

LICHENS OF LUNDY

by

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Lichens are very special on Lundy; over 350 different species have been recorded, one-fifth of the total lichens of Great Britain - an amazing diversity for such a small island.

Lundy owes its lichen diversity to its south-western position and variety of relatively undisturbed and unpolluted habitats.

Lundy is an important reservoir of oceanic lichens, including a number of rare lichens (e.g. *Teloschistes flavicans* and *Anaptychia ciliaris* subsp. *mamillata*) and granite domes at the north which show a unique lichen succession sequence.

The largest number of lichen species is associated with siliceous granite (and to a lesser extent slate) of natural cliffs, maritime outcrops and boulders.

Other distinctive saxicolous communities are found on:

1. dry stone walls (e.g. Halfway Wall running east-west) showing effects of aspect on lichen distribution;
2. mineral-deficient rock and damp walls of the quarries;
3. old gravestones in Beacon Hill Cemetery, which includes marble, granite and slate memorials;
4. nutrient-enriched granite domes (e.g. in heathland along the west and at the north);
5. standing stones (acting as bird perches) along the track to the north;
6. mortar and cement in man-made buildings, ruins (e.g. the Battery) and walls which introduce a calcareous substrate.

Lundy boasts 120 different corticolous lichen species with 56 species recorded on *Acer pseudoplatanus*. With but few trees (concentrated in the Millcombe valley and around the quarries on the east) this is remarkable. Many trees are old, suffer from wind damage and require continuing sympathetic replacement.

Heathland is a great strength of Lundy; the wet area around Pondsbury is rich in *Cladonia* species on peat and heather. This, and the developing lichen community to the north, are fragile, sensitive to trampling, over-grazing, drought conditions and invasion by bracken. This outstanding community requires careful monitoring.