

Information for Ringers



The work of the Lundy Bird Observatory is co-ordinated by an organising committee comprising the Lundy Bird Observatory Warden, an off-island ringing group leader and other parties with an active interest in bird research on the island, including the Lundy Field Society.

Bird ringing on Lundy is overseen by a resident staff member of the Lundy Conservation Team, usually the Head Warden, Assistant Warden or Bird Observatory Warden. Due to the wide remit of those roles and need to contribute to other aspects of running the island, we will continue to depend on, and welcome, visiting ringers.

Limited suitable habitat for mist-netting and accommodation pressures on Lundy mean the capacity to support large numbers of ringers is restricted. If you intend on bringing a group of ringers, it is essential to check with the Bird Observatory Warden before booking accommodation. All visiting ringers or group leaders will need to complete a form listing the ringers involved and identifying the ringer-in-charge and providing copies of ringing permits. On arrival, the ringer-in-charge should contact the Bird Observatory Warden before commencing ringing, to confirm their plans.

Even though the island is an Observatory, many of your fellow visitors may be unfamiliar with bird ringing, so great care and tact is required at all times. Follow the relevant codes of practice in the Ringers Manual (p.99 onwards) for ringing in public places - explaining what you are doing is very important. With the ringing equipment there are BTO leaflets that explain the scheme: hand them out if appropriate.

Lundy follows the rules of all Bird Observatories. This means that normally there should be an A permit holder acting as ringer-in-charge, who should be responsible for assessing weather conditions and deciding when to open and close nets. All members of the team should be aware of who is taking on that role. In some circumstances it may be possible for an experienced C ringer to undertake this role following confirmation by the Bird Observatory Warden and/or the off-island ringing group leader.

There are several options for setting up a ringing base. Visitors staying in Bramble Villa East may make use of the picnic table in the garden, which provides a central location for operating nets in Millcombe and St John's Valley. If ringing alone or as a small team, a base can be set up on one of the benches in Millcombe or at the Casbah; a folding table for this purpose is stored in the Gas Store / Casbah.

No-one should enter farm or other buildings for ringing purposes without prior consent. Keep the Bird Observatory Warden informed of your activities and consult about sites if in doubt.

Equipment

General ringing equipment; pliers, wing-rules, balances, ageing & sexing guides, are provided, although you are welcome to bring your own. The Millcombe ringing kit, which includes rings and the ringing notebook is normally kept in Millcombe during the sailing season. All other ringing equipment, including ring stock, poles, guys, pegs and spare nets

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are kept in the Bird Observatory and Biosecurity Hub located in the Lodge garden. Some spare poles and guys may be kept in the Gas Store or Casbah.

To adhere to HPAI guidelines and good practice, Safe4 disinfectant spray is provided in the ringing equipment. Please use this to clean any equipment during and after the session. It is also important to remember to wash your hands or use sanitiser frequently.

Mist-nets

Bird Observatory owned mist-nets are permanently erected in Millcombe and St Johns Valley during the migration seasons. Net locations and lengths are described in Appendix A. All nets must be furled tightly and tied with storm guys when not in use. The winds can be very strong on Lundy and loose nets risk unintentionally catching birds. Furled nets should be checked at least once a day to ensure they have not come loose.

Bird bags

Bird bags are provided and labelled in batches. Please count all bags after every ringing session to ensure that no birds are accidentally left in missing bags. Please avoid hanging birds in bags on vegetation and ensure you have a rigorous process for ensuring that they are all collected.

To adhere to current HPAI guidelines, a new bird bag should be used for each bird (except in exceptional circumstances). Two large mesh bags are provided for used bird bags. Please deliver the mesh bag to the laundry or Bird Observatory Warden before 5pm in order to be washed and dried for the next day.

Rings

The in-use string of rings, and usually an unopened packet of AAs and As are kept in the ringing box. The island ring stock and rings of less-frequently used sizes are held by the Bird Observatory Warden. If you use an unusually high number of rings or stocks look low, please inform the Bird Observatory Warden.

Rings for the Lundy Sparrow Project are funded by Imperial College London, so please use the labelled separate string of B rings if you catch House Sparrows. If you are licensed to fit colour rings, please also colour ring any House Sparrows and make note of the combinations used, both in the ringing book and on the combination list kept with the colour rings in the ringing box. If possible, please photograph all newly colour-ringed birds.

Only rings issued to the Lundy Bird Observatory (BTO group ID 9055) are to be used on the island.

Although the Bird Observatory is running on limited finances, we do not ask for a contribution to ring costs. In addition to primary funding from The Lundy Company, the Bird Observatory does receive an annual subsidy from the Lundy Field Society for members ringing on the island. Please consider joining the society to support the observatory.

