

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 121

Remark Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia

Location: 34°04'S., 121°59'E.; 21 km south-south-east from Esperance, WA.

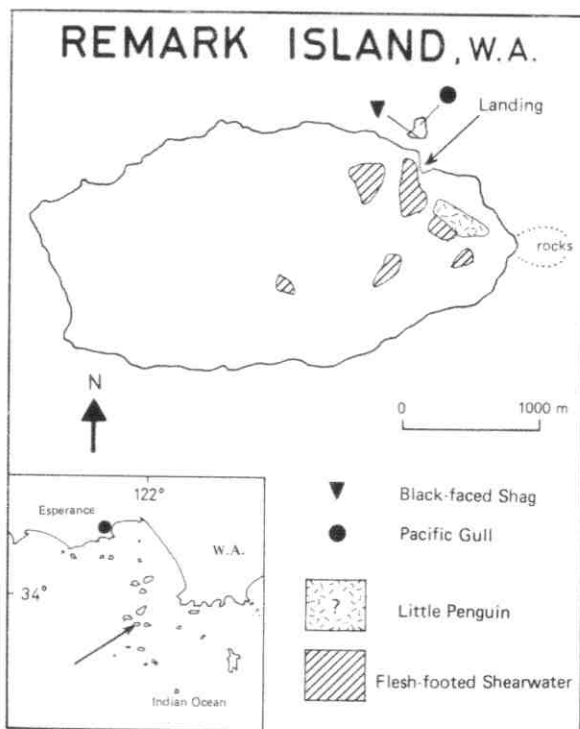
Status: Class A Reserve vested in the W.A. Wildlife Authority; entry permit required.

Description: 101 ha; about 1 800 m by 900 m at the widest and rising to 220 m. The island is granite-gneiss with a rocky shoreline mostly of sloping granite folds; there are some boulders on the eastern end and parts of the northern shore. A large dome rising steeply near the centre of the island is mainly bare rock with patches of low vegetation in the shelves and pockets. In small gullies leading to the northern shore, vegetation comprises *Eucalyptus* sp. and *Melaleuca* spp., in some places eight to nine metres in height. There is a dense litter of dead *Melaleuca* branches and trees in a number of places; burrows occurred only in the clearer parts of the understory in these areas.

There is a small satellite islet about 40 m off the northern shore. It consists mainly of fragmented granite boulders rising to about 30 m. A small plateau on the top has some soil and low vegetation.

Landing: Onto rocks in a small bay near the centre of the northern shore; difficult except in calm weather.

Ornithological History: H. M. Whittell³ stated that J. T. Tunney "... also visited Renmark ..." [sic] in November 1904 but gave no details. V. N. Serventy² visited the island on 11 November 1950 and recorded Flesh-footed Shearwater burrows. S. G. Lane¹, L. F. Lane and W. Merilees were on the island from 28 to 30 October 1981. S. G. Lane spent 15 minutes on the satellite islet on 10 November 1981.



• Remark Island (looking south).

Photo: A. Tingay

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Two burrows were found in which moulting had occurred. Tracks and guano were seen on the north-eastern shoreline. Just after dark on 29 October 1981, calls were heard from the water and two birds were seen coming ashore. Probably a few pairs breed on the island.

Pterodroma macroptera Great-winged Petrel — On 29 October 1981, "The remains of a large chick, with flight feathers not quite fully emerged and with down still adhering, was found under vegetation and rocks on the northernmost point of the island."¹. A cavity under the rock shelf appeared to have been the nest site.

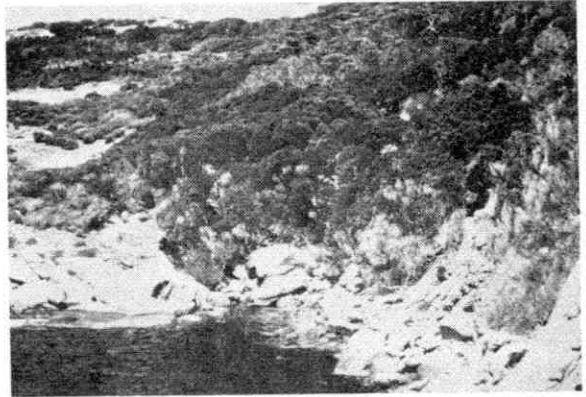
Puffinus carneipes Flesh-footed Shearwater — In 1950, Serventy² found burrows plentiful in a Yate forest. In October 1981, no doubt due to the litter and thick understory, very few burrows were located in this forest. Birds were found in burrows in a number of areas including a small patch near the highest part of the island. During the 1981 visit, pairs or single birds were found in burrows both during daytime and at night; no check was made of the western end of the island. At night, the only shearwater calls heard were those of this species. An estimate of fresh burrows was not made but probably there would have been less than 200.

Leucocarbo fuscescens Black-faced Shag — About ten birds were seen on the satellite island; some were observed gathering seaweed and nestbuilding. On 10 November 1981, ten nests were counted; one contained two large young, two contained two eggs each and the others had been recently used or were being built.

Larus pacificus Pacific Gull — Two of these birds had a territory and vantage point on the top of the satellite islet. On 10 November an old nest was found there.

Factors Affecting Status

Human interference is likely to be minimal because of access difficulties. The White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* was recorded nesting on 24 November 1950² and one was seen flying over during the 1981 visit; no doubt it would take some breeding seabirds. Two King's Skinks *Egernia kingii* and numerous small skinks were seen.



• The landing bay on the north coast with the forested gully behind it (looking south).

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Pelagodroma marina</i>	White-faced Storm-Petrel (remains)
<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	Little Black Cormorant
<i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>	Sooty Oystercatcher
<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	Silver Gull

Banding

Puffinus carneipes — 20 adults (Oct. 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. Whittell, H. M. (1938), 'Notes on field-trips of J. T. Tunney', *Emu* 38: 322-326.
4. Willis, J. H. (1953), The Archipelago of the Recherche, Part 3a: Land Flora. *Aust. Geog. Soc. Rept.* 1(3): 1-35.

Acknowledgements

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