

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 149

Flat Island, Western Australia

Location: 34°50'S., 115°57'E.; one kilometre off Point D'Entrecasteaux on the south coast of W.A.

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

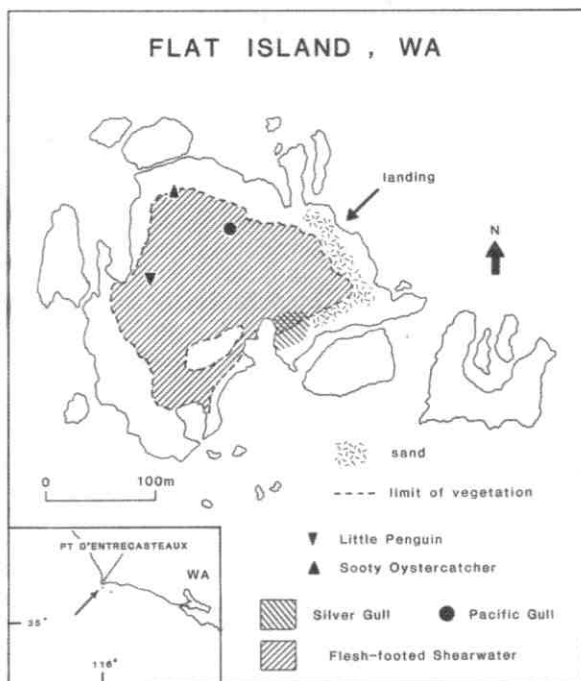
Description: 8 ha; about 350 m by 300 m, this small island rises a few metres above sea-level. It has a rocky shoreline, and rocks almost completely enclose the small sandy beaches on the northern shore. The sandy soil supports mainly Angular Pigface *Carpobrotus virescens* with patches of *Rhagodia* mostly less than 0.5 m high; near the centre, a few of these bushes reach a little over one metre. Other plants include *Lavatera plebeia*, *Olearia axillaris*, *Calceophalus brownii* and *Pelargonium capitatum*.

Landing: Onto a small sand beach but difficult except in calm conditions because of the rocky approach. The northern (sheltered) side is guarded by rocks and reefs, usually difficult to negotiate because of the surges and waves.

Ornithological History: There is no previous record. S. G. Lane and L. F. Lane visited the island for 2.5 hours on 9 November 1982. The following information was obtained during that visit.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Tracks were evident on the beaches and signs in burrows



around the edge of the vegetation indicated recent occupation. An egg with a hole in it, was found in one burrow. A few pairs probably breed regularly on the island.

Puffinus carneipes Flesh-footed Shearwater — Burrows were well-distributed throughout most



• Flat Island (looking south).

of the vegetated area. Nineteen burrows contained two birds in each and five others contained a single bird, of the 160 searched. A few burrows contained a bird or birds but were too deep to check. 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 1000-1500 breeding pairs.

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher — Three pairs were present and two nests were found. One was new and the other contained two half egg shells. Undoubtedly a young bird was hiding nearby.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — About 30 birds were present; two nests containing eggs, one small dead chick and a large "runner" were found. Probably 15-20 pairs nest on the island.

Larus pacificus Pacific Gull — Three "pairs" of adults were present in separate parts of the island. A new nest was found.

Factors Affecting Status

Few people would visit the island due to its inaccessibility. There is no evidence of human interference. The skeletal remains of a small whale were on one of the "beaches". No other vertebrates were recorded during the visit.

Other Seabirds Recorded

Sterna bergii Crested Tern (30)

Banding

One visit — 9 Nov. 82.

Puffinus carneipes — 43 adults.

Larus novaehollandiae — 1 "runner".

Acknowledgements

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Bibliography

1. Lane, S. G. (1984), 'A report on visits to Stanley and Flat Islands, Western Australia', *Corella* 8(3): 69-70.

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S. G. Lane, Lot 6 Fairview Road, Moonee, via Coffs Harbour, N.S.W. 2450.