

The Birds of Lundy by Tim Davis & Tim Jones

Birdwatching & Preservation Society and Lundy Field Society, Berynarbor, Devon. 2007. 319 pages. ISBN Paperback ed. 0-954-0088-7-1 Hardback ed. 0-954-0088-8-X. Paperback £18.95, Hardback £35.00

I had been eagerly awaiting the arrival of this book for several years, and I am pleased to report that the wait was worth it - this is a superb book.

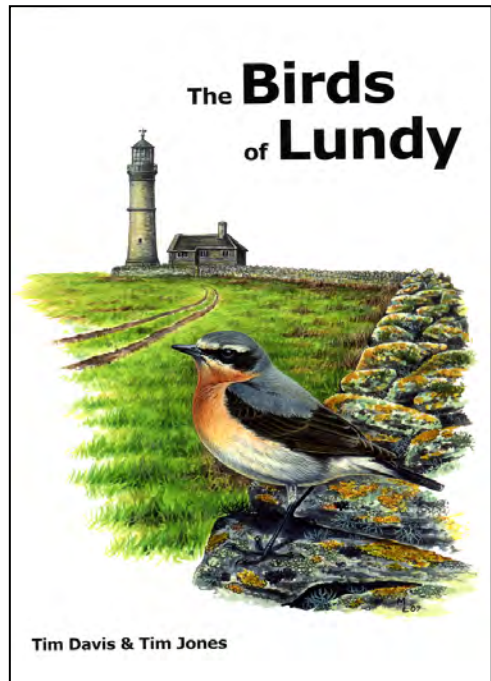
The 'Two Tims', Davis and Jones, are part of a small but dedicated group of birders with Lundy in their blood, but they have avoided the pitfall of producing a book which is so esoteric that it excludes all but the inner circle. This book is attractive, readable and completely accessible to expert and novice alike; and it just cries to be 'dipped into'. Notwithstanding the period of genesis, it is also bang up to date, with records and even photographs of birds which dropped onto Lundy just weeks before the book was published!

I own and have read many 'Birds of' titles, but this one adds a delightful quiriness, befitting such an enigmatic little island, to the standard format. The opening sections set the scene wonderfully, and enable the reader to really get to grips with what birding on Lundy is all about. I particularly liked the sections on birds through the seasons and the four suggested walks. The short snappy vignettes are a bonus and those on the human decimation of some seabird colonies and the historic variations in breeding birds on the island are particularly interesting. The comprehensive bibliography is also very useful.

The main section is of course, the systematic list. This is scholarly, thorough and accurate, using a wide range of primary, secondary visual records, and ringing data. It would be surprising if a book of this scope was free of errors, but to date I have not found any; indeed the authors include a very helpful section pointing to quite a number of anomalies surrounding individual bird records providing further testament to their thoroughness.

No review of this book would be complete without reference to the illustrations by Mike Langman. Starting with the Wheatear on the front cover, the artwork does far more than simply break up the text; rather it transports the reader onto Lundy, and helps stir the memories of regular visitors like me, to think back to sightings of individual birds.

I could go on and on about this delightful book, but space is tight. So to summarise; previous books on this subject deserve their rightful place and respect, but in truth they have only provided the 'hors d'oeuvres' to this full and satisfying main course. The Birds of Lundy will take its place as a definitive treatise on the subject and as such the authors deserve every plaudit. It is a must for the bookshelves of anyone with an interest in Lundy, or indeed birds in general.



Colin McShane