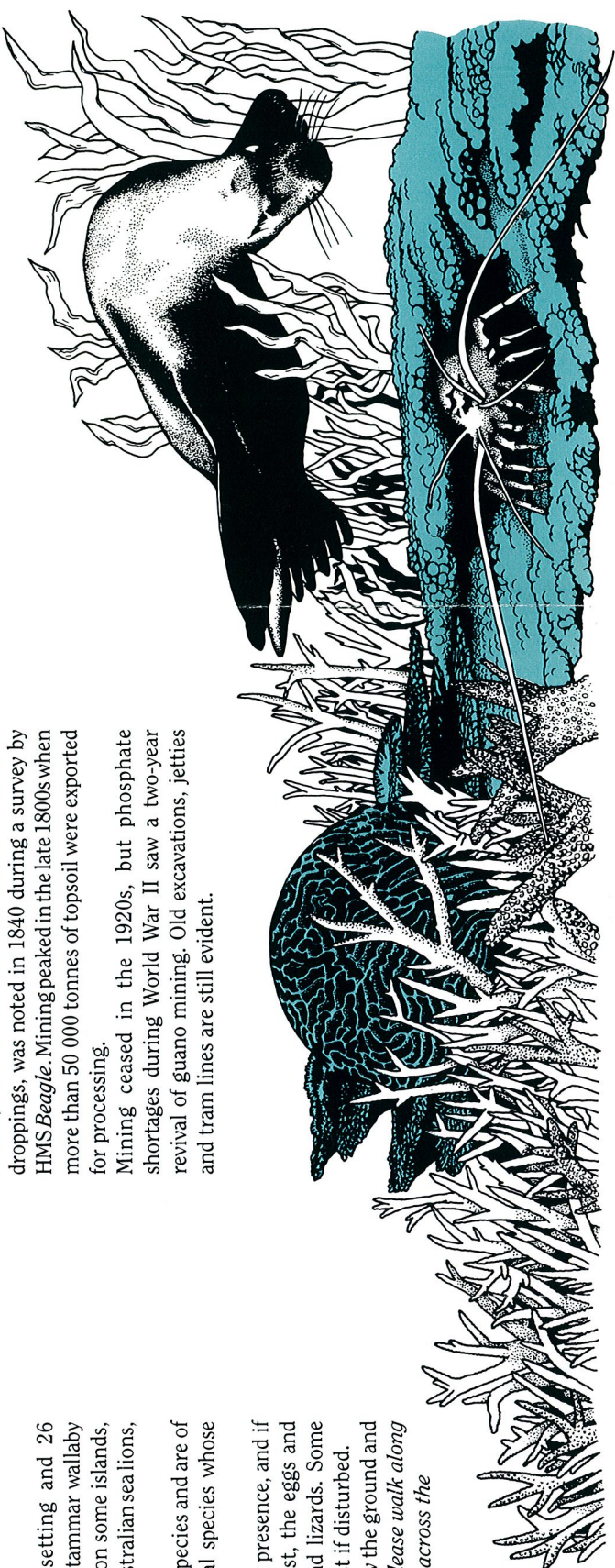


LIBRARY

Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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GUANO

Guano, the natural fertilizer derived from bird droppings, was noted in 1840 during a survey by HMS *Beagle*. Mining peaked in the late 1800s when more than 50 000 tonnes of topsoil were exported for processing.

Mining ceased in the 1920s, but phosphate shortages during World War II saw a two-year revival of guano mining. Old excavations, jetties and tram lines are still evident.

FAUNA

Reptiles thrive in this harsh setting and 26 species have been recorded. The tamar wallaby and Abrolhos bush rat are found on some islands, and marine mammals include Australian sea lions, dolphins and whales.

The islands are home to 95 bird species and are of particular importance for several species whose world populations are declining.

The birds are sensitive to human presence, and if disturbed or driven from the nest, the eggs and chicks become prey for gulls and lizards. Some species will not return to the nest if disturbed.

