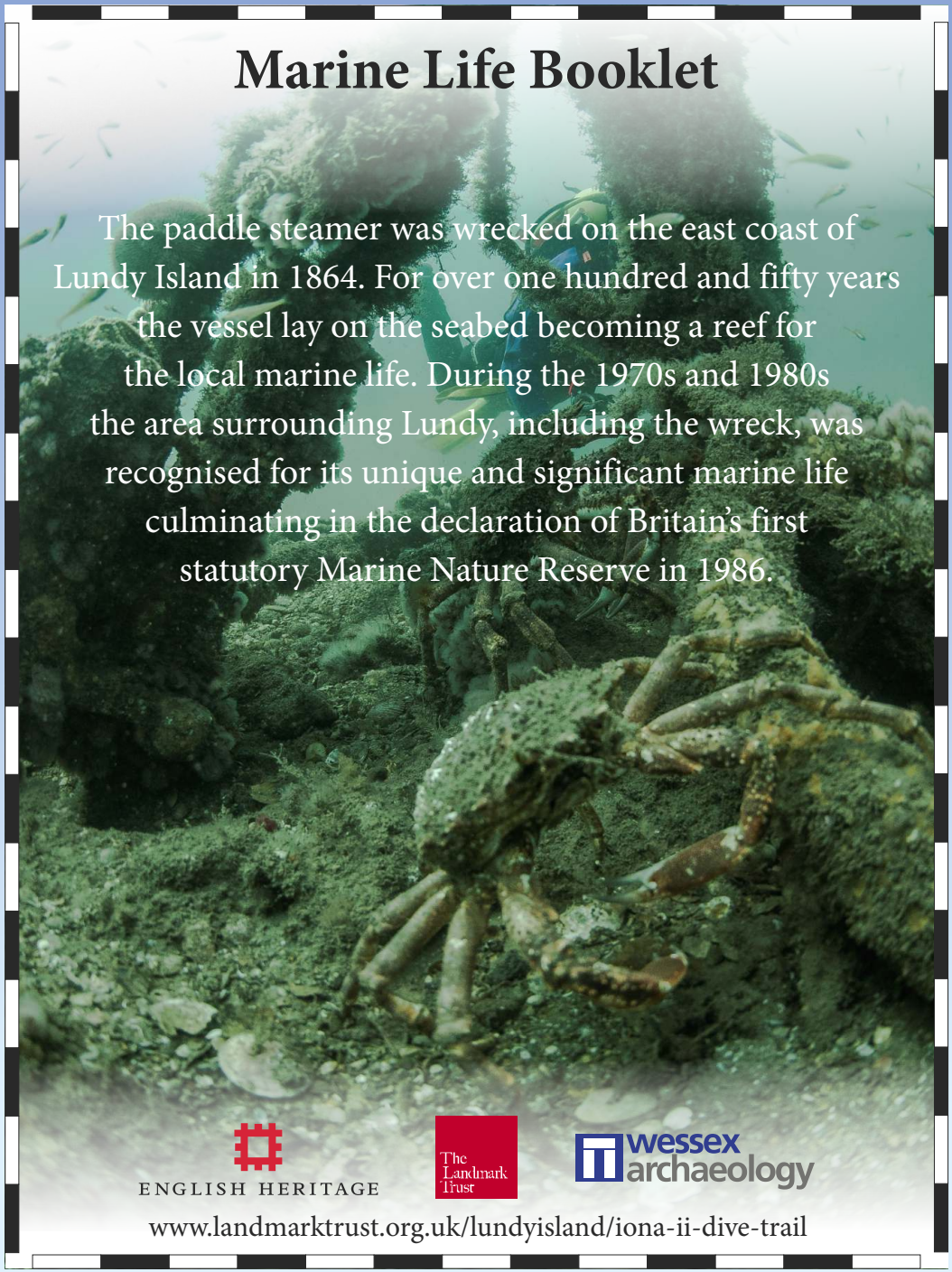
IONA II DIVE TRAIL

Marine Life Booklet



The paddle steamer was wrecked on the east coast of Lundy Island in 1864. For over one hundred and fifty years the vessel lay on the seabed becoming a reef for the local marine life. During the 1970s and 1980s the area surrounding Lundy, including the wreck, was recognised for its unique and significant marine life culminating in the declaration of Britain's first statutory Marine Nature Reserve in 1986.

