

REPORT OF THE LUNDY MARINE CONSERVATION ZONE ADVISORY GROUP

The Lundy Marine Conservation Zone Advisory Group (LMCZAG) provides a forum for the discussion of all matters relating to the island's waters and shores. The Group includes representatives from the island (the Lundy Company), Natural England, the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (formerly Devon Sea Fisheries Committee), the Lundy Field Society, the Marine Biological Association, Devon Wildlife Trust, Torrington District Council, commercial fishing interests, dive charter boat skippers and local dive clubs. The Group meets twice a year: in 2011 it met on 19 April on board *MS Oldenburg* alongside Bideford Quay, and on 25 October also on board the *Oldenburg* but this time alongside Ilfracombe Quay. The Lundy Field Society provides the secretariat for the LMCZAG.

A variety of issues were brought to the attention of the Group and discussed during the two meetings held in 2011. These are summarised below:

Celebrating marine conservation at Lundy

2011 was an important year for the island's waters as it had been 40 years since the voluntary marine nature reserve was recognised and also 25 years since the statutory reserve was established. The Group had decided to celebrate these anniversaries with a party on board *MS Oldenburg* on 3 July. In the region of 100 guests were invited. The local MP for Torrington, Geoffrey Cox, said a few words, as did Derek Green, Keith Hiscock and Robert Irving, and Ilfracombe & Appledore dive clubs exhibited their members' underwater photos of Lundy's marine life. The opportunity was also taken to launch the island's new Marine Life Guides by Nicola Saunders and Sophie Wheatley.

In addition to this event, other means of marking the year included the use of a special 'Lundy – 40 years of Marine Conservation' cancellation frank on all mail leaving the island during the year; various articles written by Keith Hiscock which appeared in the Wildlife Trusts' *Natural World* magazine, the May issue of *Diver* magazine, and another in May's issue of *Dive* magazine; displays had been on show at a number of libraries in North Devon; and a short book by Keith Hiscock and Robert Irving on Lundy's history of marine conservation was being written, for publication in 2012.

Marine Conservation Zone website

A great deal of time and effort has been put to designing and producing a website for the Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ). The content has largely been compiled by Nicola Saunders and Sophie Wheatley, with the design and technical aspects being outsourced to a professional consultancy. The site, launched in September, has been very well received and will provide valuable up-to-date information about the MCZ. It can be found at www.lundymcz.org.uk.

Atlantic Array windfarm

A public consultation exercise for the proposed Atlantic Array windfarm took place during the second half of 2011 (10 September to 10 November). Public meetings were held at various places along the North Devon coast as well as along the coast of South Wales. Discussions also took place at both of the Advisory Group meetings, with salient points being passed on to the Lundy Management Forum. The Forum itself, representing organisations involved with the management of the whole of Lundy, had submitted a letter to the developers, RWE npower renewables, in May outlining a number of concerns. The 12-page response which had been received back had not fully answered all of the questions raised and further discussions between the Forum members and the developers are likely to ensue.

Cetaceans

In order to obtain further information about the cetaceans which are frequently seen between Lundy and the mainland, two C-pods were deployed for three months from the end of July for recording cetacean 'clicks'. One was attached to the wreck of the *Robert* off the east coast, and the other to the wreck of the *Ethel* off the island's SW corner. Analysis of the data has yet to start. When completed, it is hoped that different species may be distinguished, together with some indication of their numbers. The intention is for the analysis of the data to be undertaken as a research project at Plymouth University. There were also four years of sightings data from charter boats and from the *MS Oldenburg* to add to the analysis.

No Take Zone infringements

At the October meeting, the Group were informed by the Warden of a number of possible infringements of the No Take Zone (NTZ) off the island's east coast by both fishing vessels and by anglers aboard visiting craft. Often, the main difficulty with any such reporting is being able to tell if the vessel in question is actually inside the NTZ. Where there is clear evidence that wrong-doing is taking place, then the vessel in question (if it can be positively identified) is reported to the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, which then decides on what further action should be taken. In most cases this results in a 'ticking off' by the Authority, but if it is a serious infringement or a second offence, then the likely punishment is gear confiscation and/or a fine. Obtaining clear, irrefutable evidence is very difficult however, especially where activities take place at dusk or after dark and often very close to the boundary of the NTZ.

If there are any matters which LFS members would wish to have aired at the Advisory Group meetings, I would be happy to raise them on your behalf.

ROBERT IRVING
Honorary Secretary
Lundy Marine Conservation Zone Advisory Group
March 2012



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Lundy Warden Nicola Saunders presents Robert Irving with a framed print during the celebration on board *MS Oldenburg* of 40 years of marine conservation.