Nests occur both above and below the ground and are easily trampled by visitors. *Please walk along the shoreline and avoid walking across the islands.*

FUTURE USE

Future use for conservation, fishing and tourism relies on our ability to maintain the quality of the Abrolhos environment. Fisheries Aquatic Reserves, National Park and multiple-use Marine Park areas will soon be established for the protection of this precious resource.

Scallop and wetline fisheries also operate in the waters of the Abrolhos.

Rock lobster fisheries make an important contribution to the region's economy.

There are about 200 boats licensed to fish for rock lobster near the Abrolhos. The fishing season lasts from 15 March to 30 June, when fishers and their families are allowed to reside on the islands. *Diving for rock lobsters is not permitted.*

THE ROCK LOBSTER INDUSTRY



PLANNING YOUR VISIT

The Abrolhos is about 60 km west of Geraldton, and the best time to visit is from March to October when the winds are most tolerable. Information about charter boats and day flights can be obtained from the Geraldton Tourist Bureau.

Camping on the islands is not permitted, though visitors may go onshore during the day. Pets, firearms and fires are not allowed on the islands.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Private vessels must be fully self-contained, as moorings, fuel, food and water are not available at the islands. Take extra supplies; bad weather often causes delays. Ensure that you have enough chain to anchor in 20 fathoms (40 m) and obtain the necessary nautical charts - AUS 751 covers the Abrolhos.

- Some islands have restricted access. Before leaving for the Abrolhos, contact the Fisheries Department in Perth on (09) 220 5333, or in Geraldton on (099) 211 956.
- Obtaining a safe anchorage is crucial and this should be your first priority on reaching the islands.
- Boating in the late afternoon or early morning can be hazardous when reflection from the sun severely reduces the visibility of the reefs.
- Anchoring in shallow water can be extremely dangerous when the weather changes - deep water anchoring is recommended.
- Beware of wind shifts.
- Ensure that you can safely navigate out of your anchorage if the weather changes for the worse.

DANGEROUS SAILING

The first European account of the Abrolhos was in 1619 by Commander Frederick de Houtman of the Dutch East India Company, who almost ran aground. From this may have come the name Abrolhos, derived from the Portuguese expression *Abri vossos olhos* or "Keep your eyes open!"

This warning was not heeded on 5 June 1629 when the *Batavia* ran aground shipwrecking the 300 people aboard. While Commander Pelsaert and 44 of his men took the ship's tender to Jakarta for help, fighting and mutiny erupted on the Islands.

Jeronimus Cornelisz had more than 130 men, women and children murdered. When Pelsaert returned, he captured and tried the perpetrators and had 36 men hanged. The shelters which remain from this tragic episode are the first European structures built in Australia.

CARE FOR THE ABROLHOS

- Rubbish must be brought back to the mainland as there is no disposal facility on the islands.
- Bilges should not be pumped in the shallows. Oil and chemical wastes should be disposed of on the mainland.
- Anchors and chains destroy corals. Always anchor in sand or mud, away from coral.
- Corals break easily. Avoid touching them when diving and don't walk on reefs.
- Nesting birds and other fauna must not be disturbed.
- Historical items must be left in place to preserve our heritage. Metal detecting is not acceptable.
- Conserve fish numbers by taking only what you need to eat. Fisheries regulations apply.
- Fishing camps and jetties are private property and off-limits to uninvited visitors - please respect this.

Further Information:

Fisheries Department Fisherman's Wharf PO Box 1171 GERALDTON 6530 (099) 211 956	Geraldton Tourist Bureau Chapman Road PO Box 187 GERALDTON 6530 (099) 213 999
Department Conservation and Land Management 7th Floor, Town Towers PO Box 72 GERALDTON 6530 (099) 215 955	WA Museum (Geraldton Branch) Marine Terrace PO Box 112 GERALDTON 6530 (099) 215 080

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THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS

