

## Birds of Elphick Knob in the Dampier Archipelago — January 1981

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### Introduction

The Dampier Archipelago comprises a group of islands within a 15 km radius of Dampier on the north-west coast of Western Australia.

Elphick Knob is a small rocky island, approximately 1.0 km by 0.5 km. It is clearly identified by its 'Popes Nose' appearance and is just off the eastern side of Rosemary Island at the extremity of the Dampier Archipelago. It is possible to walk from Rosemary Island to Elphick Knob across Illingworth Passage at low tide.

The island's vegetation is mainly low spinifex *Triodia* sp. with beach spinifex *Spinifex longifolius* on the low lying sections of the coast and with patches of *Sarcostemma australe* above the northern shore.

This article gives an account of the birds observed on two short visits each of two hours duration on the mornings of 25 and 26 January 1981. I have been visiting the islands of the Archipelago regularly from 1975 observing and recording birds and I have added previous observations where relevant.

### Bird List:

#### Wedge-tailed Shearwater

No birds sighted. Burrows are present however similar to those on Malus Island. They are located on the sand ridge above the north shore of the island under *Sarcostemma australe*. I have observed these birds in the waters of the Archipelago during the months of February, March and April.

#### Pied Cormorant

One bird seen in flight over the island.

#### Least Frigatebird

No birds sighted. I have however observed these birds high over the area on previous visits. Usually two or three.

#### Eastern Reef Egret

At least eight adults present at the western end of the island; all grey phase. Found seven stick nests in the rock ledges at the western end. Four eggs in one. A young grey Egret, height approximately 0.3 m, seen in a rock crevice.

#### Rufous Night Heron

Two adults flew from a rock cavern on each visit.

#### Osprey

One individual present on the southern cliff face. Osprey breed successfully each winter on Rosemary Island.

**White-bellied Sea-Eagle**

A stick nest on the actual Knob at the eastern end of the island, I believe to be of this species.

**Australian Kestrel**

An individual observed over the island in April 1978.

**Beach Thick-knee**

One bird sighted near Illingworth Passage on the tidal flat.

**Sooty Oystercatcher**

Two birds present on both visits.

**Red-capped Plover**

One seen near Illingworth Passage.

**Ruddy Turnstone**

Small groups on the rocky beach areas around the island at each visit.

**Greenshank.**

A few individuals on the tidal flat near Illingworth Passage.

**Silver Gull**

100+ observed flying around the rock ledges at the perimeter of the island. Three nests found in use, each with one egg, two on rock ledges and the third amongst beach spinifex. The gulls were frequenting and protecting the same areas as the Bridled Terns.

**Bridled Tern**

100+ observed over various sections of the rock ledges. A search of the ledges accessible found the areas to be heavily used. I found only three nests in use. Two with one egg each, and the other a small chick.

In a tunnel system under low spinifex I sighted an adult tern. I had previously observed 40+ of this species when fishing off Rosemary Island in February 1978.

**Lesser Crested Tern**

A group of 50+ observed on a sand bar off the north shore of the island.

**Welcome Swallow**

A pair present on both visits.

**Pied Butcherbird**

Two adults and two immature birds observed on both visits.

**References**

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