

## SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 117

## MacKenzie Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia

**Location:** 34°12'S., 122°06'E.; 40 km south-south-east from Esperance, WA.

**Status:** Class A Reserve vested in the W.A. Wildlife Authority; entry permit required.

**Other Name:** Round Island (formerly).

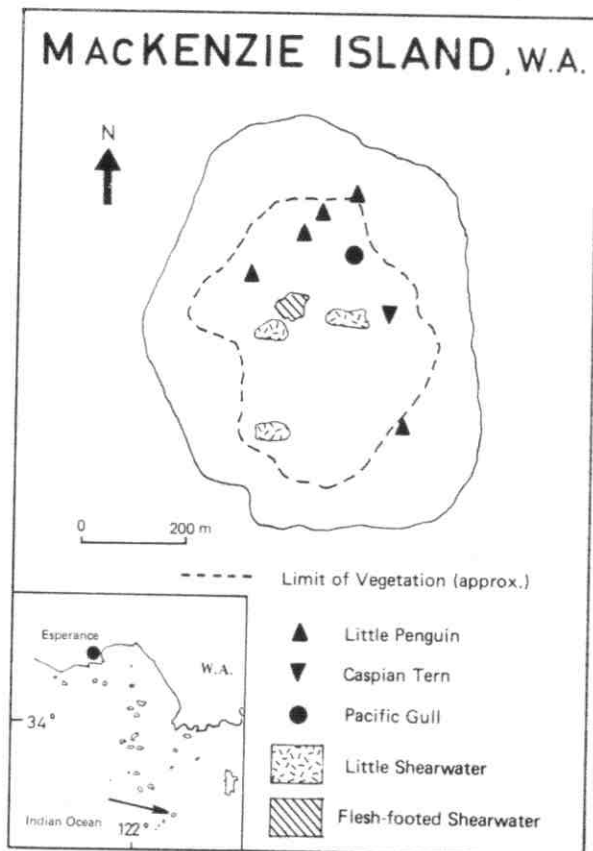
**Description:** 48 ha; roughly circular, about 900 m in diameter, this granite-gneiss island is shaped like a dome which reaches 28 m at the highest point. There are large areas of bare rock or boulders while the soil in the remaining places is mostly shallow. Generally the vegetation is low with *Carpobrotus*, small plants and some shrubs to about 0.5 m in height. In a few places, clumps of *Melaleuca lanceolata* reach to about two metres high.

**Landing:** Onto rocks and difficult in all but calm conditions as the island shore is exposed to sea swell from any direction.

**Ornithological History:** V. N. Serventy<sup>2</sup> visited the island on 18 November 1950 and found Little Penguins and Pacific Gulls breeding. S. G. Lane and L. F. Lane<sup>1</sup> were on the island for eight hours on 8 November 1981; they recorded details of a further five breeding species and evidence of a sixth. Except where otherwise indicated, the following information was obtained during the visit in 1981.

### Breeding Seabirds and Status

*Eudyptula minor* Little Penguin — Dead young penguins were found in 1950<sup>2</sup>. In 1981, seven nests were seen — ready for eggs, adult incubat-

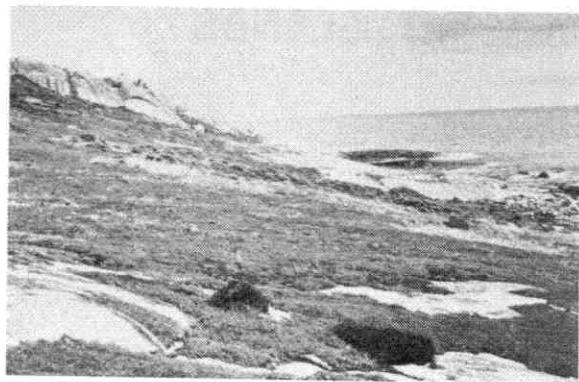


ing fresh eggs and an adult on an egg and a very small chick.

*Puffinus assimilis* Little Shearwater — Burrows, almost certainly of these birds, were found in three different locations. Apart from a few old



• *MacKenzie Island (looking south-south-east).*



• *Part of the north side (looking west-south-west).*

burrows, 28 appeared to have been recently used. In one of the areas a skull of one of these birds was found. Between 20 and 30 pairs may breed on the island.

*Puffinus carneipes* Flesh-footed Shearwater — Four old burrows, assumed to belong to this species were found; one contained breast feathers. A skull and the dried remains of a bird were also found.

*Haematopus fuliginosus* Sooty Oystercatcher — Four pairs appeared to be holding territories. In one of these, part of a recently-hatched egg shell was found and the adults were seen carrying food to a rocky area where the chick apparently was concealed.

*Larus novaehollandiae* Silver Gull — Of some 25 birds present, only one pair showed any breeding behaviour. No nest was located but a chick, almost at flying stage, was eventually discovered hiding under rocks.

*Larus pacificus* Pacific Gull — Five birds were counted and one pair had a nest ready for eggs.

*Hydroprogne caspia* Caspian Tern — Two birds were present at a nest with two recently hatched chicks; the egg shells were still close by the nest.

*Cereopsis novaehollandiae* Cape Barren Goose — Two adults were seen with an almost-flying young bird.

#### Factors Affecting Status

A number of Sea-lions *Neophoca cinerea* breed on the island and would cause some damage to the breeding birds. King's Skinks *Egernia kingii* were present and would take eggs. A White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* was seen flying around and over

the island, while two Australian Ravens *Corvus coronoides* were present; both species would cause some predation. Human interference is unlikely because of the remoteness of the island and the difficulty of landing.

#### Other Seabirds Recorded

*Sterna bergii* Crested Tern (remains)

#### Banding

*Larus novaehollandiae* — 1 "runner" (9 Nov. 81).

#### Bibliography

1. Lane, S. G. (1982), 'Avifauna of islands off Esperance, Western Australia', *Corella* 6: 37-39.
2. Serventy, V. N. (1952), The Archipelago of the Recherche, Part 2: Birds. *Aust. Geog. Soc. Rept.* 1(2): 1-24.
3. Willis, J. H. (1953), The Archipelago of the Recherche, Part 3a: Land Flora. *Aust. Geog. Soc. Rept.* 1(3): 1-35.

#### Acknowledgements

I thank Messrs N. Tromp and K. Penalurick for their assistance with transport, and my wife for helping with the survey.

Date compiled: 10 November 1981

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