ENGLISH HERITAGE

The Landmark Trust

wessex archaeology

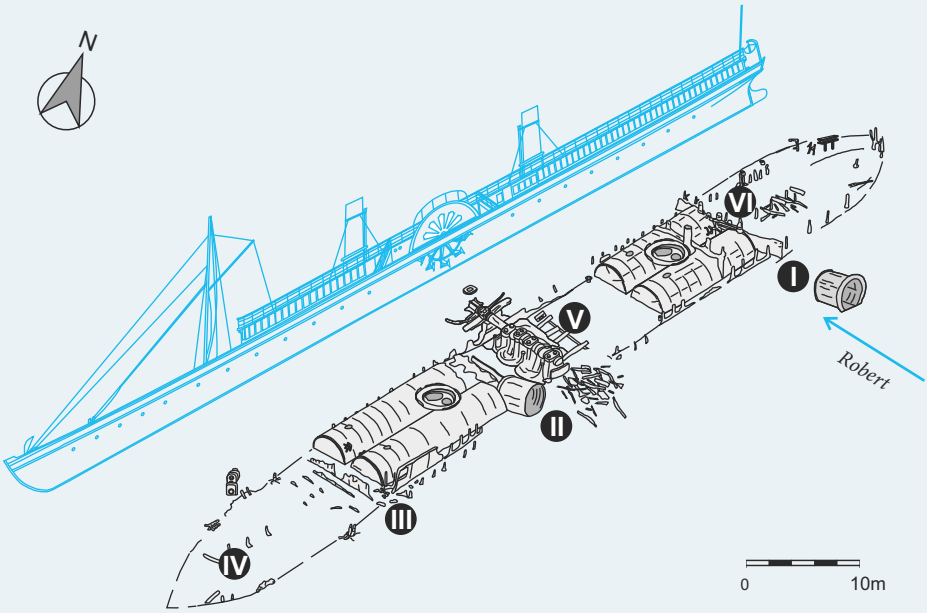
www.landmarktrust.org.uk/lundyisland/iona-ii-dive-trail

NAVIGATING THE WRECK

This Information Booklet corresponds with the **Marine Life Underwater Guide**. The numbers on the plan below are also on the Marine Life Underwater Guide and correspond to areas of interest around the wreck, which are explored further in this booklet.

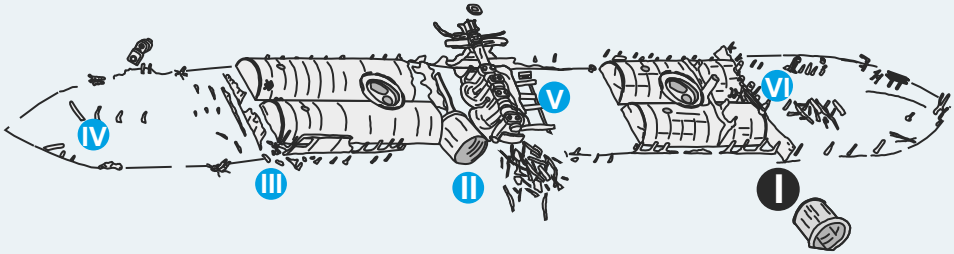
The *Iona II* wreck site is on the east coast of Lundy Island. The seabed around the *Iona II* wreck is generally flat, with a slight slope east of the amidships area. The seabed is coarse, firm, level mud and fine silt with some areas of fine sand within the wreck and some gravel patches around the boilers.

The wreck lies at 22 to 28 metres depending upon the state of the tide. Visibility can vary from 1 to 15 metres. The best time to dive is at slack water, which is two hours either side of low water.



Access to the *Iona II* Dive Trail is via the *Robert* wreck buoy. From the *Robert's* rudder, head 35m on a bearing of 245 degrees or WSW to reach the *Iona II*.

I MARINE TURF



Marine Turf

Description: This dense population of plant-like hydroids and bryozoans form a silty, moss-like growth about 2–6 cm in height. Although belonging to different animal groups, both types of colonies feed off minute particles suspended in the water column.

Location: A covering of 'marine turf' grows on the funnel segments and on vertical surfaces of the wreck, such as the hull plates and boilers.

