans has declined since about the mid-1980s at Lundy and so records are kept (where possible) of abundance and condition. Off Gull Rock and towards the Knoll Pins at the seaward edge of the boulder tumble at about 15m below chart datum and during a 57-minute dive, several 'healthy' but smallish fans (ranking as 'occasional') were present. However, there were many long-since-dead fans fouled with a wide variety of attached species including Bull Huss eggs (a fairly recent phenomenon). (Keith Hiscock).



▲ A heavily fouled Pink Sea Fan *Eunicella verrucosa* present near Gull Rock on 9th June. Living branches can be seen on the lower part of the fan (photo: Keith Hiscock).

ANNELIDA: POLYCHAETA

A eunicid polychaete *Arabella ampulliformis* *Arabella ampulliformis* is a polychaete worm that was collected during the Lundy Marine Festival in 2022 and described in a paper by Darbyshire & Kara (2024).



▲ A polychaete worm new to science from Lundy: *Arabella ampulliformis* (anterior end) (photo: Teresa Darbyshire).



▲ The Orange-tipped seaslug *Trapania tartanella*, photographed on the wreck of the MV Robert (photo: Rollin Velinde).

**MOLLUSCA: GASTROPODA:
ONCHIDIIDAE**

Celtic Seaslug *Onchidella celtica*
Seventy-three counted in Devil's Kitchen on 25th August (Joe Parker). Particularly notable that the population (originally found in 2020 by Rosie Ellis) is still present in large numbers.

**MOLLUSCA: GASTROPODA:
NUDIBRANCHIA**

Crested Aeolis *Antiopella cristata*
Recorded on 5th August during a Snorkel Safari around Landing Bay Jetty (Ben Long).

Orange Doris *Gargamella* (was *Discodoris*) *rosi*
Seen on Landing Bay Jetty during a snorkel safari on 3rd July (TM-W). A conspicuous species that was the furthest north record when first seen at Lundy in 2022. Becoming more widespread in south-west England and now known from south-west Wales.

Orange-tipped Trapania *Trapania tartanella*
This nudibranch ranks as 'Nationally Rare' (until another location is reported) and was photographed by Rollin Verlinde on the MV Robert on 17th August. The species has only recently been discovered in Britain (Picton and Morrow, 2023).



▲ A single individual of Darwin's Barnacle *Austrominius modestus* (distinguished by having only four wall plates) among Stellate Barnacles, *Chthamalus montagui*, found at Quarry Bay (photo: Keith Hiscock).

Darwin's Barnacle *Austrominius modestus*

A non-native species common on the mainland but rarely seen at Lundy. Although found in very small numbers in past years, none were found in the region of Christie's Quay after much searching in June 2024 but, in a 45 minute search at Quarry Bay, one was located (Keith Hiscock).

CRUSTACEA: DECAPODA

Spiny Spider Crab *Maja squinado*

A frequently seen species around Lundy and sometimes seen in moulting aggregations. In 2024, a large number of shed carapaces were stranded near the Landing Bay Jetty noted on 3rd July (TM-W).

BRYOZOA

Red Ripple Bryozoan *Watersipora subatra*

This species was first found at Lundy on 27th May 2021. In 2024, it covered extensive overhanging or vertical (shaded) rock surfaces on the NW side of Rat Island and on the jetty fenders as well as under some boulders but was not found elsewhere. Systematic quadrat photographs were taken along the transect in 'Anemone Cave' on the north side of Rat Island. (Keith Hiscock and TM-W).

Ross 'Coral' *Pentapora foliacea*

Many colonies of *Pentapora foliacea* observed at Gull Rock in June were infested with Filigree Worms (*Filograna implexa*) perhaps suggesting that they were not in good condition. A similar situation was observed off The Battery during the Marine Festival surveys in 2022 and George (1975) notes about the worms: 'Common on rocks, stones, shells and *Pentapora* at all sites visited from 10-36 m'.

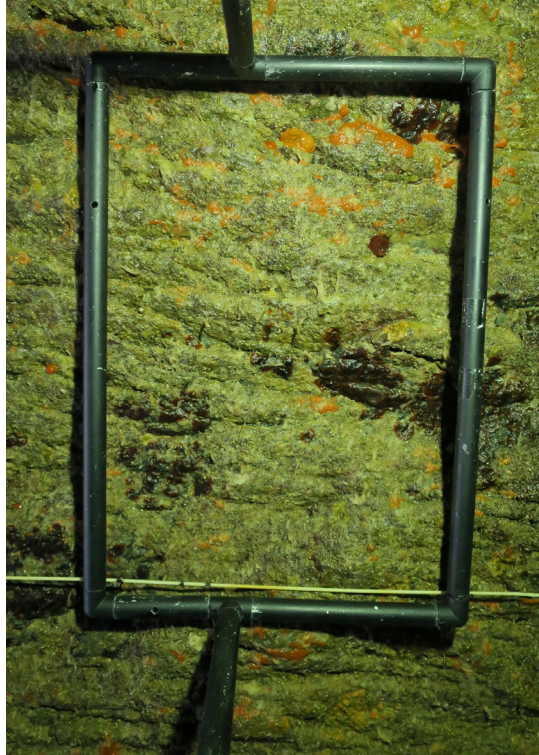
FISH

CHORDATA: PISCES

There are several fish species commonly seen by snorkelers and divers around Lundy including Bass, Grey Mullet (at the Landing Bay Jetty), Pollack, Ballan Wrasse, Cuckoo Wrasse and sandeels. Less frequently sighted species are noted here.