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Mist-netting

Sites

A list and map of agreed sites in Millcombe and St John's Valley is shown in Appendix A. The net sites in Millcombe offer some protection from most wind directions except a strong easterly. If you have not ringed on Lundy before, please be aware that in the right conditions the 'slope net' (net 1) can be very productive and can potentially keep an experienced solo ringer fully occupied. Existing sites should be enough for most purposes, and should not require more than the removal of encroaching brambles. Please avoid damaging trees or shrubs when clearing net sites as woody plants grow very slowly on the island. If you think any trees or shrubs need cutting back, speak to the Bird Observatory Warden.

In calm conditions, mist-netting on other parts of the island is possible, but please consult the Bird Observatory Warden first. No net should ever be set blocking any path.

General procedure

In order to maintain good relations with visitors and islanders, as well as for the welfare of tired migrants, it is essential that you observe the following points:

- The Ringers' Manual states that no passerine should be kept more than half an hour. To allow for time spent queuing to be processed, ringers should set out on net-checking rounds at least every 20 minutes.
- It is vital to keep the ringing area under direct observation all of the time. In this way potential problems can be noticed and responded to immediately. Bird welfare is a ringer's top priority, but we must also give no visitor any reason to worry, even if their worry is not necessarily justified. Listen to people's concerns, and respond with understanding.
- Notices are displayed at the more public sites, but you cannot rely on them preventing interference. For net 1 ('slope'), tie notices directly to poles, not on approach routes: some people have interpreted them as meaning 'Don't use this path', and this has caused resentment. Set this net well to the east of the path. Make sure the blackthorn etc is trimmed back on the west side sufficiently to give people plenty of space, but ask the Bird Observatory Warden before doing significant pruning work.
- At busy times such as boat arrivals, it is wise to furl some nets and station a ringer permanently beside others. If necessary, set up a second ringing base, using a different set of ring strings, pliers etc (N.B. careful record-keeping needed: transfer to red notebook later).
- Anyone ringing on their own should have nets open in Millcombe Valley **or** St John's Valley, **not** both. Even for groups, the use of some outlying sites will require permission from the Bird Observatory Warden, and will depend on where you are based, the size of your group, etc. See Appendix A for further details.

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- When a group of ringers has nets open in both Millcombe and St John's, the areas should be checked by two ringers, or groups of ringers, working separately. For some sites, a third circuit is needed: see Appendix A for details.

Tape lures

The use of tape lures is restricted so as not to affect the enjoyment of island visitors. The following restrictions apply and are island policy:

- If tape lures are to be used, you must inform the Bird Observatory Warden.
- Each player may only run for 2 hours, followed by a break of 2 hours.
- Tapes must be restricted to commonly occurring species (as a rough guide, those described as *resident*, *common* or *regular* in *The Birds of Lundy* by Davis & Jones, 2007 unless given permission by the Bird Observatory Warden.
- No tape luring is permitted during the breeding season (May to August) without express permission of the Bird Observatory Warden.
- Remember that even with the above restrictions, you risk disturbing non-ringers staying in St John's, Old School, Brambles and Millcombe House. Liaise with them.
- Place speakers sensitively and keep volumes to a reasonable level.

Bait

Any bait used must not contain seeds that might germinate and introduce alien species to the island. Apples, peanuts and sunflower hearts are acceptable.

Heligoland Trap

The Terrace Heligoland was reinstated in spring 2023. A small ringing kit is stored in a weatherproof box inside the trap. If you are licensed to ring independently, please make use of this if there are birds in the vicinity of the trap. Please check with the Bird Observatory Warden for the current status and procedure for making it safe when not in use.

Thermal Imaging and Lamping

Courtesy of the RSPB, Lundy Bird Observatory owns a thermal imager. Please check with the Bird Observatory Warden on availability, protocol and whether you need to bring a torch and hand-net.

Overnight Seabird ringing

Manx Shearwaters

There is a long history of ringing adult and juvenile Manx Shearwaters on Lundy on the sidelands, particularly on the west side during the hours of darkness and we are keen to continue this. However, this is potentially dangerous activity and should not be attempted alone or without someone experienced who knows the terrain. Please consult with the Bird Observatory Warden if you wish to do this.

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Storm Petrels

Mist-netting of Storm Petrels at night is possible at several sites, notably the North End and Brazen Ward, although Pilot's Quay and west side between Old Light and The Battery are also possibilities. Please restrict the use of tape lures at known breeding sites. Liaise with the Bird Observatory Warden to discuss protocol and possible assistance with transport of ringing equipment.

