

Protecting Lundy's marine life: 40 years of science and conservation by Keith Hiscock and Robert Irving
Lundy Field Society. 2012. 108 pages. ISBN 978-0-9530532-2-3. Available in either hardback or paperback from the LFS website at www.lundy.org.uk.

This book has been written by the two people most involved in marine conservation at Lundy since the island was first mooted as a voluntary marine nature reserve in 1971 and is an authoritative chronicle of the unique marine life in the waters around the island, the extensive research carried out over the last 40 years and the steps taken to help protect the marine plants and animals and the habitats they depend on.

Lundy holds a special place in British divers' minds and the relative difficulty of reaching, staying on and diving around the island has always been a stimulus to those for whom diving is about what they can see and photograph rather than what they can salvage or eat. The book records some of the highlights of the Lundy marine life that they come to see including the sunset corals, red band fish, grey seals and scarlet and gold cup corals. But this is not a guide to Lundy's marine life. It's a history and celebration of the work carried out by so many people over a 40-year period, many of them volunteers, who have helped Lundy lead the way in what is a somewhat limited network of marine conservation areas in the UK.

The book takes us through the early days of diving on the island, the research and the ups and downs of the marine life – disease affecting sea fans, monitoring the rare and most northerly population of sunset cup corals and much more – and weaves around it the story of Lundy's marine conservation. Starting as a voluntary marine reserve, Lundy then became the first and only statutory Marine Nature Reserve in England, European recognition as a Special Area of Conservation, hosting the first No Take Zone in England off the east coast and finally becoming the first Marine Conservation Zone in England in 2010. This shows how Lundy has been at the forefront of marine conservation in the UK, though sadly it has often been on its own, as at the time of writing it still is the first and only Marine Conservation Zone.

The book will be of great interest to all those who have been involved with marine conservation around Lundy, both past and present. It will also appeal to visitors who have not been privileged to see the wonderful marine life first hand but want to know what is special about it and why Lundy has been a worthy leader in site protection in England. Thank you to Keith and Robert not only for all your hard work over the years but also for recording it in this book for the benefit of those who have been involved in the past or come to Lundy in the future.

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