Basking Shark *Cetorhinus maximus*

A possible sighting of a basking shark in Jenny's Cove on 22nd June by a visitor – 'two fins moving slowly'. (Reported by TM-W).



▲ One of the survey quadrats along the 'Anemone Cave' transect (established in 1985 and 're-strung' on two stainless-steel screws, here on 22nd June). The dark patches are Red Ripple Bryozoan *Watersipora subatra*. (Photo: Keith Hiscock).



▲ A Nursehound / Bull Huss egg case ('Mermaid's Purse') attached to a Yellow Staghorn Sponge *Axinella dissimilis*, cutting into the branches (photo: Keith Hiscock).

Nursehound / Bull Huss *Scyliorhinus stellaris*
There were no records of the fish in 2024 but eggs entwined around Pink Sea Fans especially continued to be frequently seen. The egg cases remain after hatching and the tendrils from them may damage the Pink Sea Fans and cut into branching sponges such as the long-lived and slow-growing *Axinella dissimilis*.

Sunfish *Mola mola*
Just south of Brazen Ward on 30th July (Ishbel Hayes, Helen Cole, P. Hayes). Also seen on a crossing to/from Lundy on 30th August (AC and TJW).

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna *Thunnus thynnus*
One 'jumping' off Millcombe in the Landing Bay on 30th July and one on 3rd August (Thomas Weston).

TURTLES

CHORDATA: REPTILIA: DERMOCHELYIDAE

Leatherback Turtle *Dermochelys coriacea*
A probable Leatherback Turtle drifted north close-in past Millcombe on 14th August at around 0630 (Thomas Weston).

WHALES, DOLPHINS AND PORPOISES (CETACEANS)

CHORDATA: MAMMALIA

Overall, the number of records and of individuals seen of Harbour Porpoise and Short-beaked Common Dolphin were greater than in 2023. There were two sightings of Bottlenose Dolphin in 2024 (one in 2023, one in 2022, none 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>.

Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*
There were eight days (from early March through to early December on which there were logbook entries for Common Dolphin seen from the island: usually three or four together. There was one record on 18th May by MARINElife observers off the south coast from the land. Notably, on 7th May, a pod of 26 plus smaller groups of six and six passing Jenny's Cove between 1200-1400 (Thomas Weston). On 14th July, a pod of 25 was observed about 800m off the west side of the island just north of Quarter Wall (Chris and Sharron Blackmore). On 29th July a pod of c. 20 was reported heading north off Old Light/Battery on the west coast) (Thomas Weston) and likely the same pod on the same day reported as 25 off Montagu Steps (Adam Hobbs).

There were sightings by MARINElife from five (out of 10) Oldenburg passages. On 18th May, there were sightings almost the whole way across to the island, off both port and starboard sides.

Bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

Three were observed on 18th May '20 minutes east of the island' – presumably from a trip to the mainland (Ian Lewis). Eight were seen off the SW Point on 27th October during a cetacean watch: they were very far out but lots of breaking and playing made it easier to identify them (Anon.)

Risso's Dolphin *Grampus griseus*

Possible two large and one smaller Risso's on 12th October: moving NW to SE from Big St John's (Anon.).

Possible three Risso's off Rat Island on 18th October at 0800: impression was that dorsal fins were taller than for common dolphin (Tim Jones).

Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

There were 15 days on which there were logbook entries for Harbour Porpoise, mostly singles or two individuals. On 1st November, nine porpoise were seen – three off South Light, one more off SW Point, and five off North Light – all feeding in tidal races (Anon.).

There were sightings by MARINElife from three (out of 10) Oldenburg passages. On 18th May, there were sightings almost the whole way across to the island, off both port and starboard sides.

Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

Likely a Minke Whale recorded on 9th May about 1.5 km off the south coast at about 1330, then seen moving rapidly off Rat Island at 1340 and then off Tibbetts Point at about 1352 (Chris and Carol Bailey). One heading north off Jenny's Cove on 25th June (Sally Kunzig) and likely the same one on 26th June feeding off The Battery (TM-W).

References

- Darbyshire, T and Kara, J** (2024) *Redescription of *Arabella iricolor* (Montagu, 1804) with descriptions of two new species from the United Kingdom and South Africa*. African Zoology 60:1-21.
- George, J.D** (1975) *The Marine Fauna of Lundy: Polychaeta (marine bristleworms)*. Lundy Field Society Annual Report 25:33-48.
- Picton, B and Morrow, C** (2023). *Nudibranchs of Britain, Ireland and Northwest Europe*. Wild Nature Press, Plymouth.