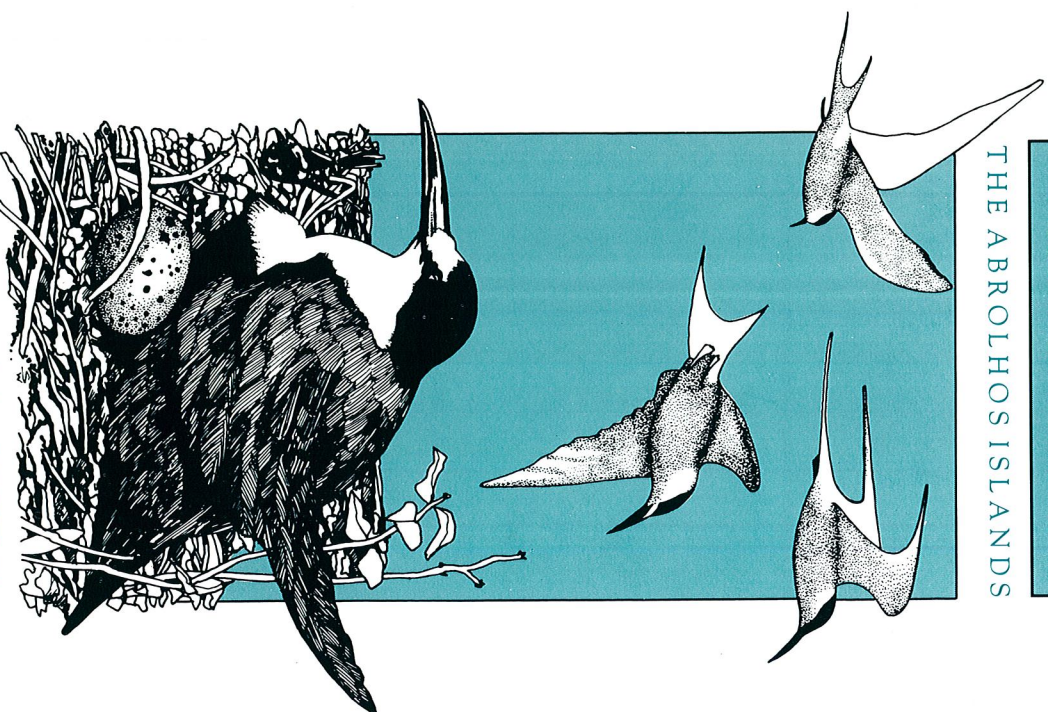
The Houtman Abrolhos is an archipelago of 108 islands surrounded by a maze of reefs and channels providing refuge for numerous rare, migratory and native species.

The islands are mainly deposits of low, windswept limestone, sand and coral. The vegetation is primarily saltbush, beach spinifex and dwarf coastal shrubs, with the exception of small mangrove communities and a single patch of the rare gum, *Eucalyptus oraria*.

Many varieties of tropical marine life are carried to the Abrolhos in the warm waters of the Leeuwin Current, which flows south from the tropics. Temperate marine systems also are an influence, with kelps, sea lions and other cool water species occurring in the area. This unusual coexistence of tropical and temperate species makes for a particularly diverse ecosystem of great scientific significance.

