

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 119

Frederick Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia

Location: 34°04'S., 122°00'E.; 22 km south-south-east from Esperance, W.A.

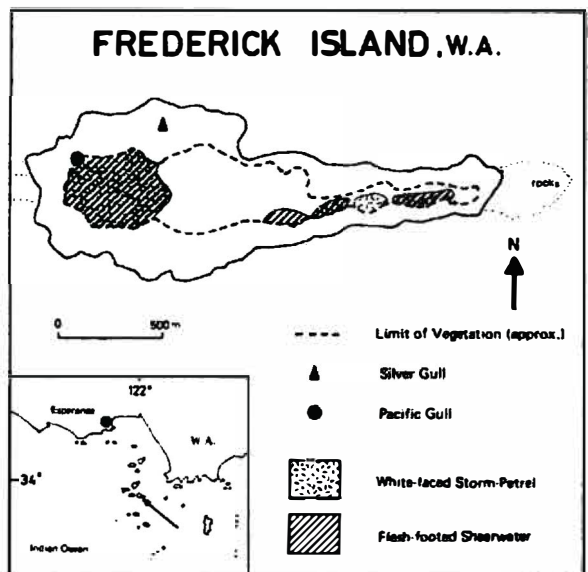
Status: Class A Reserve vested in the W.A. Wildlife Authority; entry permit required.

Other Name: Goose Island (formerly).

Description: 77 ha; 'club' shaped, some 1 800 m long by 900 m at the widest part, with the 'handle' extending to the east. It consists of granite-gneiss and rises to 88 m towards the western end. There are large areas of bare or almost bare rock while other parts consist of stunted vegetation growing in rock cracks and breaking rock, all unsuited for burrowing. The remaining areas comprise mostly low vegetation (*Poa*, other grasses, *Rhagodia*?, *Carpobrotus* and others), with a few patches *Melaleuca* spp. formerly three or four metres high. Much of the vegetation was extensively burnt by a wild-fire probably nearly a year earlier. The dead trees indicate the height of the bushes before the fire. Vegetation regrowth was extensive in October 1981.

Landing: Onto sloping rock on the northern shore, the location depending on the prevailing conditions; difficult except in very calm conditions.

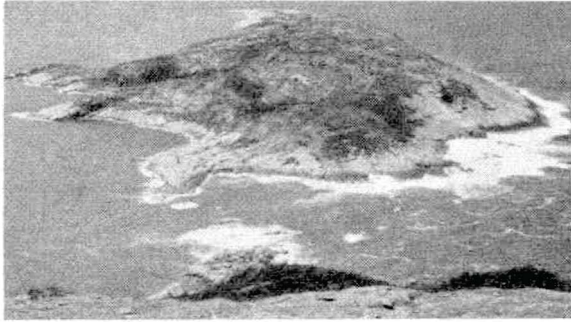
Ornithological History: There is no previous record of any ornithological visit though the former name would indicate that Cape Barren Geese were present. S. G. Lane¹, L. F. Lane and Wm. Merillees were on the island for 4.5 hours on 30 October 1981 and found evidence



of breeding by Flesh-footed Shearwaters, White-faced Storm-Petrels, Silver Gulls and Pacific Gulls. The following information was obtained during that visit.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Puffinus carneipes Flesh-footed Shearwater — Burrows of these birds were found in most of the suitable areas on the island, usually among storm-petrel colonies. Isolated burrows were found under rocks in a number of places. Between 50 and 60 burrows were searched, all indicating recent occupation by the birds; two



● *Frederick Island (looking east).*

Photo: Wm. Merilees



● *Part of the north side (looking north-west). Long Island is in the background at right.*

burrows each contained two birds and one was found in a third burrow. Numerous burrows were in the process of being dug and an estimate of "active" ones was between 500 and 1 000.

Pelagodroma marina White-faced Storm-Petrel — The remains of one of these birds were found near the nest of a Pacific Gull. Burrows were distributed throughout most of the vegetated areas except those in the shallow, rocky places and where the vegetation had been thickest. Most of the burrows had been very recently attended, though no birds were found in the few checked. Many burrows were incomplete while some contained nesting material. A rough estimate of the "fresh" burrows was between 5 000 and 8 000.

Cereopsis novaehollandiae Cape Baren Goose — Four "adults" and three almost-flying young were seen; one of these was captured and banded.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — Two birds were frequenting a small headland on the north-eastern end and a used nest was found.

Larus pacificus Pacific Gull — Four adults and an immature bird were counted. One pair had a nest with two eggs near the western end.

Factors Affecting Status

The burning of the vegetation must have affected the habitat greatly; if it occurred during the breeding season it would have probably destroyed many nesting birds. However, there

was no evidence of this at the time of the visit. A few Australian Ravens *Corvus coronoides* were present and a large stick nest thought to belong to this species was found in a burnt *Melaleuca* patch. There was no evidence of human predation.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

King's Skink *Egernia kingii* and small skinks and lizards were present.

Other Seabirds Recorded

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher

Banding

Puffinus carneipes — 5 "adults".

Cereopsis novaehollandiae — 1 large runner.

Bibliography

1. Lane, S. G. (1982), 'Avifauna of islands off Esperance, Western Australia', *Corella* 6: 37-39.

Acknowledgements

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