

Six Mile Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia

Location: 33°38'S., 123°57'E.: 8.5 kilometres east of Point Dempster, W.A.

Status: Class A Reserve vested in the W.A. Department of Conservation and Land Management.

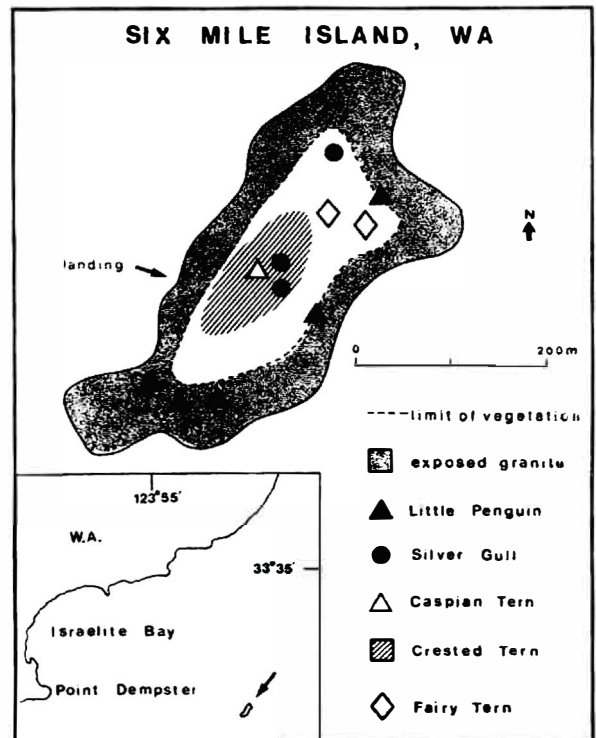
Description: 10 ha: 500 m long by 200 m wide; maximum height 7 m. The island is composed of granite much of which is exposed. The more protected parts are vegetated with *Carpobrotus* sp. while scattered *Atriplex* sp., *Pelargonium* sp. and *Lobelia alata* grow in the scant soil between the jointing planes of the granite. One moderately large, dead *Nitraria* sp. is present at the low north-eastern end.

Landing: Difficult except in calm seas. A landing can only be made on the lee side onto shelving granite where the water is shallow and rocky.

Ornithological History: There is no previous record. R. E. Johnstone and L. Spurr visited the island for two hours on 25 January 1985. Johnstone, L. A. Smith and Spurr visited again on 30 October 1985 and 23 February 1986 for three and one hours respectively.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudiptula minor Little Penguin — Some 35-40



pairs nest under granite slabs, mostly near the south-western end of the island. In January nests contained adults and young ranging from about 10 days old to fully feathered. Young birds were

often sitting in crevices together. Eight were counted under one slab of granite and six under another. In October 45 adults were found in 35 nests; 25 nests were empty, three contained 2 eggs (at least one fresh clutch), one contained a downy nestling and one had two large downy young, one had 2 almost fully fledged young and one nest was abandoned with a dead nestling and a chipped egg. None was seen in February 1986.

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher — Several pairs probably breed on the island. Seven were observed around the island in January and February and 13 in October. In October birds were defending territories and dive-bombing observers but no nests were found.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — Some 20-25 pairs breed on the island. In October, eleven nests were found, seven in the centre of the island, three on the north-eastern end and one at the south-western end. Four nests contained eggs (one clutch of 3, three clutches of 2) and one contained 2 downy young. Eighteen "runners" and one fully feathered chick were also found. Most nests were on *Lobelia* and *Carpobrotus*.

Hydroprogne caspia Caspian Tern — Two or three pairs breed on the island. In January five adults were seen. In October two nests were found in small depressions in the granite near the centre of the island; each contained 2 eggs.

Sterna nereis Fairy Tern—In January 40-45 pairs were nesting in two small areas of shell grit and *Carpobrotus* near the north-eastern end of the island. Four nests contained 1 egg, seven contained 2 eggs and nine were empty. Two adults were seen in October and 8 adults and 1 juvenile, still begging for food, were seen during the February visit.

Factors Affecting Status

The island is rarely visited and there is no evidence of human interference.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

Eight Australian Sea-lions *Neophoca cinerea* were present on 25 January 1985. In the October visit 39 Sea-lions comprising 6 bulls, 20 cows, 12

yearlings and a pup were counted on and around the island. One species of skink, *Egernia napoleonis*, was collected.

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Daption capense</i>	Cape Petrel (remains)
<i>Leucocarbo fuscescens</i>	Black-faced Shag
<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull

Banding

Nil.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Mr L. Spurr of Israelite Bay for his hospitality and for taking us to the island, and to Mr N. Kolichis and Mr and Mrs W. H. Butler whose grants to the Western Australian Museum defrayed the costs of the field work.

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ADDENDUM

The following paragraph was inadvertently omitted from Vol. 11, Number 3, page 94 (Seabird Islands No. 178, Six Mile Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia).

Sterna bergii Crested Tern — About 1 000 pairs nest on the central part of the island on bare granite and shell grit, and on *Carpobrotus*. On 8 January 1986 all birds were on eggs (fide L. Spurr). In February, young ranged from newly hatched chicks to black-capped speckled birds almost ready to fly. Speckled and brownish runners tended to be in loose groups of about 100. Twenty addled eggs were found in the colony.