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THE STATUS OF QUEENSLAND SEABIRDS

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A survey was made of seabird populations and breeding islands from Cape York south to off Mackay between 1979 and 1990. These data are supplemented with that of others from the Gulf of Carpentaria, the Torres Strait, and other islands of the Great Barrier Reef and south of Mackay to the Queensland/ New South Wales border. Twenty-four species of seabirds breed principally on some 75 islands of the more than 1 000 in this vast area. These islands may be largely sand, mangrove, low wooded, continental or cays, vegetated or unvegetated. The influence of the vegetation of an island on the breeding of seabirds is discussed as are other factors influencing breeding success. Queensland, and in particular the Great Barrier Reef, has the largest and most diverse population of tropical seabirds in Australia, some of which is still relatively undisturbed. There is an international obligation to preserve and maintain this faunal resource.