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REMEMBER

Practise caution. Wedge-tailed shearwaters and Pilbara short-tailed mice live and nest in burrows that can easily collapse underfoot. Please keep away from nest areas.

Stay cool. Carry water and protection from the sun.

Protect plants and animals. All are protected. Clearing of vegetation is not permitted, and can result in fines of up to \$2000. Collecting of live shells is prohibited in intertidal zones. No firearms or pets are allowed on Serrurier Island.

Caring for corals. Corals are very fragile life forms. They are easily damaged by touching. When mooring a boat, please anchor in sand and away from coral or reef areas.

Light no fires. Open fires are not permitted. Campfire escapes can cause irreparable damage to the ecology of the islands. Please use portable gas stoves.

Ask before camping. Overnight camping is permitted in areas indicated on the map, but please seek permission from the CALM office beforehand. Garbage trucks do not visit the island! Please take all your litter with you.



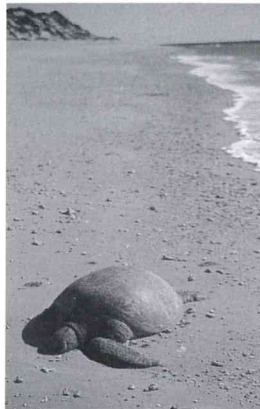
Caspian Tern nesting colony

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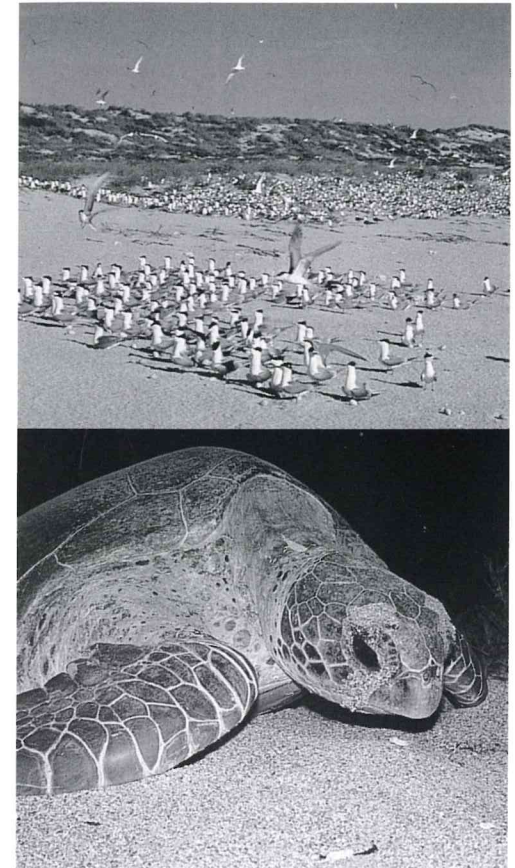


DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT

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SERRURIER ISLAND

Nature Reserve



VISITOR INFORMATION GUIDE



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT



ENVIRONMENT AUSTRALIA

SERRURIER ISLAND NATURE RESERVE

Serrurier Island is a sand cay that is located 42 km west of Onslow and approximately 1300 km north of Perth.

The island has formed over thousands of years from the deposition of sand and marine sediments. Serrurier Island now covers an area of approximately 350 ha.

Since 1976, Serrurier Island has been classified as a nature reserve for the conservation of flora and fauna.

The climate is arid subtropical. The island experiences hot and humid summers from October to April. The winter months (May to September) are usually warm, and these are the best times of year to visit.

Prevailing winds are common and may reach gale force, which persists for several days. On average, the area experiences two tropical cyclones per year during the cyclone season (October to April).

Visitors to the island should be prepared for extreme weather. Water and protection from the sun should be carried at all times. Keep visits brief to minimise impacts on the island environment.



Serrurier Island (aerial photo looking south east)



Green Sea Turtles mating

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

The beaches and waters surrounding Serrurier Island are home to a variety of animals. Coral reefs fringe sections of the outer rim of the island platform. Stingrays, sharks, sea snakes and turtles frequent these waters. For this reason, swimming should never be undertaken alone.

Dugongs are also regular visitors to the shallow intertidal zones, and feed on the seagrasses that occur nearby.

Green sea turtles nest on Serrurier Island during the months of October to February, although nesting has been recorded as early as August and as late as March. Females come ashore at night to lay their eggs, and leave distinctive tracks in the sand all the way to their nests. Hatchlings usually emerge from the sand from December to February. After incubating for about two months, they make a life-or-death dash for the water. A female turtle can lay up to 500 eggs each season, but of these, only about one will survive to adulthood. Young turtles must avoid being eaten by birds, crabs, or marine predators. To ensure their long-term survival, it is important that these islands remain a viable rookery for these species.

Recreational fishing is a common pastime for visitors to Serrurier Island.

TERRESTRIAL ENVIRONMENT

Serrurier Island is an important area for seabirds, such as the white-breasted sea-eagle and the osprey. These two species can be seen gliding on thermal air currents. Their nests sit conspicuously on high sand dunes around the island. Many other species of seabirds breed on Serrurier Island, and some (such as the Caspian terns) will nest above the high-tide mark on the beaches.

Approximately 43 per cent of the island is used by wedge-tailed shearwaters for nesting. There are an estimated 50,000 burrows of wedge-tailed shearwaters throughout the island, supporting between 8,000–20,000 nesting pairs. These birds return to the island and burrows between August to September. Egg-laying commences from October to November. Shearwaters will leave again by May.

