

Sandy Island, Western Australia

Location: 34° 52' S., 116° 03' E.; 4 km south-east of Point D'Entrecasteaux on the south coast of W.A.

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

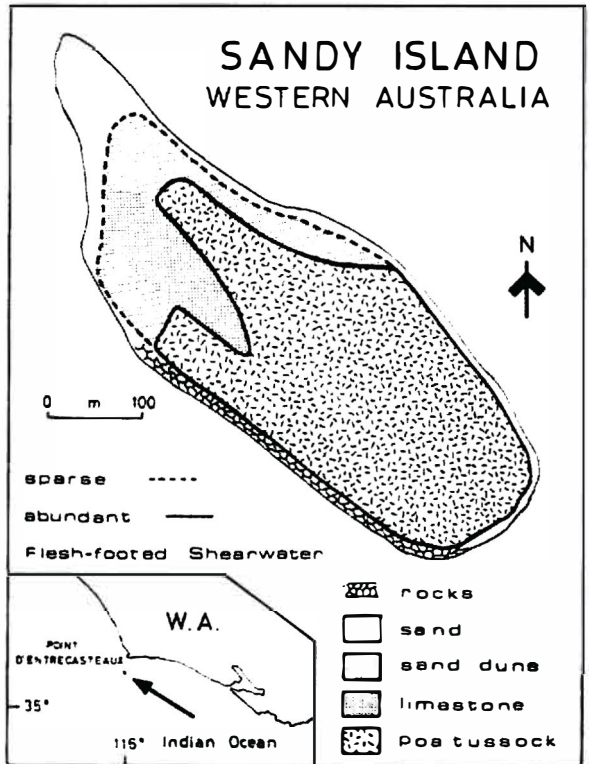
Description: 25 ha; about 800 m by some 300 m at the widest, the island is flat (to 3 m) and sandy for the greater part. At the north-western end an area of limestone rock and unconsolidated dune occurs and the maximum elevation here is 9 m. The southern coastline is rocky (granite-gneiss). On limestone the vegetation is made up of low *Rhagodia* thickets; on unconsolidated dune it is dominated by *Spinifex* and *Olearia*; the flat part of the island is a *Poa* tussockland with *Carpobrotus* and *Lobelia alata* locally dominant. Forty-six plant species were recorded¹.

Landing: Weather permitting, landing is no problem onto sandy beaches along the north-eastern or western coasts.

Ornithological History: W. Nairne Clarke² visited Sandy Island in May 1841 and recorded nesting by 'Sooty' and 'Variegated' Petrels, presumably meaning the Flesh-footed and Little Shearwater respectively. I. Abbott spent from 26 March to 4 April 1976 on the island.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Puffinus carneipes Flesh-footed Shearwater — Very common. The island is riddled with their burrows. However, not more than 100 adults seemed to visit the island during the first hour after dusk each night during Abbott's stay; a



• Sandy Island (looking south-east) from Point D'Entrecasteaux.

Photo: L. K. Abbott



▫ View from the summit at the western end (looking south-east). Foreground vegetation is *Rhagodia* with *Poa tussockland* in the background.

few chicks at the 'French-poodle' stage were seen in or at the entrance to some burrows. When undertaking vegetational studies in which 50 random 1 m² quadrats were distributed in a 4 ha plot, 63 active burrows were counted in the quadrats. Extrapolation of these data suggests a total population of about 300 000 pairs.

Puffinus assimilis Little Shearwater — 'Variegated Petrels' were reported breeding on the island in 1841², but there are no subsequent records.

Factors Affecting Status

As the island is only 3 km from the fishing and holiday settlement of Windy Harbour, frequent unauthorised visits to it are likely, and no doubt some interference with breeding birds would result.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

King's Skink *Egernia kingii* occurs and doubtless predate eggs. During the month of October large flocks of ravens visit the island, presumably to predate eggs (D. Beale, pers. comm.).

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Great Cormorant
<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>	Little Pied Cormorant
<i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>	Sooty Oystercatcher
<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	Silver Gull
<i>Sterna bergii</i>	Crested Tern

Banding

Nil.

Bibliography

1. Abbott, I. (1980), 'The flora of 37 South-western Australian islands', *Western Australian Herbarium Research Notes*, No. 3: 19-36.
2. Clarke, W. Nairne (1842), *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal*, 3 September 1842.

Acknowledgements

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