

REPTILES, LAND MAMMALS AND BATS

Chris Blackmore

Amphibians

The surprising sound of a **Common Toad** *Bufo bufo*, heard at the Quarry and possibly a second below the Terrace as recorded in the 2023 Annual Report has not been repeated in 2024, with none seen or heard.

Introduced Reptiles

A first for Lundy! ... or not? Warden Joe Parker was recently sent a photo of a **Common Lizard** *Zootoca vivipara*. It was seen by Andrea May on 4th of August 2024, 'on top of gorse between Rocket Pole Pond and the Kistvaen before it quickly disappeared'. This was really exciting news and thought to be a first. However, Alan Rowland wrote in the LFS Annual report 2023 of reports of Common Lizard sightings on Lundy in previous years, the latest being in May and September 2000 by National Trust visiting teams. Please do keep an eye out for this addition to the island's wildlife.



▲ Slow worm by 'Village' sign by Millcombe, June
(photo: Alan Rowland).

There were only 10 sightings of **Slow-Worms** *Anguis fragilis* recorded in 2024. Unfortunately three were dead, one had a missing tail and was bleeding but still alive and 'David' reported one on 16th May in Millcombe Valley 'taken by adult starling to feed early young'.

Most sightings were in Millcombe, although J Parker and B Maxted recorded a male on the Main Track, parallel with Pondsburry on 19th May, and assistant warden Tara McEvoy-Wilding recorded one on the West Coast on 26th April, 50cm long and moving across the grass north of Pyramid.

Native Land Mammals

Lundy's only native terrestrial mammal, the **Pygmy Shrew** *Sorex minutus* continues to be recorded throughout the island and in many of the properties. In 2024 there were 53 recorded sightings of a total of 90 animals, four of which were dead. They were seen as far north as Widow's Tenement and Brazen Ward. A notable series of sightings on 8th August by P St. Pierre and C Lock recorded 14 between the Castle and Old Light and others were recorded during nocturnal surveys, including thermal, at various locations by Joe Parker and assorted helpers.

Bats

There were few recorded sightings of bats during 2024. **Common Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* were detected between the farm and church on 3rd June by Steve Evans using wildlife acoustic detection methods. Two **Pipistrelles** were recorded by Thomas Weston at the Barn on 5th May, as well as in Millcombe on 8th June by P St. Pierre and C Lock. Our intrepid Joe Parker ensured that a **Common** or **Soprano Pipistrelle** *P. pygmaeus* was liberated from the Tavern on 11th August.

Feral Land Mammals

The feral ungulates are monitored and controlled according to the terrestrial management plan. A feral stock count was carried out in March 2024 and culls took place in February, September and October. Please do keep reporting sightings in the logbook as these add to the information gained from the formal stock counts.



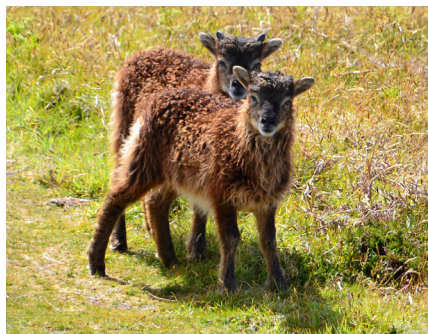
▲ Sika conga (photo: Chris Blackmore).

Sika (*Cervus Nippon*)

Sika are now being recorded from Rocket Pole to the North End and on both west and east coasts and are far less shy than previously. A stock count in March by J Parker, T Weston and A Rowland recorded 125 animals (82 hinds and 43 stags). Further significant counts throughout the year included 16 on both the 16th and 17th April in Southwest Field by Carole Lee. Intriguingly one had only '1 horn, a unicorn' which Carole saw twice. Chris Dee recorded 65 in St Helen's Copse on the 15th April. An anonymous entry in the logbook, seen at the Tavern on 21st August, of '2 stag and 1 Red Deer' perhaps indicates the ale must have been particularly good that day! In February, 13 stags and eight hinds were culled, six stags in September and three stags in October.

Soay Sheep (*Ovis aries*)

The stock count in March by J Parker, T Weston and A Rowland recorded 295 animals, (234 ewes and 61 rams). Further significant sightings, both by M Williams, were 52 on the West coast from Halfway Wall on 26th May and 35 at Middle Park on 28th December. In February one ewe was culled, 38 rams and 3 ewes were culled in September and 25 ewes and nine rams in October.



▲ Soay lambs (photo: Kathy Weston).

Goat (*Capra aegagrus*)

The stock count in March by J Parker, T Weston and A Rowland recorded 47 animals, (26 nannies and 21 billies). Further significant sightings were of 18 from the Upper East Coast Path (One billy, 11 nannies and six kids) by A Rowland on 19th March, 15 (four billies and 11 nannies/kids) by Chris Dee on 15th April, and 18 at Old Light by Carole Baillie on 3rd October. One billy was culled in February, three billies and one nanny in September and seven billies in October.

Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

The slow recovery in numbers continues with no reported outbreaks of Myxomatosis or Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease, although four carcasses were reported and on 10th December one was seen near the steps at North Light by Anna Northam who recorded, 'it didn't appear to hear me approaching and the right eye was opaque so probably no vision'. This could possibly have been a diseased animal. Highest counts were increased on 2023 numbers with 18 recorded between the Castle and Old Light on 8th June by P St. Pierre and C Lock, 12 on the Main Track and North End Sidelands with a thermal imager on 10th June by J Parker, 25 in the Village 'dazzling route' on 28th September by J Parker and 10 on a nocturnal survey on 10th January by J Parker. One was also seen with puffins at St Martin's Stone on 16th June by L Pecasse. Please do continue to record your rabbit sightings.



▲ Wingnut (photo: Chris Blackmore).