

## LUNDY CANDIDATE SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (cSAC)

By

LAURA HEAPE

English Nature, Renslade House, Bonhay Road, Exeter EX4 3AW

### ABSTRACT

Lundy (51°11'N, 4°40'W) rises abruptly out of the water to a plateau at the entrance to the Bristol Channel. Some 18km north of the nearest mainland at Hartland Point, the island measures just 5km by 1.25 km at its widest. Because of its value for wildlife, the island, including intertidal areas is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is due to the remarkable array of underwater habitats and species in its surrounding waters that it is also England's only Marine Nature Reserve (MNR) and has been submitted to the European Commission as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC).

*Keywords: Lundy, Special Area of Conservation, Marine Nature Reserve, Site of Special Scientific Interest, conservation*

### INTRODUCTION

This article looks briefly at the progress of statutory designations on Lundy over the past seven or so years and its status as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC).

### STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS ON AND AROUND LUNDY

#### a LUNDY SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The Lundy SSSI was first notified in 1976 and renotified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) on 3 September 1987. The SSSI extends over about two-thirds of the land plateau, including most of the steep slopes and cliffs and the intertidal area down to the low water mark of ordinary spring tides.

b LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE (MNR)

The idea of a marine nature reserve around Lundy was discussed as far back as 1969 when divers first recorded the presence of warm water marine species. This prompted the Lundy Field Society to propose the establishment of a marine reserve and a management plan for a voluntary reserve was published in this journal in 1973 (Hiscock *et al.* 1972). Provisions for the establishment of statutory Marine Nature Reserves were introduced in 1981 and after public consultation, the Secretary of State for the Environment announced the designation of a statutory reserve at Lundy under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 on 20 November 1986. It remains the only designated MNR in England.

The boundary of the MNR was determined by the need to include all habitats, communities and species of high scientific interest in an area that would be small enough to manage. The areas of interest are predominantly on hard substrata extending to about 1.85 km (1 nautical mile) offshore on the west and south coasts and on/in sediments which extend to about 1.85 km (1 nautical mile) off the east coast. Excluded from the reserve are the fishing banks and areas of substrata which commonly occur in the Bristol Channel and its approaches. English Nature now lease the seabed of the MNR from the Crown Estate.

A zoning scheme was developed to present information related to the management of the Reserve for the benefit of both wildlife and people, showing users where they can undertake activities with minimal impact on the natural features and on each other.

c A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR LUNDY

In 1994, English Nature published 'Managing Lundy's wildlife', a management plan for the Marine Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest. This plan guides the Management Group, a close partnership between the Landmark Trust who manage the Island, the National Trust who own the Island, and the Devon Sea Fisheries Committee, who regulate fisheries in the surrounding waters. This plan was reviewed in 2001.

d LUNDY CANDIDATE SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (cSAC)

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are selected initially by each Member State of the European Union on the basis of the habitats and species listed in Annexes I & II of the Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive provides a major contribution by the European Community to the Biodiversity Convention

agreed by more than 150 countries following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The habitats and/or species found on each site are referred to as *interest features*. The best examples in each country, once agreed locally and nationally through consultation, are submitted to the EC for consideration. At this stage they are referred to as *candidate* sites. They are then adopted by the EC and must be formally designated by their member states by 2004.

Lundy cSAC was submitted to the European Commission for consideration as a candidate SAC on 9 January 1996 in recognition of its international importance for marine wildlife. It is now one of 33 candidate marine Special Areas of Conservation in the UK. Because the cSAC includes areas 'intermittently covered by tidal waters or any part of the sea' Lundy is also described as a 'European Marine Site'.

Lundy qualifies as a cSAC for the following Annex I habitats and Annex II species as listed in the EU Habitats Directive:

- reefs
- shallow sandbanks slightly covered by seawater all of the time<sup>1</sup>
- submerged or partially submerged sea caves<sup>1</sup>
- grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*)<sup>1</sup>
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The boundary for the cSAC follows that of the MNR and fully encompasses the reef features for which the site has been selected on both the west and east coast. Both the cSAC and MNR are contained within a rectangle with coordinates 51°09'N 4°38'W; 51°13'N 4°38'W; 51°13'N 4°42'W; and 51°09'N 4°42'W and extend shoreward to the height of the highest astronomical tide. The total area covers approximately 13.9 km<sup>2</sup>, of which approximately 0.6 km<sup>2</sup> are intertidal.

#### e THE ROLE OF RELEVANT AUTHORITIES

The Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 translate the Habitats Directive into law in Great Britain. It makes relevant authorities responsible for the conservation and management of European marine sites. In doing so they require all local and national relevant authorities to exercise their duties to meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

English Nature have a statutory obligation to advise relevant authorities as to the conservation objectives for European marine sites in England and to advise

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<sup>1</sup> Footnote: proposed interest features added through the process of SAC moderation in 2000.

relevant authorities as to any operations which may cause deterioration of natural habitats or the habitats of species, or disturbance of species for which the site has been designated. This advice has been delivered in the Regulation 33(2) package produced by English Nature, which informs the production of a management scheme and to inform the appropriate assessment (as per Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive).

A programme of monitoring will be undertaken at each site, to establish the condition of features of the site and to assess the effectiveness of management measures undertaken. The results of the monitoring will inform revision of the management scheme. Member State Governments are required to report on favourable condition status on a six yearly basis.

To meet UK agreed common standards, English Nature is committed to reporting on certain attributes of interest features and sub-features. Attributes are characteristics of interest features or sub-features, which provide an indication of the condition of that feature.

## CONCLUSION

There is much to celebrate in the wildlife conservation management achievements on Lundy to date and the candidate Special Area of Conservation status is another step on the way to ensuring the continued richness of the wildlife that makes Lundy such a special place.

## REFERENCES

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