

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 59

Mistaken Island, King George Sound, Western Australia

Location: 35° 04' S., 117° 56' E., about 100 m east of Vancouver Peninsula, Albany, W.A.

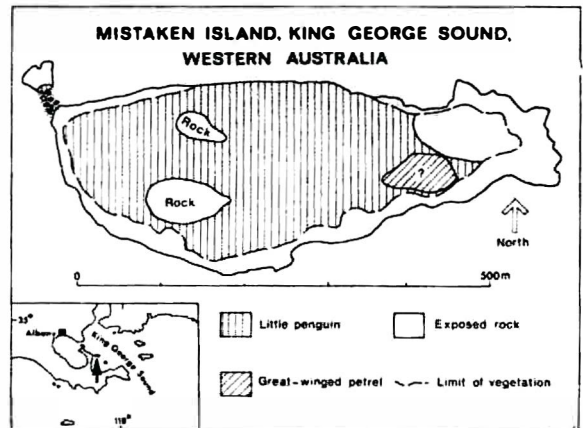
Status: Class C Reserve for conservation of fauna and flora, vested in the W.A. Wildlife Authority.

Other Name: Rabbit Island.

Description: 9.9 ha; 630 m by 230 m at the widest; elevation 44 m. The island is granite-gneiss, much of which is exposed on the flat plateau and sides. Deep soil occurs in places. About fifty plant species occur, of which Annual Veldt Grass *Elrharta longiflora*, Sticky Tailflower *Anthocercis viscosa* (to 4 m), *Oxylobium ellipticum*, *Lhotzkya ericoides* (to 3 m) and *Agonis flexuosa* (to 4 m) dominate. Several above-water rocks lie between the island and the mainland.

Landing: Landing can be made anywhere to suit the prevailing wind conditions. The island can also be reached by a short swim from the mainland.

Ornithological History: W. Nairne Clarke² visited the island on 15 February 1841 but did not mention any seabird species. The next recorded visits were by G. C. Shortridge (2 April 1905)⁴, T. Carter (March ? 1909 and 24 June 1911)⁶ and A. F. Bassett Hull (20 November 1921)³. Hull found uninhabited burrows which he considered belonged to White-faced Storm-petrels *Pelagodroma marina*; however, there are no authentic breeding records. N. Kolichis (pers. comm.) found a pair of Sooty Oystercatchers nesting with two eggs on 12 October 1974. I. Abbott landed on the island on 15 September 1975, spending nearly 90 minutes ashore, then with L. F. Lane,



S. G. Lane and C. Meredith spent three hours there on 23 September 1976¹.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Probably present to breed from July or August until December or later. Some birds are likely to be ashore throughout the year, particularly at night. Estimated 50-100 breeding pairs.

Pterodroma macroptera Great-winged Petrel — Found breeding by Shortridge in 1905⁵ and Carter obtained specimens in 1911⁶. The dried remains of one of these birds was found in September 1976¹, but it is doubtful if breeding still occurs on the island¹.

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher — One pair probably nests regularly on the island, usually in October or November.



● *Mistaken Island (looking south-west).*



● *View of the south-west corner of the island from the adjacent mainland.*

Factors Affecting Status

Evidently the island has been considerably disturbed. W. Nairne Clarke² mentioned seeing Goats *Capra hircus* on the island as well as Brush Bronzewings *Phaps elegans*. Neither was present during my visits, but Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus* were common. To judge from the many paths over the island, it appears to be often visited by people. Carter¹ mentioned eggs of the penguins having been robbed but by whom was not disclosed.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

King's Skinks *Egernia kingii*, Tiger Snakes *Notechis ater* and Dugites *Pseudonaja affinis* also occur (C. Meredith, pers. comm.).

Other Seabirds Recorded

Daption capense Cape Petrel (remains)⁴.
Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull.

Banding

Nil.

Bibliography

1. Carter, T. (1910), 'Remarks on Some Birds of Western Australia', *Ibis*: (9) 4: 647-658.
2. Clarke, W. Nairne (1841), 'Journal of an Expedition to Nornalup, or the Deep River of the Sealers, in the Months of March and April, 1841', *The Inquirer* No. 56 (25 August).
3. Hull, A. F. Basset (1922), 'A visit to the Archipelago of the Recherche S. W. Australia', *Emu* 21: 277-289.
4. Lane, S. G. (1977), 'A Survey of Breeding Seabirds on Mistaken Island, Western Australia', *West. Aust. Nat.* 14: 27-28.
5. Ogilvie-Grant, W. R. (1910), 'On a Collection of Birds from Western Australia, with Field Notes by Mr G. C. Shortridge', *Ibis* (9) 4: 156-191.
6. Whittell, H. M. (1938), 'Pterodroma macroptera in Western Australia', *Emu* 38: 78-79.

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