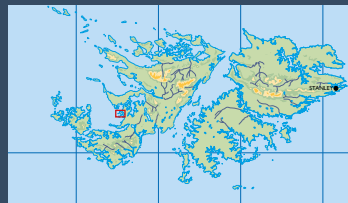


# DOUBLE ISLAND & OUTER ISLAND

## Information sheet



Falklands Conservation own and manage a number of offshore islands and mainland sites across the Falkland Islands. FC strive to manage these national assets to conserve and enhance them for future generation of Islanders.

### Island Summary

Double and Outer Islands are located a couple of kilometres off the coast of Spring Point, West Falkland, in Queen Charlotte Sound

Both islands sustain high quality tussac habitats, whilst Double Island also supports blue grass dunes and a large intertidal extend of rock platform and reefs important for many foraging birds. The islands were amongst the first to be cleared of rats in the Falkland Islands in 2001, but although the abundance of passerines and other birds has since thrived, neither Cobb's wren nor tussacbird have yet been able to recolonise.

### Ecology

#### Physical

Double Island covers approximately 9ha and consists of two hummocks joined by a low sandy ridge forming a beach. At the northern end a rocky peninsula and intertidal reefs extends about 600m to the west with a secondary inter-tidal zone extending to the north. At the southern end there are low sedimentary cliffs (up to 3m) with an extensive fringe of wave cut rock platform and intertidal to the west.

Outer Island covers approximately 20ha, its somewhat domed-relief oriented northeast to southwest and with cliffs up to 10m along the northwest-facing coast.

Geology is part of the Devonian Fox Bay Formation comprised of fine to medium-grained sandstones interbedded with siltstones and mudstones in varying proportions.

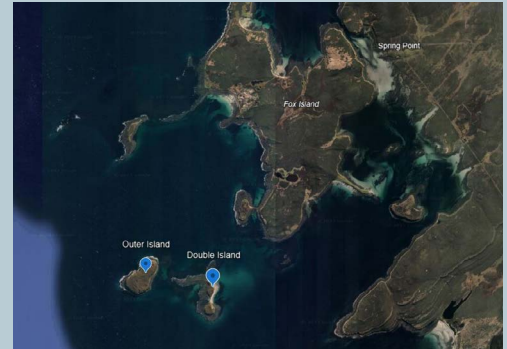
No standing fresh water is recorded for either island.

#### Habitat Value

Tussac grass dominates on both islands and appears in a recovered near pristine state. On Outer Island several deep slump holes appear in the otherwise dense tussac grass suggesting that there may have been a fire with localised burning into the peat at some point in the past, the appearance of patches of pink ash near the north-east point would further confirm this. There is also evidence of some historical grazing with bullock bones suggesting the fattening of beef cattle.

Nationally threatened bluegrass dune habitat is found on Double Island at the southern end of the joining beach ridge.

The islands are rodent-free, following a rodent eradication programme completed in 2001. Whilst numbers of passerines and shorebirds have recovered, neither Cobb's wren nor tussacbird have so far managed to re-colonise due to the extended dispersal distance (c.30km) required from other rat free islands with surviving populations.



On the west coast of West Falkland, **Double Island** (51° 52' S & 60° 30' W) and **Outer Island** (51° 52' S & 60° 31' W) sit approximately 500m apart at low tide within the inner reaches of Queen Charlotte Bay adjacent to Spring Point and Queen Point coastlines. They lie approximately 2 km from the nearest point of the mainland and 1.2 km from Fox Island.

### Relevant Legislation and Policy

Statutory

None

Non-statutory

None

IMAGES Double Island looking south.



# DOUBLE ISLAND & OUTER ISLAND

## Information sheet

### Species Diversity

Between the two islands a total of 30 bird species have been recorded, with 17 species breeding on Double Island and 19 species breeding on Outer Island. This includes 1 endemic species (Falklands flightless steamer duck) and 8 endemic sub-species. The islands are most notable for the abundance of passerine, waterfowl and shorebird species that benefit from the extensive intertidal. Imperial cormorants breed on Outer Island, and striated caracara (*Near-Threatened*) nest on both.

On Double Island 18 plant species have been recorded comprising of 9 native and 9 introduced plant species. No threatened or legally protected plant species are present

On Outer Island 24 plant species have been recorded comprising of 16 native plant species and 8 introduced non-native species, including the Prickly sow thistle categorised as invasive.

Tussac dominates across the islands whilst the introduced plants tend to occur in the more open areas of tussac and along the immediate coastal margins impacted by past fire or suppressed by grazing. This is typical of pioneer species such as meadow grass, groundsel, and sheep's sorrel. Only prickly sow-thistle is considered to be highly invasive on disturbed ground.

Southern sea lion numbers on Double Island have increased from 6 animals in 1998, to 52 animals in 2019. It is likely that they now breed on the island with animals on the eastern beach of Double Island formed into loose harems.

### Key Threats and Management

Fire remains a threat to the fauna, flora and peat soils of the Islands. Fire-threat may increase with the forecast continued drying of the Falklands climate through climate change. Visitor guidelines and a fire contingency plan are available.

The introduction of invasive plant species has potential to compete with valuable habitats and plant species, leading to degradation and loss over time. Prickly sow-thistle is not considered to be causing significant detrimental impact nor active encroachment

on native species but should be pulled opportunistically when opportunity arises. Biosecurity measures are important to prevent further introductions.

No significant encroachment/suppression of native plant species nor soil erosion is considered to be ongoing at present. No restoration activities are recommended at this time, beyond the removal of sow thistles.

Human disturbances also remains an important threat and the sea lion breeding beach should be avoided during the pupping season.

### Notable birds, plants, marine mammals & habitats of Double & Outer Islands

Falklands steamer duck	Endemic	Coastal nassauvia	Endemic
Striated caracara	<i>Near threatened</i>	Southern sea lion	Haul-out
Imperial cormorants		Tussac grass habitat	
Slender-billed prion		Bluegrass dune habitat	

**Citation** none.

### Contact

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IMAGES Double Island looking south from the west coast; imperial shag (inset).