There are also seven species of terrestrial reptiles. Of these, the dragon-lizard (*Lophognathus gilbertii*) and the skinks (*Ctenotus saxatilis*, *Sphenomorphus isolepis*) can often be seen during the day. The ripples that are commonly seen in the sand are formed by the sand skink (*Lerista bipes*). No snakes inhabit the island. It is recommended that visitors restrict their walking to the beaches, as shearwater burrows may collapse underfoot and cause injury. Breeding birds and their nests should not be disturbed.



Wedgetailed Shearwater Bert & Babs Wells/CALM

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

FISHING

Fishing charters are available from Onslow. Normal fishing regulations apply. Let someone reliable know where you are going and when you are expected to return.

SWIMMING, SNORKELLING, DIVING

Serrurier Island offers beautiful warm beaches to swim from. Snorkelling and diving can be enjoyed around the southern half of the island, and offer incredible underwater photography or viewing of corals and other marine life.

BIRD WATCHING

Species often sighted around the island include the osprey, white-breasted sea-eagle, beach stone-curlew, Caspian tern, silver gull, wedge-tailed shearwater, and Richard's pipit.

TURTLE WATCHING

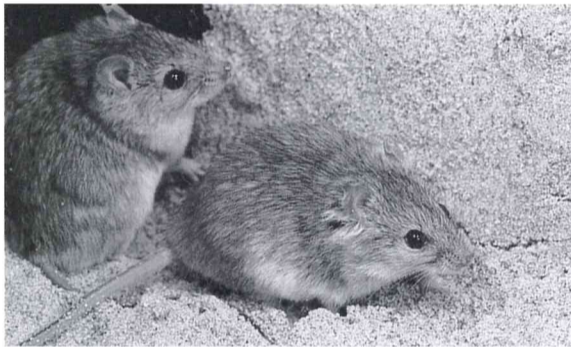
Serrurier Island is an important rookery for the Green sea turtle. Female Green turtles can be seen to come ashore during the breeding season. Turtles can be viewed from a distance and at night, but please do not approach them when they are moving up the beach. To minimise disturbance, sit quietly on the beach and watch for sea turtles emerging from the ocean, but do not shine lights on them. If you see a tag on their flipper, record the date, time, place, circumstances and tag number, and send this information to CALM.

LAKELAND DOWNS MOUSE: A SPECIES AT RISK

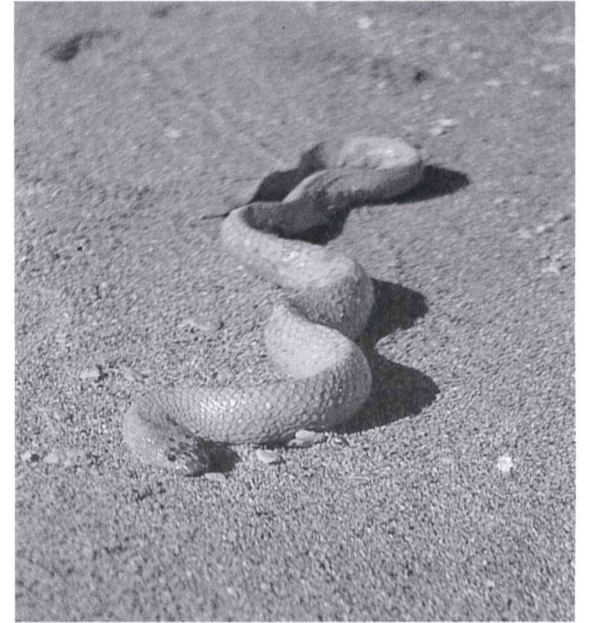
Serrurier Island was chosen as the site for the release of a rare native Australian mouse, the Lakeland Downs short-tailed mouse (*Leggadina lakedownensis*). This species is rarely found on mainland Australia, and has a population on nearby Thevenard Island. Its Aboriginal name is Kerakenga.

The Lakeland Downs short-tailed mouse weighs approximately 25–30g. Its hair is grey-brown above and white below. It has a tail that is shorter than the total length of its head and body, hence its common name of short-tailed mouse. These mice have good adaptations to survive in an arid environment. They burrow to escape the hot daytime temperatures, and become active at night when temperatures are lower. Lakeland Downs short-tailed mice can obtain all their water from the juicy plants and invertebrates that form part of their diet.

The Lakeland Downs short-tailed mouse is in danger because house mice now occur on Thevenard Island. A baiting program for house mice could place the native mice at risk, so it was considered important to establish a second population.



Lakeland Downs mice



Seasnake

During 1996, with co-operation and support from the Department of Conservation and Land Management, the University of Western Australia, Environment Australia, and West Australian Petroleum, several native mice were translocated to Serrurier Island from Thevenard Island. Subsequent trips in 1997 found that the mice were well established. Footprints could be seen in the sand, and burrows were abundant.

Monitoring grids have been set across the southern end of Serrurier Island, and have been marked by dropper posts. Monitoring involves the use of traps, spot-lighting, and looking for tracks and burrows in the sand. It is expected to continue for several years to ensure that the population remains viable. Visitors to Serrurier Island are asked to leave the monitoring grids alone, as they are important reference markers for the study of this Australian native species.