Marine turf on hull plates (J. Wright)

Marine turf on funnel (Wessex Archaeology)

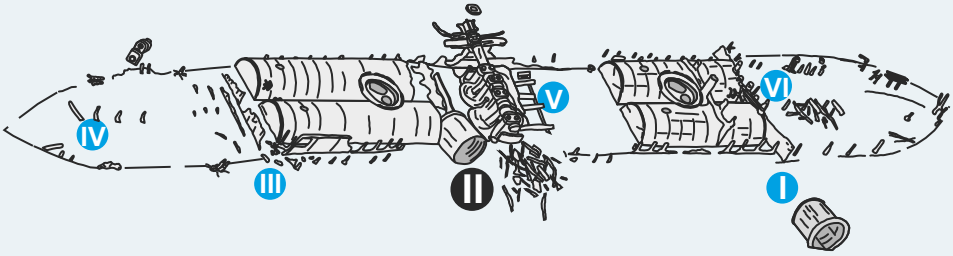
Oaten Pipes hydroid, *Tubularia indivisa*

Description: Its thin yellow stem supports a pink polyp to a height of 10–15cm; however, these have often been eaten off by other marine organisms. The stems are usually clustered together at the base.

Location: This is the most common species on the wreck and can be found in areas with high level of water movement, such as on the edges of the wreck and some surfaces of the engine.

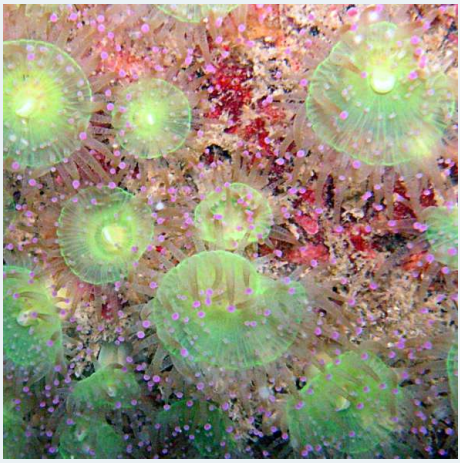
Hydroids, *James Eagan Layne* wreck (K. Hiscock)

II JEWEL ANEMONE



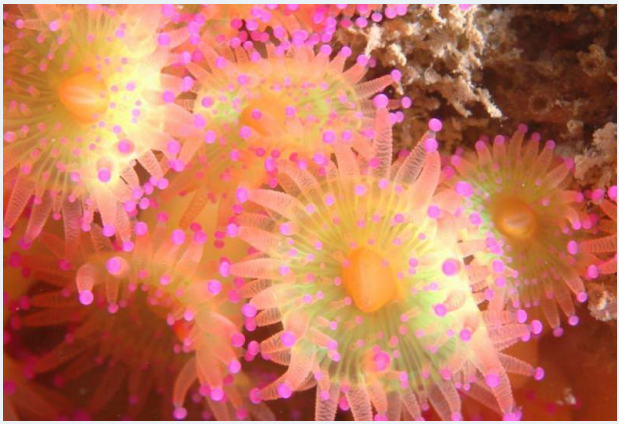
Jewel anemone, *Corynactis viridis*

Description: This small clonal organism has a smooth column up to 15mm in height and diameter. They commonly occur in large numbers of one colour. The jewel anemone looks like a cup coral except they lack a hard skeleton.



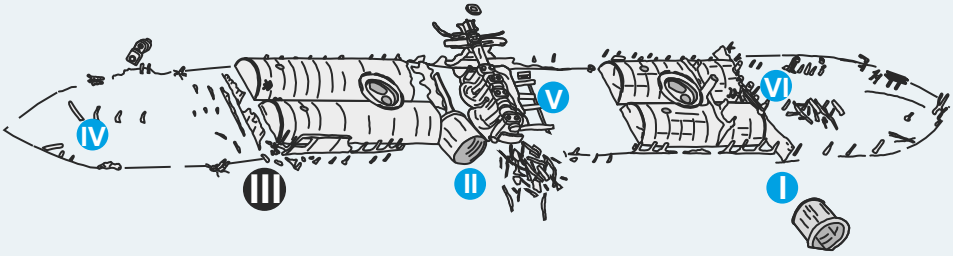
Jewel anemones, Gull Rock (P. Newland)

Location: These organisms are found in areas of strong water current. This includes vertical surfaces of the wreck and in thick densities on downward-facing surfaces. The base of the funnel lying on the portside of the wreck has supported jewel anemones, as have areas near the port forward boilers and portside crankshaft.



