

THE LUNDY SEABIRD RECOVERY PROJECT: A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR LUNDY'S BURROW-NESTING SEABIRDS

by

DAVID APPLETON¹, HELEN BOOKER², DAVID J. BULLOCK³, LUCY CORDREY³
and BEN SAMPSON⁴

¹ Natural England, Level 2 Renslade House, Bonhay Road, Exeter, Devon, EX4 3AW

² RSPB, Keble House, Southernhay Gardens, Exeter, Devon, EX1 1NT

³ The National Trust, Heelis, Kemble Drive, Swindon, SN2 2NA

⁴ The Landmark Trust, Lundy Island, Bristol Channel, Devon, EX39 2LY

The U.K. holds over 90% of the global breeding population of Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*. Lundy Island's population of Manx shearwater (and also puffin *Fratercula arctica*) is much lower than those reported in the mid-twentieth century. The impact of rats on seabird populations has been globally well documented. A major factor affecting the burrow-nesting species on Lundy was believed to be predation by black (*Rattus rattus*) and brown (*R. norvegicus*) rats. Both species are globally widespread and abundant and neither is native in the U.K. A partnership was formed to implement the Lundy Seabird Recovery Project, the primary objective of which was to eradicate rats to increase seabird breeding success. The project was controversial because, in the U.K., the black rat is rare. Between November 2002 and March 2004, the eradication programme was implemented. Following a further two years of checks, Lundy was declared rat-free in March 2006. Monitoring now focuses on the productivity and population trends of the target seabirds. Post-eradication estimates of Manx shearwater productivity are encouraging. However, it will be at least five years before these juveniles, the first recorded for c.50 years, return to Lundy and boost the breeding population.