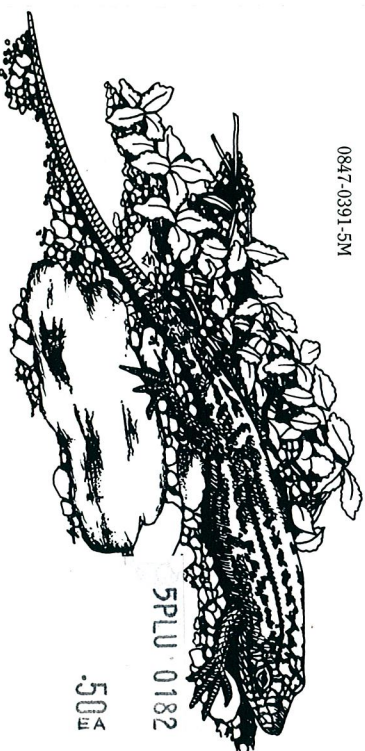
HOUTMAN ABROLHOS

THE ABROLHOS ISLANDS



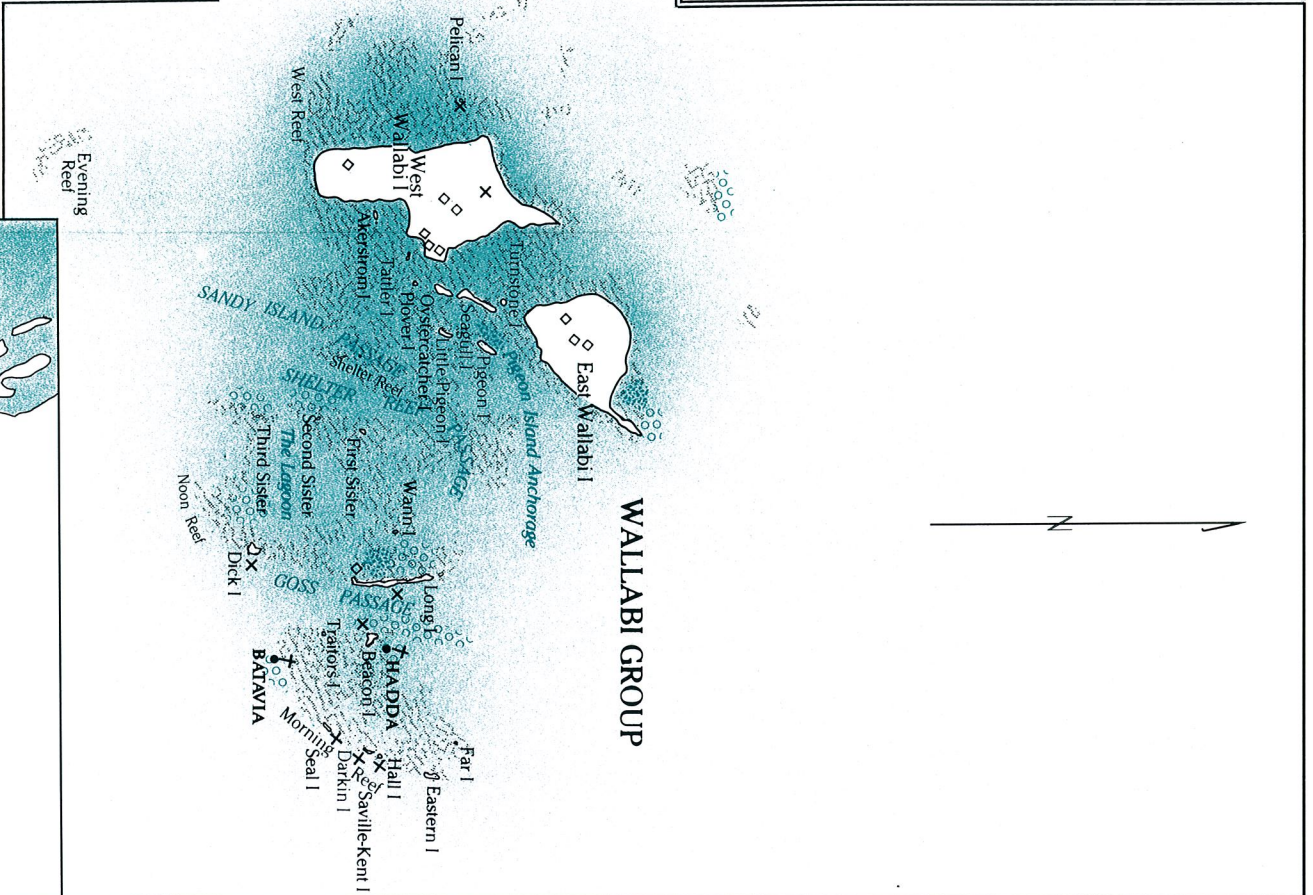
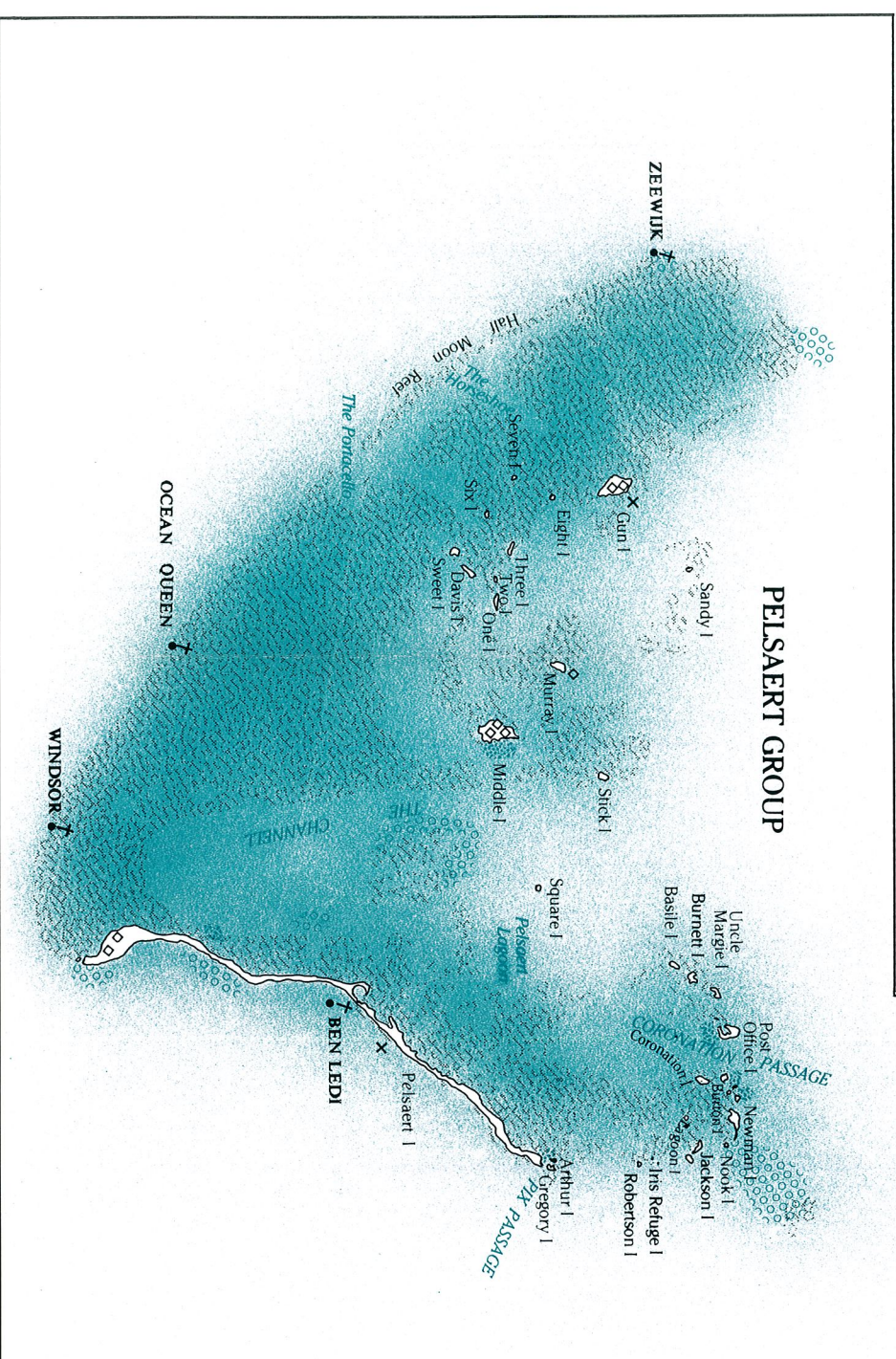
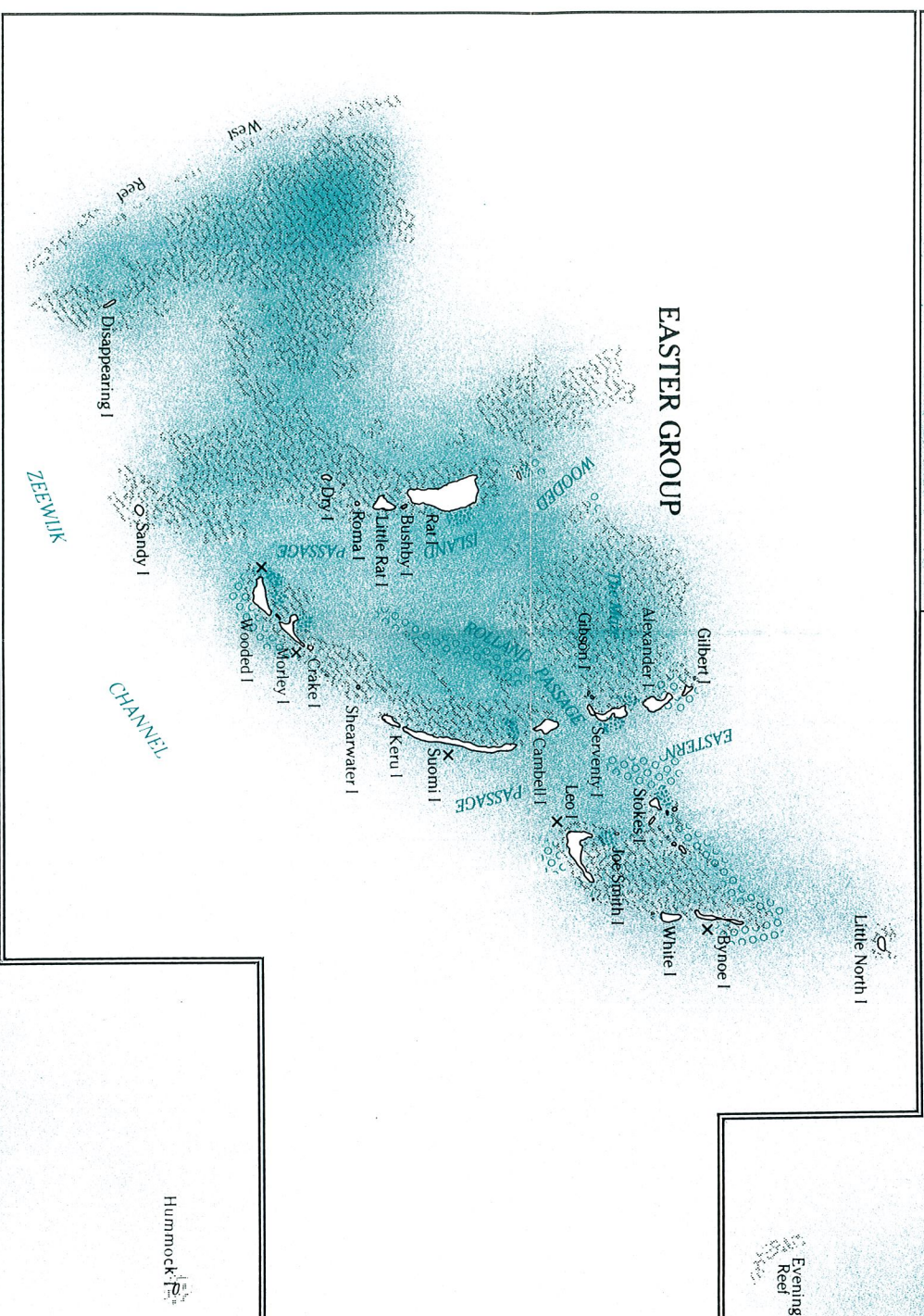
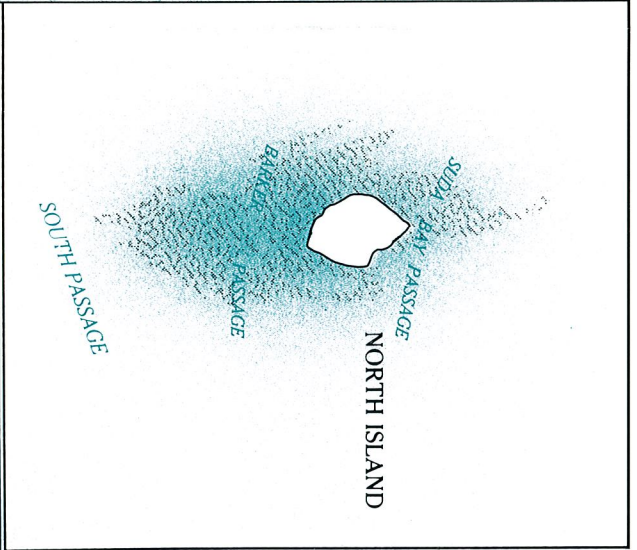