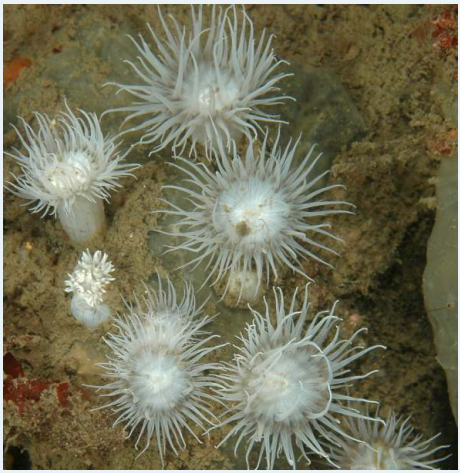
Jewel anemones (J. Wright)

III SANDALLED ANEMONE



Sandalled anemone, *Actinothoe sphyrodeta*

Description: This small anemone usually has a squat cylindrical column of about 2cm diameter that has alternating stripes of translucent white and dirty white, which is why it is commonly named the sandalled anemone. On top of this column is up to 120 irregularly arranged tentacles that taper to fine points. The centre disc of this anemone can either be white or yellow.

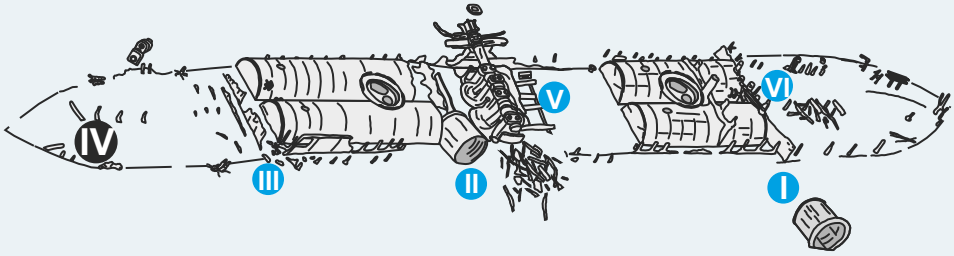


Sandalled anemones (K. Hiscock)

Sandalled anemones on *Iona II* (S. Prentice)

Location: Sandalled anemones are usually found in clusters on rocks or flat surfaces, such as shipwrecks. They only stick to this surface lightly as they have no suckers or other methods of attachment. On the *Iona II* they can be found in patches on the ribs and on some vertical surfaces left unoccupied by hydroids.

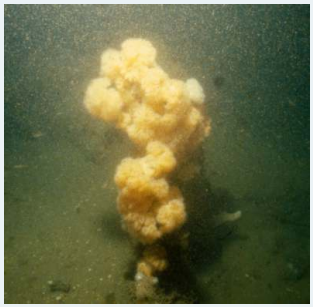
IV PLUMOSE ANEMONE



Plumose anemone, *Metridium senile*

Description: This species has a cylindrical body of up to 30cm high supporting a plume of numerous tentacles. Plumose anemones come in a variety of colours with the most common being white or orange.

Location: This is the most common anemone on the wreck. These anemones are usually found in clusters on hard substrates, such as rocks or wrecks, and have been found on the forward and aft frames of the *Iona II* as well as on the aft boilers.

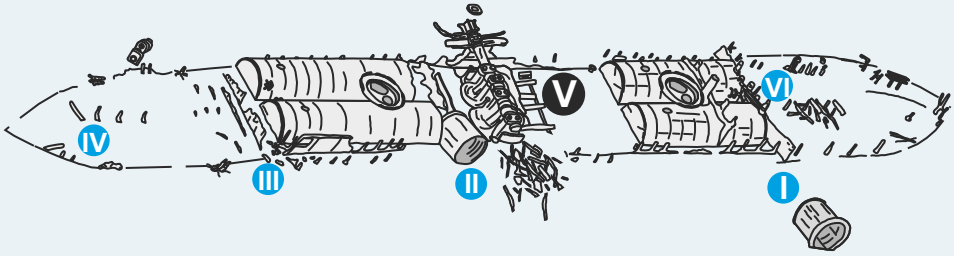


Plumose anemones on frames (S. Prentice)

