

## SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 57

## Gull Rock, King George Sound, Western Australia

**Location:** 35°02' S., 118°00' E.; 600 m west of Ledge Point, King George Sound, W.A.

**Status:** Crown land; recommended as a reserve for conservation of flora and fauna.<sup>2</sup>

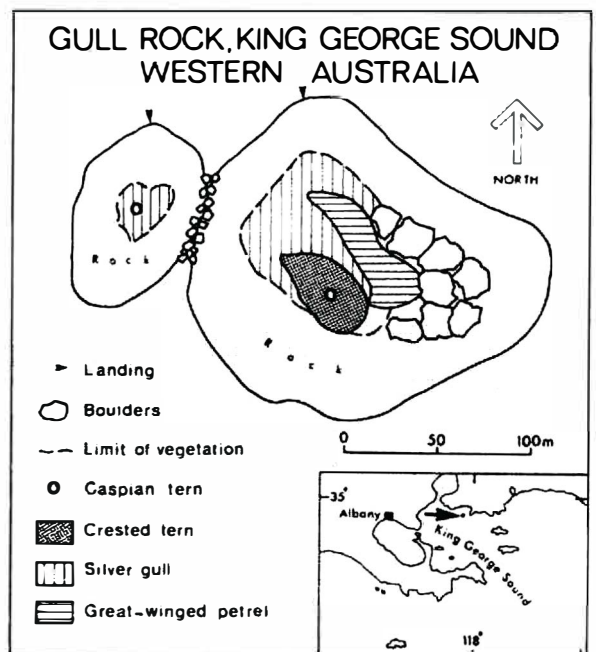
**Description:** 2.5 ha; shaped like a figure of eight, the island is some 250 m long and 150 m at its widest, and rises to about 10 m. The larger, eastern part is connected to the other part by a ridge of rocks.

The island is wholly granite-gneiss and steep-sided on the southern shore. The soil is shallow, occurring only on the top and northern upper slopes. Some 30 species of plants occur; dominant species are Pigface *Carpobrotus virescens*, Annual Veldt Grass *Ehrharta longiflora*, Tree Mallow *Lavatera arborea* and Bearded Oat *Avena alba*.

**Landing:** Possible only in calm weather as at any other time the swell runs far up the slopes.

**Ornithological History:** On 18 June 1937<sup>1</sup>, C. A. Allen found a small colony of Great-winged Petrels breeding on the island. In September 1961, his son T. Allen (pers. comm.) found Caspian Terns nesting, and on 12 November 1966 he also found Crested Terns 'commencing to breed'. Silver Gulls were recorded nesting by N. Kolichis on 12 October 1974.

T. Allen made nine visits to the island between September 1961 and September 1977, Kolichis made five visits from June 1973 to September 1977 and I. Abbott spent about 30 minutes ashore on 28 November 1975. Because of the local weather conditions, visits to the island are generally brief, usually no more than one to one and one half hour's duration.



## Breeding Seabirds and Status

*Pterodroma macroptera* Great-winged Petrel — Probably present to breed from late January to October or November; fresh eggs have been found in late May and the first week in June. Nests are mostly located in rock crevices under Pigface. Estimated 15-20 breeding pairs.

*Haematopus fuliginosus* Sooty Oystercatcher — One, sometimes two pairs nest on the island, usually laying in September or early October.



- *Gull Rock from Ledge Point (looking southwest). The smaller, western end is partly visible at the right hand side.*

Photo: I. Abbott

*Larus novaehollandiae* Silver Gull — Breeds on both parts of the island. Birds were on eggs on 19 August 1976; no young were present but small chicks were present on an earlier visit on 12 October 1974. Some 30-50 breeding pairs.

*Hydroprogne caspia* Caspian Tern — Usually breeding from about August to November. Nests have been found among the Silver Gull's nests on both parts of the islands. One, sometimes two, breeding pairs.

*Sterna bergii* Crested Tern — Nesting from early November to December or January. Estimated 500-1 000 breeding pairs.

### Factors Affecting Status

The difficulty of landing due to the swell and barnacle-covered slopes no doubt discourages visitors to the island. Vandals on the mainland with rifles could cause some damage. King's Skink *Egernia kingii* has not been recorded positively but is probably present and would predate eggs. (An unidentified skink was recorded during one visit.)

### Other Seabirds Recorded

*Phalacrocorax carbo* Black Cormorant.

### Banding

Nil.

### Bibliography

1. Allen, C. A. (1938). 'Breeding Great-winged Petrel'. *Emu* 37: 317.
2. Ride, W. D. L., R. T. Appleyard, B. E. Balme and J. F. Morgan (1974). Conservation reserves in Western Australia: Report of the Conservation through reserves committee to the Environmental Protection Authority.
3. Serventy, D. L., V. N. Serventy and J. Warham (1971). *The Handbook of Australian Sea-birds*. A. H. and A. W. Reed, Sydney.
4. Whittell, H. M. (1938). 'Pterodroma macroptera in Western Australia'. *Emu* 38: 78-79.

### Acknowledgements

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