

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 56

Michaelmas Island, King George Sound, Western Australia

Location: 35°03' S., 118°02' E.; 10 km east-south-east of Albany, W.A. and 2.2 km offshore.

Status: Class C Reserve vested in the W.A. Wildlife Authority for conservation of flora and fauna.

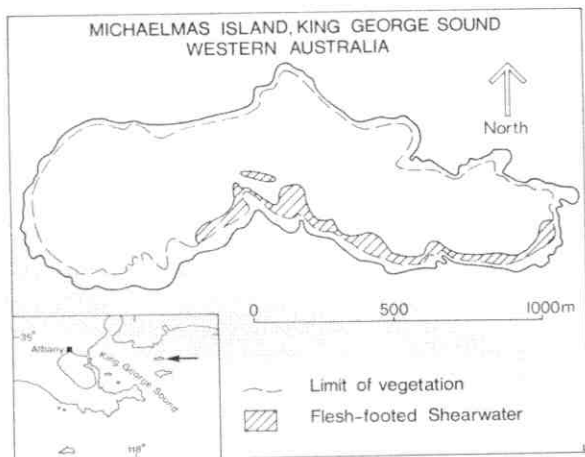
Description: 90 ha; 1.4 km by 0.5 km at widest. Steep-sided, it consists mostly of granite-gneiss though there are extensive exposures of aeolianite limestone on the northern side. The western end consists of a granite-gneiss dome and rises to 152 m. Some 85 plant species occur and the main dominant ones are Ridge-fruited Mallee *Eucalyptus angulosa*, Pigface *Carpobrotus virescens*, Coastal Saltbush *Rhagodia radiata* and Peppermint *Agonis flexuosa*.

Landing: In calm weather landing can most easily be effected in one of the coves at the north-east corner.

Ornithological History: A. F. Bassett Hull¹ with companions spent 3.5 hours ashore on 20 November 1921. They found no occupation by any species of seabird. Unoccupied burrows of the White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina* were recorded by D. L. Serventy (pers. comm.) on 4 June 1948 but there has been no subsequent confirmation. Serventy also found unoccupied burrows of Flesh-footed Shearwaters, but no signs of Great-winged Petrels or Little Penguins. I. Abbott spent from 3 September to 15 September 1975 on the island.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Rare; only one was seen at night during the visit in 1975.

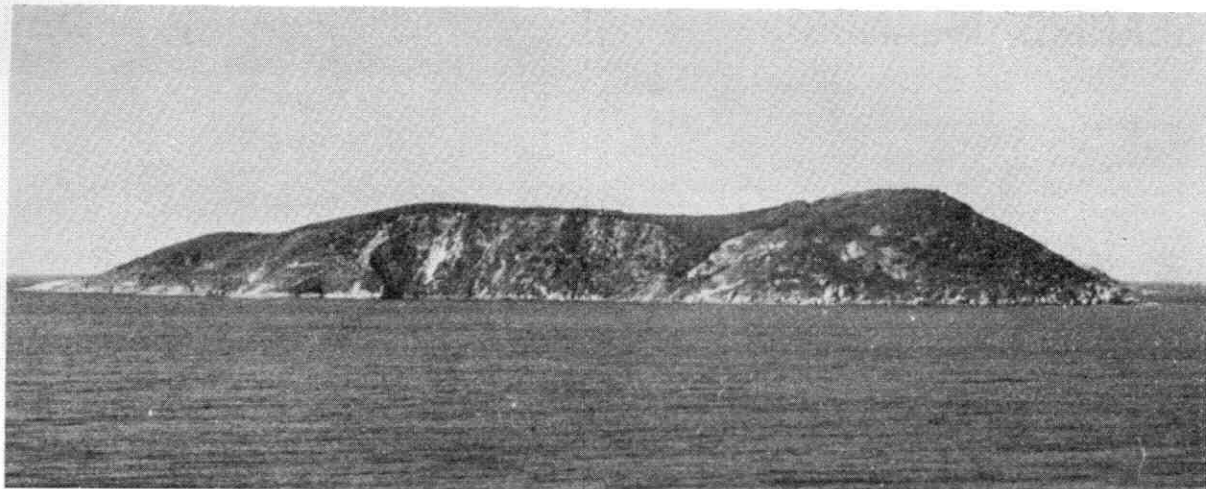


Guano was seen on rocks at sea level on the southern side indicating regular use. A few probably breed on the island.

Puffinus carneipes Flesh-footed Shearwater — Burrows occur in suitable areas dominated by *Carpobrotus* and *Poa* on parts of the southern slopes but are not widespread. Probably between 100 and 1 000 pairs may breed on the island.

Factors Affecting Status

Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus* are plentiful and undoubtedly destroy vegetation and cause erosion. The effect on the few seabirds breeding on the island is not known. King's Skink *Egernia kingii* and the Western Swamp Rat *Rattus fuscipes* are present and might be expected to predate some



● *Michaelmas Island (looking south-east).*

Photo: S. G. Lane



● *View of the southern side (looking east).*

eggs while the Barn Owl *Tyto alba*, observed during the 1975 visit, might predate some of the seabirds themselves.

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Black Cormorant
<i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>	Sooty Oystercatcher
<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	Silver Gull
<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull
<i>Sterna bergii</i>	Crested Tern

Banding

Nil.

Bibliography

1. Hull, A. F. Basset (1922), 'A Visit to the Archipelago of the Recherche S.W. Australia', *Emu* 21: 277-289.
2. Serventy, D. L., V. N. Serventy and J. Warham (1971), *The Handbook of Australian Sea-birds*. A. H. & A. W. Reed. Sydney.
3. Serventy, D. L. and H. M. Whittell (1948), *A Handbook of the Birds of Western Australia*. Patersons Press Ltd. Perth, W.A.

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I. Abbott,
Department of Zoology,
The University of Western Australia,
Nedlands, W.A.