

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 147

Charley Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia

Location: 33°55'S., 121°53'E.; 6 kilometres south of Esperance, W.A.

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

Other Name: Charlie Island.

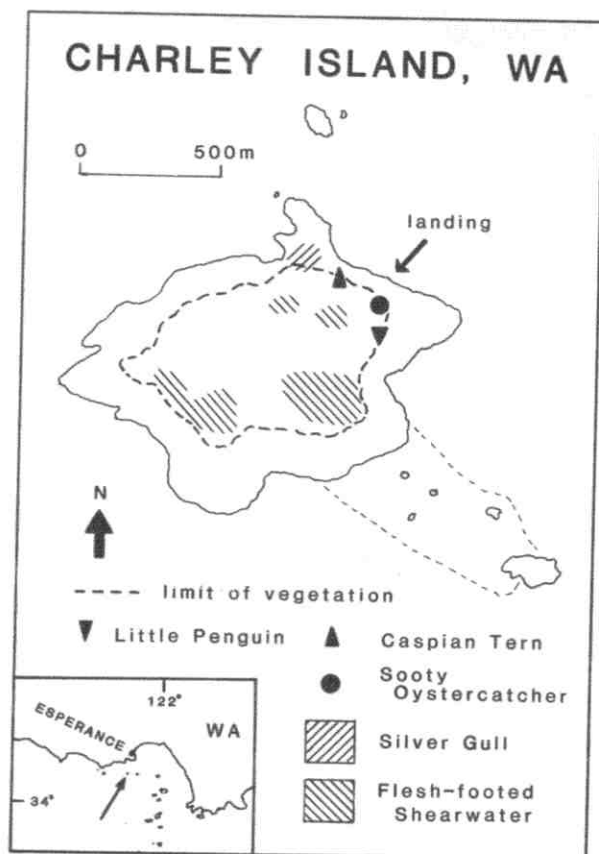
Description: 101 ha; irregularly dome-shaped, about 1 250 m long by some 1000 m wide, this granite-gneiss island rises to 108 m near the centre. The shore line consists of sloping granite folds or boulders, while much of the island surface is bare, or almost bare, rock. In some parts low vegetation including *Carpobrotus virescens* occurs around the edges of the vegetation line. Dense thickets of *Melaleuca* spp. occur in numerous places, some in rocky soil and others where the soil is deeper. On the southern slopes some of these thickets are interspersed with areas of grasses and low vegetation.

Landing: Onto sloping rock and difficult except in calm conditions.

Ornithological History: Basset Hull ⁽¹⁾ visited the island on 29 November and 10 December 1921; he recorded Flesh-footed Shearwaters breeding and other species seen. D. L. Serventy ⁽⁴⁾ was on the island on 6 January 1944. A. K. Daw visited the island on 17 December 1981 and again with S. G. Lane and L. F. Lane on 21 October 1982.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Hull ⁽¹⁾ saw a Little Penguin but did not find any nests. On 21 October 1982 a well used nest-cavity was found among rocks under dense *Melaleuca*



scrub near the eastern shore line; the well-worn track to the site, and the droppings in and around it, indicated regular and recent use. Recorded breeding ⁽⁵⁾. A few pairs probably breed regularly on the island.

Puffinus carneipes Flesh-footed Shearwater — Burrows of these birds were scattered through-



• Charley Island (looking south).

out the island where soil depth permitted burrowing. Most burrows were from one to two metres long but generally within 30 or 40 cm of the surface. Burrow concentration was greatest in the two areas of the southern slopes (1982 visit). Probably present to breed from late in September to the end of April or early in May when the young leave; egg laying occurs late in November to early December. Estimated 500-1000 breeding pairs.

Cereopsis novaehollandiae Cape Barren Goose — Tracks, droppings, feathers and other evidence of the presence of these geese were found almost anywhere on the island. During the visit (1982) three adults and five large young were seen; a dead adult and two old nests were found. The vegetation provides excellent cover and an estimate of breeding numbers was not possible.

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher — One pair had a nest with two eggs on the north-eastern corner (21 October 1982).

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — About 70-80 birds were presented during the 1982 visit. Nineteen nests were found (7 new, 6 x 1 egg, 4 x 2 eggs and 2 x 3 eggs). Estimated 30-50 breeding pairs.

Hydroprogne caspia Caspian Tern — A large "runner" and a "holed" egg, apparently the result of a predator, were found on 17 December 1981.

Factors Affecting Status

Prior to 1944 ⁽⁴⁾ sheep were grazed on the island and, no doubt, this had an adverse effect on the vegetation. However, it has probably recovered in the intervening years. The White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* is reported to have a nest on the south-western side. One Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides* was seen during the 1982 visit. Both these species may predate some of the breeding seabirds.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

Ornate Dragons *Amphibolurus ornatus*, Geckos, small skinks and a dead Rat *Rattus fuscipes* were seen on 21 October 1982. Snakes are reported to be present.

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull
<i>Sterna bergii</i>	Crested Tern

Banding

21 Oct. 82.

Puffinus carneipes — 21 "adults".

Cereopsis novaehollandiae — 3 immatures.

Bibliography

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3. Lane, S. G. (1984), 'Further notes on visits to islands off the south coast of Western Australia', *Corella* 8(2): 64-66.
4. Serventy, D. L. (1947), 'Notes from the Recherche Archipelago, Western Australia', *Emu* 47: 44-49.
5. 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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