Plumose anemones (P. Newland)

Plumose anemones (M. Deaton)

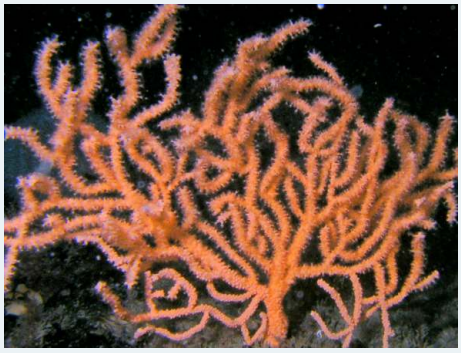
V PINK SEA FAN



Pink sea fans, *Eunicella verrucosa*

Description: The pink sea fan is a type of soft coral that is extremely slow growing, increasing only 10mm a year. It is actually a colony of many animals joined together which allows better access to food particles passing by in the water.

Location: Their preferred substrate is a stable structure, such as rocks or a wreck. This is also situated in an area of a gentle current so they can obtain nutrients.



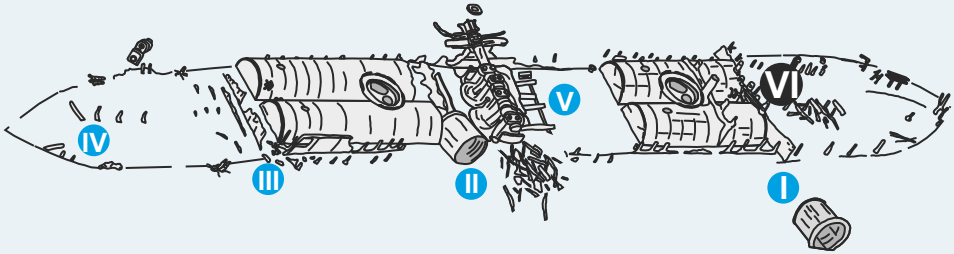
Pink sea fan (P. Newland)

Pink sea fan near *Iona II* engine (M. Deaton)

Pink sea fans are very rare and any sighting on the wreck should be reported to the Lundy Warden. Pink fans have suffered from being seaside souvenirs in the mid-20th century and those around Lundy have also been recently affected by a bacteriological disease.

It is now an offence, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, to harm these organisms.

VI CORAL



Devonshire cup coral, *Caryophyllia smithii*

Description: This 25mm diameter coral has an internal limestone skeleton in the shape of a cup into which they can retract and hide. They have transparent tentacles with spherical knobs on the ends, and stripes of bright blue and green can be seen between the tentacles. This type of cup coral can vary in colour from white, pink, green or brown.

Location: On the *Iona II*, these solitary organisms were present on vertical and horizontal surfaces of the wreck in high densities.

Devonshire cup coral (M. Deaton)

Southern cup coral, *Caryophyllia inornata*

Description: These colourless animals have short tentacles with prominent knobbed tips and consist of singular small solitary cups which are 5–7mm in diameter.

Location: This quite rare species has only had one colony which was spotted on the *Iona II* wreck. These animals can usually be found on vertical or overhanging rock faces in small groups.

Southern cup coral, Babbacombe (P. Newland)

MOLLUSCS & SPONGES

Nudibranch

Description: Nudibranchs are soft-bodied marine gastropod molluscs and are noted for their bright colours and unusual forms. They are usually quite small, only 20–40mm long.

Location: On the *Iona II* they have mainly been spotted feeding on oaten pipe hydroids.

Above: Nudibranch (M. Deaton).
Inset: Scarlet lady feeding on hydroids (P. Newland).

Sponge (P. Newland)

Crater sponge, *Hemimycale columella*

Description: The crater sponge can grow up to a 10mm thickness and spread across 300mm.

Location: Small numbers of sponges have previously been identified on the horizontal surfaces of the wreck.

STARFISH & URCHINS

Spiny starfish, *Marthasterias glacialis*

Description: The spiny starfish has five arms each with three rows of spike-like spines that are usually white tipped with purple. These starfish can grow up to 35cm in diameter with animals living in more sheltered habitats growing larger than those in more exposed sites.

