

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 118

Hood Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia

Location: 34°09'S., 122°03'E.; 30 km south of Esperance, WA and 15 km from the mainland at Cape Le Grande.

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

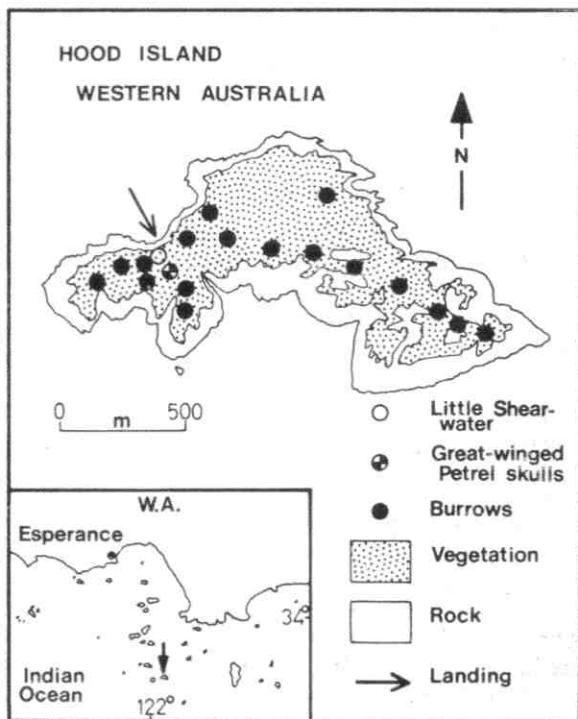
Description: About 131 ha; 2 000 m long by about 700 m at the widest. The island is basically a long granite ridge with a dome at the south-eastern end and two smaller knolls on the south-western portion. Cliffs and exposed rock slope steeply into the sea around most of its coastline, particularly along the south coast. The island slopes downwards from the southern to the northern coastline, much of which consists of granite boulders. A prominent rocky outcrop on the dome forms the highest point (76 m). Above the bare granite coast, much of the island supports a low mixed shrubland growing to one metre on shallow soils with a few small patches of Moonah *Melaleuca pubescens* growing to about four metres.

Landing: Landing requires jumping onto a flat granite boulder on the northern coast and is safe only in calm weather.

Ornithological History: There appears to be no record of any visit by a naturalist before 1977. A. and S. R. Tingay carried out a flora and fauna survey on the island between 13 and 19 January 1977.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Puffinus assimilis Little Shearwater — Many were present in burrows at night in January



• Hood Island (looking north-west).

Photo: S. G. Lane

1977. There were hundreds of burrows in shallow soils under low shrubland. This species nests in winter, the adults returning to their breeding islands at night in January¹; egg laying occurs in late June or early July, and the young would probably leave about the beginning of November.

Pterodroma macroptera Great-winged Petrel — This is another winter-nesting species which probably breeds on the island. They are reported to return to their breeding islands (in WA) in "late January"¹. Four skulls were found among burrows.

Cereopsis novaehollandiae Cape Barren Goose — A pair with four young were sighted.

Factors Affecting Status

Fire is an ever present threat to islands of the Archipelago of the Recherche and there is evidence (burnt wood) that Hood Island has been burnt in the past. Difficulty of landing and remoteness probably deter visitors.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

King's Skink *Egernia kingii*, *E. napoleonis* and *Ctenopus labillardieri* are present. The Southern Bush-rat *Rattus fuscipes* is abundant and a colony of New Zealand Fur Seals *Arctocephalus forsteri* occupies the rocky northern coastline around the landing place. The White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* and the Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*, potential predators of seabirds on their breeding islands, are also present.

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Eudyptula minor</i>	Little Penguin
<i>Leucocarbo fuscescens</i>	Black-faced Shag
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Great Cormorant
<i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>	Sooty Oystercatcher
<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	Silver Gull
<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Caspian Tern
<i>Sterna bergii</i>	Crested Tern



• Part of the north side. Note the tent in the centre of the picture.

Banding

Nil.

Bibliography

1. Serventy, D. L., V. N. Serventy and J. Warham (1971), The Handbook of Australian Sea-birds. A. H. and A. W. Reed, Sydney.

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