

2008 Annual Report for Park Use Permit # V10610242: Leach's Storm-petrel survival in British Columbia CT 14 '08 PH01:08

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In 2008 I completed the second year of a survival study of Leach's Storm-petrels (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) on Cleland Island in the Cleland Island Ecological Reserve. The field work took place on July 2-3, 2008, and involved one biologist and one field assistant. Our study area, delineated in 2007, is along the western side of the storm-petrel colony denoted in the B.C. Seabird Colony Inventory (Rodway and Lemon 1990; British Columbia Seabird Colony Inventory: Report #5 – West Coast Vancouver Island, CWS Tech. Rpt. No. 94; see attached map). All work was conducted according to the methods described in my research permit proposal.

Our field work consisted of checking all burrows in the study area. We recorded the band numbers on all banded storm-petrels found and banded all unbanded storm-petrels encountered. Each burrow was checked only once. The totals in the area were 166 banded birds and 128 unbanded birds. Of the total 294 storm-petrels, 291 were incubating eggs and 3 were brooding newly hatched chicks.

The 166 bands recovered in 2008 represents just over half of the 300 bands that we used in 2007. Most of the of the 128 unbanded birds were likely the mates of storm-petrels that we banded in 2007. I decided not to repeatedly check those 128 burrows for the originally banded bird to limit damage to the fragile habitat. The project is a multi-year study and we should encounter additional members of the original sample in future years.

In 2007, we marked each excavated Leach's Storm-petrel burrow with a numbered tongue depressor and mapped the locations of all marked burrows. In 2008, new burrows were numbered and their locations were added to the maps. It was very difficult to spot the tongue depressors even when we were on our hands and knees looking at the burrow entrances. Although that difficulty does not negatively impact my study, it is of concern if overlapping studies are permitted in the same area. I raise this because the next Canadian Wildlife Service egg collection for toxicological analysis is scheduled for June 2010. I will be requesting an amendment to my research permit for July 2009 to allow me to more obviously mark the edges of my study area so that eggs are not inadvertently collected from my study birds in 2010.

As in 2007, the occupancy rate was over 95% and all birds found were Leach's Storm-petrels.

During our field work, we were dropped off and picked up on the east side of the island each day. We walked to the west side along the rocky edge of the island and approached the study area from the Camp Beach. We returned to the Camp Beach for our lunch breaks.

No collections of any specimens were made during this study.



1 transect line

Figure WV410-1. Seabird colony areas on Cleland Island in 1988. Scale is distorted between the main island and 'Murre Reef'.

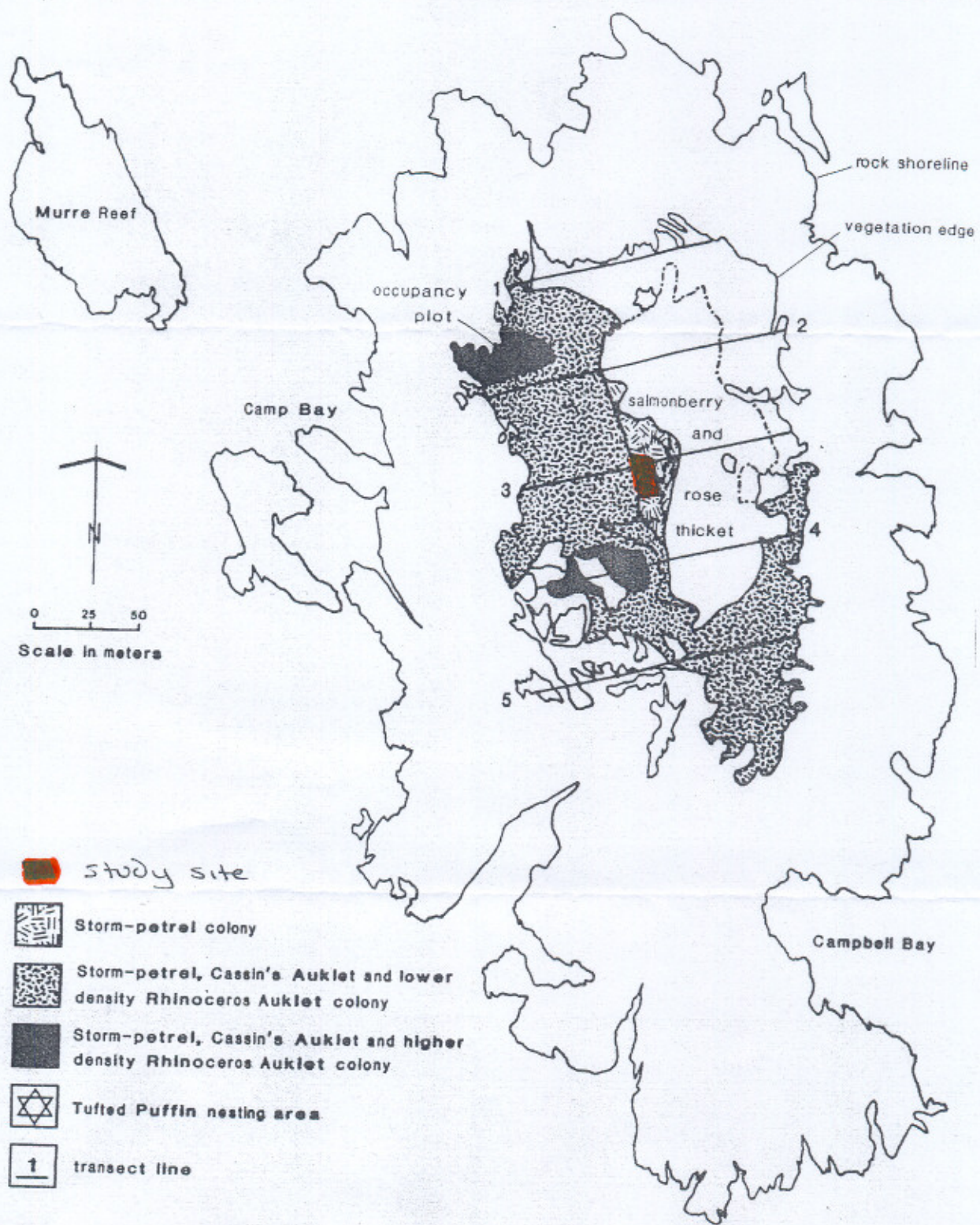


Figure WV410-1. Seabird colony areas on Cleland Island in 1988. Scale is distorted between the main island and "Murre Reef".