

# REPORT OF THE LUNDY MARINE PROTECTED AREA ADVISORY GROUP

The Lundy Marine Protected Area Advisory Group (LMPAAG) 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/Landmark Trust), Natural England, the Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (D&SIFCA), Historic England, the Marine Management Organisation, Torridge District Council, the Lundy Field Society, the Marine Biological Association, MARINELife, local nature conservation groups, commercial fishing interests, dive charter boat skippers, local dive clubs and local sailing clubs.

The Group meets twice a year: in 2018 it met on 18th April on board the MS *Oldenburg* moored alongside Bideford Quay; and on 2nd October at the Ilfracombe and North Devon Sub-Aqua Club, Ilfracombe. The Lundy Field Society provides the secretariat for the LMPAAG. Through the Secretary, the Group brings matters of importance to the island's Management Forum (which also meets twice a year, usually immediately after the Advisory Group meetings), the decision-making body which manages both terrestrial and marine aspects of Lundy.

During the two meetings held in 2018, a variety of issues were brought to the attention of the Group and discussed. These are summarised below:

## **Installation of new underwater temperature loggers**

New underwater data loggers had been purchased by the Warden (with assistance from the Lundy Field Society) to replace existing ones which were now over ten years old. These loggers will record seawater temperatures every 6 hours and can be left *in situ* for at least 12 months. In August 2018, one logger was attached to the wreck of the MV Robert off the island's east coast in about 20 m depth, and the other was attached in a few metres depth to the end of the jetty in the Landing Bay. Obtaining accurate measurements of seawater temperatures around the island will contribute towards understanding the physical parameters affecting the marine life within the MPA.

## **Updates from Devon & Severn IFCA**

2018 saw the introduction of a new netting byelaw throughout the Devon and Severn district. Within the Lundy MPA, netting is now prohibited around all of the island (covering approximately 60% of the MPA area – essentially where bedrock constitutes the major part of the seabed), although it is still allowed closer to the MPA's outer boundary.

As a named featured species of the Marine Conservation Zone, the removal of spiny lobster *Palinurus elephas* by any fishing means (towed gear, potting and diving) is now prohibited within the MPA.

At the October meeting, we were informed that, as one of the conditions attached to the Mobile Fishing Permit, all boats undertaking this method of fishing had to be fitted with a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). This ruling had been in place for boats over 12 m in length, but smaller vessels (6.99 m to 11.99 m) were now required to have an Inshore VMS. These units were provided by the IFCA through funding from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. Upon leaving harbour, a boat's position will be notified to the IFCA observation centre in Brixham every 3 minutes. This will allow for much greater accuracy of plotting a boat's position and in working out whether it is fishing or not.

## **Damaged scaffolding at Brazen Ward**

At the end of February 2018, a strong easterly storm hit the island which had 'wrecked' the scaffold structure in place around the historical platform at Brazen Ward for repair works. Some of the scaffold structure had fallen onto the intertidal rocks and some into the subtidal. Whilst the accessible poles were removed fairly quickly, those in the subtidal were left until conditions would allow their safe removal. This, however, would not be a straightforward procedure as several had become wedged into crevices and their overall weight was considerable.

## **Marine archaeological update**

The meeting in April 2018 was the last to be attended by Alison James, as she moves on from Historic England to join a marine archaeological consultancy. Alison had attended meetings of the Group for the past five years (as well as those of the Management Forum), which is all the more impressive knowing she travelled all the way down from the Peak District each time! During 2018, only a few divers managed to visit the *Iona II* protected wreck due to poor weather conditions. A survey of the HMS *Montagu* wreck site close to Shutter Point by Wessex Archaeology divers (assisted by divers from the Help for Heroes charity) did take place. This had been postponed from last autumn. The findings and recommendations of this survey will be known early next year.

## **Spiny lobsters**

Spiny lobsters (also known as crawfish) *Palinurus elephas* were once reasonably common around the island, but their numbers decreased dramatically from the late 1970s into the 1980s making sightings of them a rare event. This is the only species identified as a protected 'feature' under the Marine Conservation Zone designation (2010) and the management aim is "to recover their numbers to a favourable condition". It's encouraging to hear that sightings of these impressive crustaceans by divers around the island are continuing to increase. Several had been seen on separate occasions off Battery Point off the west coast; off the Rattles on the south coast; and at the Knoll Pins on the east coast. Most individuals seen were small (less than about 20 cm in length). Dr Keith Hiscock of the Marine Biological Association explained to the Group that the recovery of the spiny lobsters after 40 years of low numbers was likely to have been linked to an influx of planktonic larvae being brought to the region. Numbers elsewhere in the south-west had also been reported to be on the increase.

## **The North Devon Marine Pioneer project**

Chrissie Ingle (Project Manager) brought the Group up-to-date with the progress of the North Devon Marine Pioneer project. This 5-year demonstration project was set up to show how to make the most of the natural capital of the coast and of the marine area out to 20 miles offshore. The area was chosen because of the concentration of new MCZs and of the existence of an established protected area at Lundy. Partnering organizations in the project are: North Devon Biosphere Reserve, Marine Management Organisation, Devon & Severn IFCA, Natural England, Worldwide Fund for Nature, University of Plymouth, Plymouth Marine Laboratory and the Blue Marine Foundation. Input to the project will also come from the SWEEP programme (South-West Partnership for Environment and Economic Prosperity). The project had held a number of Workshops, at which several Advisory Group members had attended.

## **WWF UK-SEAS Project**

Sarah Young from WWF came along to both meetings to keep the Group up-to-date with the UK SEAS project. The project, which is closely aligned to the Marine Pioneer project and is run in partnership with Natural England, is looking at how best to improve the management of Marine Protected Areas, using North Devon and the Outer Hebrides as example sites. The

primary donor to the 5-year project is Sky Ocean Rescue, and there are four main themes: (1) Improving governance of MPAs; (2) Investigating sustainable finance for MPAs; (3) Improving community awareness of local MPAs; and (4) Ensuring Government provides sufficient finance for MPAs. Further information about the project is available at [www.ukseasproject.org.uk/north-devon](http://www.ukseasproject.org.uk/north-devon).

Interested parties had been asked to complete an on-line questionnaire investigating what level of management was being achieved by each of the N. Devon MPAs. The outcome of the responses to the questionnaire will be presented in a standard format known as a 'compass card', which indicates where improvements to management can be made. The compass card for the Lundy MPA will be available early in 2019.

### **Input to MPA management by Sue Wells of the National Trust**

This was the second and final year of Sue Wells' contract with the National Trust as their Marine Project Manager. Whilst having a national remit, she had been particularly interested to see how the Lundy MPA, the oldest MPA in the country, was being managed and how the MPA Advisory Group and the Management Forum worked together. Under her guidance, the Trust had taken a leading role in assessing the impact of anchoring and mooring within MPAs, and was pleased that the Royal Yachting Association would now be taking on this role. She had been particularly interested to see how the SeaFlex moorings at Lundy had worked – not that well it turns out, as modifications to their design were found to be necessary for charter skippers to be happy to use them.

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

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