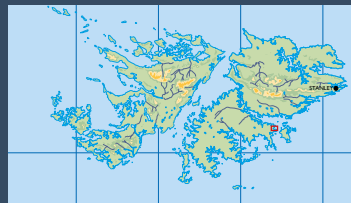


PYRAMID ISLAND & PYRAMID ISLET

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

Pyramid Island and Islet lie a few hundred metres off the Walker Creek coastline of East Falkland at the northern end of Lively Sound. Both are low-lying tussac islands with Pyramid Island also having a more open centre of heathland. Miraculously given their close proximity to the mainland both islands are rodent-free and support breeding populations of the endemic Cobb's wren and tussacbird. Southern sea lion haul out but have not yet been confirmed as breeding.

Ecology

Physical

Pyramid Island is roughly circular and covers approximately 8ha, gently rising from the south to the north to a maximum height of around 10m. The coast line of Pyramid Island is generally shallow sloping with shingle beaches to the south and west and steep-to with rocky platforms in the north and north-east.

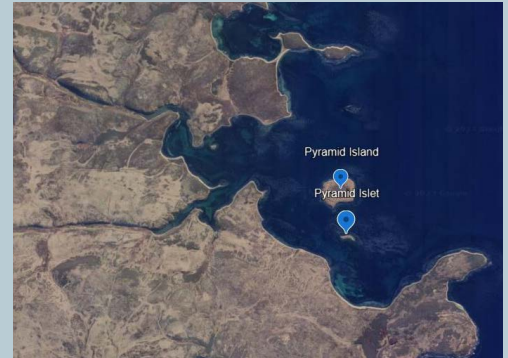
Pyramid Islet, covering 0.2ha, has formed along a shallow linear reef and rises to no more than 1.5m above sea level. It is surrounded by extensive reefs, especially to the north extending towards Pyramid Island, which are exposed at low tide and are an important foraging resource for shorebirds.

The underlying geology of the Pyramid islands is that of the Brenton Loch formation dominated by turbidite sandstones, and laminated siltstones and mudstones.

Habitat Value

Tussac grass habitat dominates on both islands. Pyramid Islet comprises a narrow strip of land with mature tussac to the east and more open tussac with shallower soils and small open glades containing heath and common violet to the west. Pyramid Island has a ring of tussac with an open heath, isolated patches of neutral grassland and dispersed single tussac bogs across the center. The island shows some limited signs of past grazing.

Pyramid Island and Islet are rodent-free.



Pyramid Island (-52.0025°W & -58.605°S) and **Pyramid Island Islet** (-52.0065°W & -58.6045°S) are located in the east of the Falklands archipelago between Lively Sound and Choiseul Sound. Pyramid Islet sits only 250m from the mainland and is a stepping stone to Pyramid Island which lies 200m further out.

Relevant Legislation and Policy

Statutory

None

Non-statutory

No statutory or non-statutory land designations are in place for the islands.

Despite being rodent-free, due to the close association to the Walker Creek coastline, Pyramid Island and Islet were not included within the Lively Island Important Bird Area designation.

IMAGES Pyramid Island looking west; common violet (inset).



PYRAMID ISLAND & PYRAMID ISLET

Information sheet

Species Diversity

In total 19 bird species have been recorded on Pyramid Island and Islet, 13 of these are breeding or probably breeding. Being rodent-free the islands provide refuge for all three Falklands' endemic bird species; Cobb's wren, tussacbird, and Falklands steamer duck. In addition to the 3 endemic species, 6 island-races are present. In total 18 plant species have been recorded including 14 native

species and 4 introduced species. Whilst no endemic, restricted range or threatened plant species have been recorded as present, Common violet the primary food source of Queen of the Falklands Fritillary caterpillar (the Falklands' only breeding butterfly) occurs extensively on both islands along with the nationally 'rare' southern mudwort.

Numbers of sea lion use the islands as a haul-out site but as yet there has been no evidence of breeding.

Key Threats and Management

Pyramid Island was historically grazed and the balance of tussac to heath may have been modified by stock, with lower density tussac and a more open heath dominated centre. In addition there is some evidence of previous fire in an area of slump on the north-east corner, although this has largely recovered and revegetated.

Fire remains a threat given the sensitivity of tussac and peat soils on both islands to fire. Especially given the expected continued drying of the Falklands due to climate change. Visitor guidance and fire contingency plans are available for both islands and smoking and

naked flames are prohibited.

The introduction of rats or mice would be catastrophic for the islands bird life. Rodents would cause the localised extirpation of Cobb's wren and tussacbirds and have been shown to depress both songbird and shore bird numbers through resource competition and inhibit habitat restoration through seed consumption. Introduction of invasive plant species may also impact the native habitats and plant species present. Biosecurity measures are important to prevent any further introductions and all clothing and equipment should be carefully cleaned and checked by any visitors before landing.

Notable birds, plants, marine mammals & habitats of Pyramid Island & Pyramid Islet

Cobb's wren	Endemic Least Concern	Southern sea lion	Haul-out
Tussacbird	Endemic Near Threatened	Common violet	Protected
Falklands steamer duck	Endemic	Southern mudwort	Nationally rare
Magellanic penguin	Near Threatened	Tussac grass habitat	

Citation none.

Contact

Conservation Manager, Falklands Conservation.
co@conservation.org.fk or +500 22247

IMAGES Pyramid Islet and reef looking north to Pyramid Island; Falkland steamer duck (inset, left); southern mudwort (inset, right).

