

## SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 112

## Edward Island, Western Australia

**Location:** 31°02'S., 115°20'E.; about 100 m offshore near Lancelin, W.A. and some 115 km north-north-west of Fremantle.

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

**Other Name:** Edwards Island.

**Description:** 0.15 ha; 100 m by 20 m at the widest, the island is in the form of a table-topped plateau 6 m high. It consists of aeolianite limestone, and is encircled by vertical cliffs except at the north-west where the island has been eroded into several stacks.

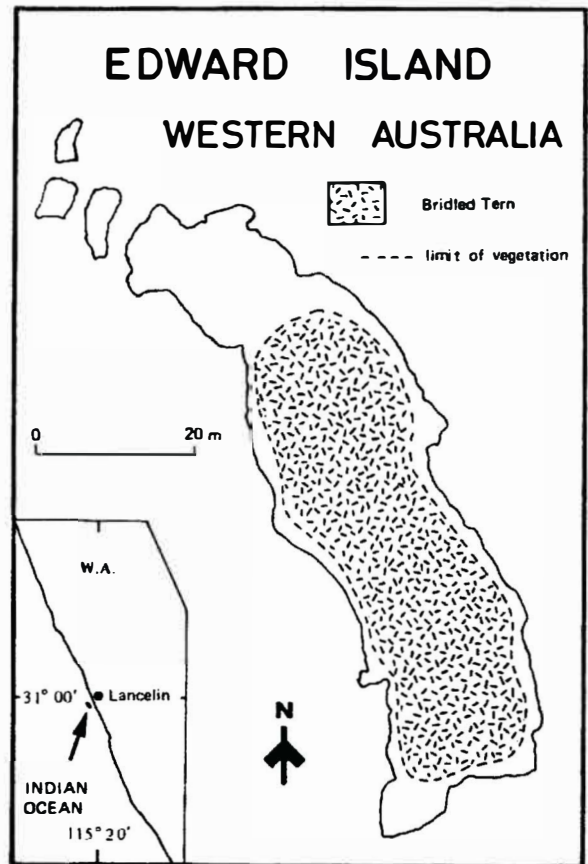
Seven species of plant have been recorded<sup>1</sup>. Of these *Carpobrotus virescens* and *Frankenia pauciflora* are codominant on the plateau in between which are herbfields of *Gasoul crystallinum* and *Sarcocornia* sp. Scattered clumps of *Nitraria schoberi* (to 1 m) are present on the plateau and also on the north-east cliffs.

**Landing:** There is no difficulty landing in any reasonable weather as the ledges and reefs west of the island usually break the force of the swell.

**Ornithological History:** J. R. Ford<sup>2</sup> visited the island on 6 October 1961; he also made observations from adjacent mainland points on various other occasions. I. Abbott spent about 30 minutes ashore on 8 December 1976.

## Breeding Seabirds and Status

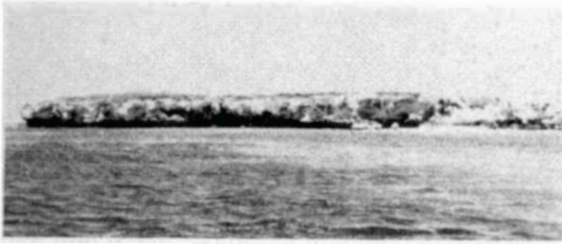
*Puffinus pacificus* Wedge-tailed Shearwater — in 1961 Ford<sup>2</sup> found 'several' burrows under *Nitraria* on the plateau. Abbott specifically searched under all the clumps and failed to find any sign of shearwaters during his visit in 1976.



• NOTE: Locations were not available for other breeding species.

A few pairs may occasionally breed on the island.

*Larus novaehollandiae* Silver Gull — Observations from the nearby mainland indicated that about 20 birds were nesting on 8 September



• *Edward Island (looking south-west).*

1961 and a nest with two eggs was found on 6 October the same year<sup>2</sup>. There was no sign of the species during the visit on 8 December 1976.

*Larus pacificus* Pacific Gull — Recorded breeding on the island<sup>1</sup> but no details are available.

*Hydroprogne caspia* Caspian Tern — One pair was recorded as 'probably breeding' in October 1959, two birds were seen 'changing over at the nest' on 8 September 1961, and two chicks were found on 6 October 1961<sup>2</sup>. No birds were present on 8 December 1976.

*Sterna anaethetus* Bridled Tern — About 50-100 birds were observed flying over the island in October 1959, October 1961, January 1962 and November 1962, but none was seen on 8 September 1961<sup>2</sup>. About 50 pairs had eggs or small chicks on 8 December 1976; the nests were on ledges on the cliffs and on the plateau but only under *Nitraria* or among *Frankenia*.

*Sterna bergii* Crested Tern — About 12 pairs nested in October 1961<sup>2</sup>. None was seen on 8 December 1976. Small numbers probably breed occasionally on the island.

#### Factors Affecting Status

P. Prideaux (pers. comm.) reported that several years ago visitors to the Lancelin district had shot at a sign on the island from the nearby mainland. Such vandals could cause destruction of wildlife. The White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* has been recorded nesting on the island<sup>2</sup> and may cause some predation of breeding seabirds.

#### OTHER VERTEBRATES

None recorded.



• *Looking north from the top of the island with Lancelin Island in the background. Bridled Terns are visible in the foreground and in the air.*

#### Other Seabirds Recorded

*Phalacrocorax varius* Pied Cormorant

#### Banding

Nil.

#### Bibliography

1. Abbott, I. (1980), 'The floras of 37 South-western Australian islands', *Western Australian Herbarium Research Notes* No. 3: 19-36.
2. Ford, J. (1965), 'The avifauna of the islands between Dongara and Lancelin, Western Australia', *Emu* 64: 129-144, 181-203.
3. Gillham, M. E. (1961), 'Alteration of the breeding habitat by sea-birds and seals in Western Australia', *J. Ecol.* 49: 289-300.
4. Serventy, D. L., V. Serventy and J. Warham (1971), *The Handbook of Australian Sea-birds*. A. H. and A. W. Reed, Sydney.

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