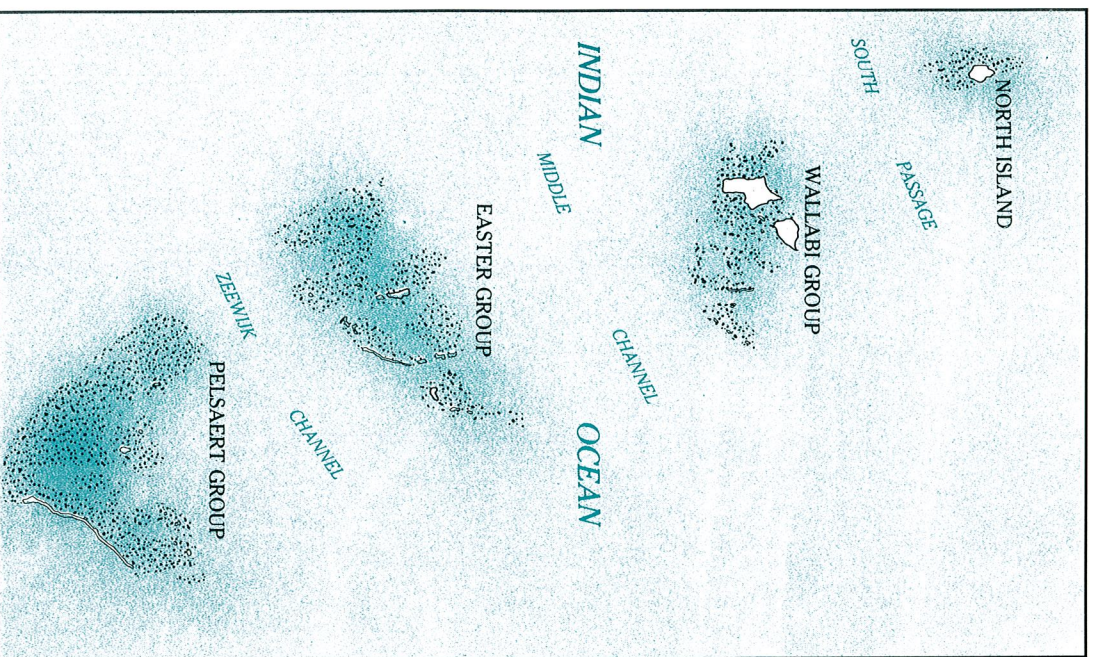
A VISITOR GUIDE

Abrolhos Islands Consultative Council
Department of Conservation and
Land Management
Fisheries Department of W.A.



5PLU 0182

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CAUTION: This map is a general guide only and should not be used for navigational purposes. The safety of marked anchorages varies greatly. Wind changes make many anchorages extremely hazardous.

HOUTMAN ABRROLHOS

SCALE

0 1 5 10
KM

LEGEND

- Reefs & Shallows
- Anchorages
- Dive Sites
- Wrecks
- Historic Sites
- Birdnesting Sites

LOCALITY MAP

INDIAN OCEAN
PERTH
ALBANY
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
HOUTMAN ABRROLHOS
GERALDTON

Cartography by Land Information Branch