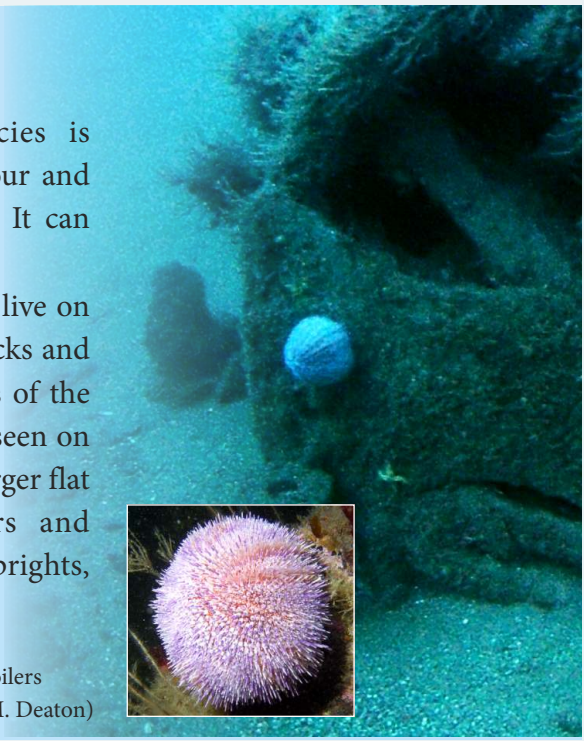
Location: This is the most common starfish on Lundy. Examples of this species will often be found on the flat surfaces of the wreck, such as boilers.

Spiny starfish (M. Deaton)

Edible Urchin, *Echinus esculentus*

Description: This species is round, pinky-red in colour and covered in white spines. It can grow to 15cm diameter.

Location: These animals live on hard surfaces, such as rocks and wrecks. Several examples of the edible urchin have been seen on this wreck both on the larger flat surfaces of the boilers and attached to thinner uprights, such as the sternpost.



Right: Edible urchin on *Iona II's* boilers (J. Wright). *Inset:* Edible urchin (M. Deaton)

FISH & EELS

Bib, *Trisopterus luscus*

Description: These members of the cod family, have a deep body and are usually 20–30cm long. They have a distinct chin barbell and are most easily recognised by their pale copper colour with four to five darker vertical bands on either side. They have three dorsal fins, one of which is triangular and two anal fins.

Location: Shoals of bib are often found around wrecks such as *Iona II*.

Shoal of bib (K. Hiscock)

Goldsinny wrasse, Firestone (K. Hiscock)

Goldsinny wrasse, *Ctenolabrus rupestris*

Description: While there are several hundred species of wrasse worldwide, only five species are found in British waters. Wrasse can be diverse in appearance, but the more commonly known ones tend to be brightly coloured and range around the smaller size of 20–30cm.

Location: Several wrasse have been seen on the wreck particularly Goldsinny wrasse.

Conger eel, *Conger conger*

Description: Conger eels have a long cylindrical body that can be 2–3m long. They have smooth scaleless skin which is slatey blue but lighter on the underside.

Location: Congers prefer to live in holes in rocks or wrecks. One is known to live on the *Robert* and visits the *Iona II* wreck occasionally.

Conger eel from the *James Eagan Layne* wreck (P. Newland)

CRABS & LOBSTERS

Spiny spider crab, *Maja squinado*

Description: Also known as the European spider crab, this is a migratory crustacean that usually travels in the autumn. The body is reddish brown bordered with spines and has long spidery legs. Shell width can be up to 20cm.

Their diet is quite varied and includes seaweeds, molluscs, sea urchins and sea cucumbers.

Location: Several spiny spider crabs have been seen on the wreck site.

Spiny spider crabs on *Iona II* (M. Deaton)

Common lobster, *Homarus gammarus*

Description: The body of the common lobster is dark blue and can be up to 75cm. This organism has eight walking legs, long red antennae and two large claws, one for cutting and one for crushing.

Lobster on *Iona II* (Wessex Archaeology)

Location: This species is commonly found around the coasts of Britain. Lobsters normally dwell among boulders as they like to find shelter. This is why several lobsters have been sighted under the boilers on the *Iona II*.

For more information about the *Iona II*
www.landmarktrust.org.uk/lundyisland/iona-ii-dive-trail