Record keeping

It is essential that you leave a full record of all birds ringed. Use the ringing notebook in the ringing box for general ringing activities. There is a second book that may be used if a extra ringing base is established, or for ad-hoc ringing. Use the 'notes' column for date, catching method and site. For general mist-netting we do not discriminate between Millcombe and St John's so please enter 'Millc/St Johns'. Please record new birds in black and retrap and control data in red. Please record repeated data clearly by using ditto marks or lines: some information, particularly dates and use of tape lures, has not been clear in the past, making checking and analysis difficult.

The Bird Observatory Warden, Assistant Wardens or Ringing Group Leader will enter Lundy data into DemOn from the ringing notebooks.

Rarities

Inform the Bird Observatory Warden as soon as possible of any national rarity caught, or anything else that might prompt an influx of birders if publicised. Consult before releasing news, so the situation can be managed (the 2013 Yellow-rumped Warbler completely jammed the island's phone system).

Write up any Lundy / Devon / National rarities in the Lundy Bird Observatory/LFS wildlife log book, and for DBRC (downloadable form on Devon Birds website) or BBRC if necessary. The Ringers' Manual section on trapped rarities has been superseded. Recent guidance is at [https://app.bto.org/ringers/ringers/information/revise%20version%20pp%2034-43\(1\).pdf](https://app.bto.org/ringers/ringers/information/revise%20version%20pp%2034-43(1).pdf).

Publicity and Explanation of Ringing Activities

A laminated notice may be displayed in the Tavern providing details of ringing operations. Ringing demonstrations are coordinated by the Birds Observatory Warden. Some ringers offer evening talks on ringing using an island laptop and the LCD projector in the Wheelhouse (back room of the Tavern). Make arrangements with the Bird Observatory Warden.

Relations with islanders

Maintaining good relations with Lundy staff is vital.

They specifically ask the following:

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- **Do not climb through or over fences or walls.** This particularly applies to the fence between Brambles West and St John's Valley. It is straightforward to reach St John's by going round via the gate outside Brambles.
- **Do not use the direct route down from net site 7** (below Brambles) to the Millcombe gate area. There are water pipes and electricity cables that could get damaged. Use the main track.
- **Ensure that you remove absolutely all guys, net ties or nets you have erected, when you pack up additional nets you have set.** This requires time and an organised system. Abandoned guys can become entangled in strimmers, causing much frustration.
- **Clean your property** on departure day. See Landmark information folder for what is expected

Lundy Field Society

The Lundy Field Society has in the past and continues to provide significant financial support for bird ringing on Lundy. Leaders of visiting ringing teams are strongly encouraged to join, and to encourage others to do so. Membership forms are available in the Tavern and on their website (www.lundy.org.uk). As part of your LFS membership you will also receive their annual report covering non-avian wildlife on Lundy and their occasional Journal.

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Appendix A – mist net sites

The following standard mist-net sites are available:

Site number (see map)	Site description	Net set (see notes)	Net length (m)	Comments
1 *	Beside path up from Millcombe Gate towards Ugly (“slope net”)	A	18	Set net down the bank, east of path. Guys long and high, above head height
2 *	Beside path leading to Secret Garden	A	12	
3 *	In north Secret Garden	A	9	
4 *	In south Secret Garden	A	12	
5 *	Lower gardens, middle	A	6/9/12	Possibilities include: between the partial walls on the S side (=9m); on the raised areas on the N side (E=6m)
6 *	Lower gardens, east	A		
7	Among trees below Bramble Villa	B	6/9/12	Take care down steps to net!
8	Along west side of Sallows in St John’s Valley	B	18/12 (x2+)	
9	Across stream, along boardwalk, St John’s Valley	B	12	
10	Across stream at east of St John’s Valley	B	9	
11	North tree cage, below Government	C	9	East to west
12	North tree cage, below Government	C	9	North to south at west edge
13	North tree cage, below Government	C	6	North to south at east edge
14	Edge of wood, west of Kasbah	C	12	Diagonal up from path

Notes

- Nets marked with an asterisk will normally be permanently erected during migration seasons.
- A single ringer, operating alone, must only use Set A, Set B **OR** Set C nets at any one time.
- A group of ringers may use two Sets together, but different ringers must check each of the two Sets **at the same time**, not as a single big circuit.
- Use of all three Sets will only be acceptable in certain circumstances, depending on size of ringing group, location of ringing base, etc. Set C must be checked separately from, and at the same time as, Sets A and B. **So if all nets are set, three net-checking ringers/groups are required.**

Lundy Mist-net Sites

