

SITE NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 3 SEPTEMBER 1987

COUNTY: DEVON

SITE NAME: LUNDY

DISTRICT: TORRIDGE

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, (as amended).

Local Planning Authority: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL, Torridge District Council

National Grid Reference: SS 135460

Area: 345.0 (ha.) 852.5 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 180

1:10,000: SW 14 NW, SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1976

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1987

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

Owned by the National Trust, managed by the Landmark Trust. Devon County Structure Plan Nature Conservation Zone.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Lundy Island, in the Bristol Channel, is 18km from the nearest mainland. It is about 5km long by 1km wide, aligned north-south, with cliffs rising to a plateau at about 110m. The rock is mostly granite, with slate at the southern end, and the plateau soil is mainly loam with some peat. The west side is very exposed to weather and salt spray and has virtually bare cliffs, while the eastern side is comparatively sheltered and is largely covered with scrub. The plateau carries mainly heathy vegetation except where the land has been agriculturally improved or built on. These activities are concentrated towards the southern end, though there is archaeological evidence of historic land use over the whole island.

There are several features of interest. Some of the heath occurs in a waved form which only develops in conditions of extreme exposure to wind. One plant occurs only on Lundy. There are important breeding populations of sea and coastal birds, and the island is a well-known staging post for migrating birds, while many vagrants have been recorded. Seals breed in several sea caves. Flora and fauna, both marine and terrestrial, have been studied and recorded for many years.

The plateau vegetation comprises mainly dry heath, with a notable area of waved *Calluna* heath at the north end, which is also rich in lichens, e.g. *Teloschistes flavicans* and several species of *Cladonia* and *Parmelia*. Elsewhere there is either a dry heath/acidic grassland mosaic, characterised by heaths and Western Gorse *Ulex gallii*, or semi-improved acidic grassland in which Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* is abundant. Tussocky *Holcus/Armeria* (Thrift) communities occur mainly on the western side, and some patches of *Bracken Pteridium aquilinum* on the eastern side. Boggy areas and acidic flushes are found around ponds, and elsewhere, e.g. above Gannet's Bay. The grass and heathland is heavily grazed by domestic livestock, also by Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus* and feral animals such as Soay sheep, goats and Sika Deer *Cervus nippon*.

The western cliffs are mainly bare, but there are some patches of cliff grassland. The eastern cliffs also carry some grassland and such areas on both sides are well used by rabbits and by seabirds which nest in burrows; notably the Puffin *Fratercula arctica* and Manx Shearwater *Procelaria puffinus*. Below the grass heath

and bracken, the eastern cliffs carry extensive areas of Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* and other scrub, which is the main shelter for deer. Scree near the landing beach is the main station for the endemic Lundy Cabbage *Rhynchosinapis wrightii* and the south eastern cliffs also carry Balm-leaved Figwort *Scrophularia scorodonia*. The Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis* occurs locally.

Large numbers of Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* nest on the cliffs, as do Razorbill *Alca torda*, Guillemot *Uria aalge*, Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* and Raven *Corvus corax*. The island is well known as an observation point for passage and vagrant species, and several birds nest on the plateau; mainly passerines and waders.

Many invertebrate animals have been recorded, particularly in the more sheltered areas and include a substantial number of flightless species.

Rocks and sea-level caves support a breeding colony of Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus*. The intertidal area is small, but it is an integral part of a marine nature reserve of great interest surrounding the island. There is an extensive literature of observation and research many groups of flora and fauna. In particular, the Lundy Field Society Journal contains detailed records since 1946.