

APPENDIX B

OBSERVATION POINTS FOR SEABIRD COLONIES

Bird-watching, birding, or nature observation has become a major non-consumptive recreational pursuit in North America, and people often travel great distances to see hard-to-find species or rarities from other parts of the world. This is true in Washington and the situation exists not only for birds in general but also for species breeding in the State.

With this greatly increased interest and awareness of the natural world, more and more people are attempting to see seabirds, particularly where they nest. A few years ago a Horned Puffin appeared on one relatively accessible colony in Washington, and within a short period of time bird-watchers converged on the area, having chartered boats in order to try to add the species to their "Washington list." It is with this experience in mind and with concern for the welfare of the birds and their reproductive success that we include this section. Some cautions are also introduced here for the welfare of persons viewing seabirds.

Seabird colonies in Washington, as elsewhere, tend to be inaccessible because of the need of the birds for security from predation and disturbance. Thus many colonies are offshore and

must be viewed at a distance, usually with a telescope, or must be approached in a boat. The former method is preferable because possibilities for disturbance are minimal. The use of boats allows close approach but also introduces possible disturbance stress and this is not only undesirable but is illegal in some cases. Many nesting islands are wildlife refuges and entry is forbidden. Maintaining a distance of perhaps 100-200 yards from a colony is necessary in many cases to prevent birds being frightened, taking flight, and causing loss of eggs or young to predators or being crushed. A further cause for caution in using small boats in Washington is that in many areas it can be extremely hazardous. Along the outer coast, there are very few places where boats can be rented or launched--Neah Bay, LaPush, Grays Harbor, Willapa Bay, and Ilwaco--and only the first two are near colonies. Even in the summer, sea conditions can change within a few minutes and heavy swells or fog can quickly create dangerous circumstances around rocks and islands or make entry into harbor impossible. In the inside waters, particularly in the San Juans, navigation near rocks can be very hazardous due to very strong tidal currents, and inexperienced sailors are well advised to be

extremely cautious, even during ideal weather. There are a number of places in the State where the summer resident seabirds can be observed, perhaps even better than on the colonies themselves. Most of these are included in Wahl and Paulson (1981) and full details are given there.

Trips to view pelagic birds on the ocean encounter not only nesting species, including storm-petrels and Cassin's Auklets not visible from shore, but also such species as Black-footed Albatrosses (Diomedea nigripes), Northern Fulmars (Fulmarus glacialis), and several species of shearwaters. Details can be obtained through the Seattle Audubon Society.

Ocean jetties at Ocean Shores, Westport, and Ilwaco (north jetty of the Columbia River) extend out from shore and allow, in good conditions, excellent views of seabirds. Birds rest on and forage around the jetties, and vast numbers pass by during migration. Pigeon Guillemots often nest in crevices in the jetties themselves, and large numbers of gulls, cormorants, sea ducks, rock shorebirds, and other species can be seen in season.

The lighthouse site at Point Wilson, Fort Worden State Park, near Port Townsend is an excellent location all year. Rhinoceros Auklets from Protection Island feed offshore, and large numbers of many species of birds forage in the strong tidal currents off the point.

Point Roberts, reached through Canada, is the extreme north-western tip of Whatcom County. Lighthouse Park, at the southwest

tip of the Point, is an excellent place to see seabirds close to shore, especially when the tide is running.

Green Point, in Washington Park, Anacortes, overlooks Rosario Strait and, while Bird Rocks can be seen by telescope in the distance, this spot is best known for spectacular flights of cormorants moving between roosts and foraging areas and for large numbers of Common Murres and many other species feeding in the tidal convergences.

Deception Pass, at the north end of Whidbey Island is reached by entering Deception Pass State Park and also has large flocks of birds feeding in strong tidal currents. Pigeon Guillemots, cormorants, loons, and many other species are often present.

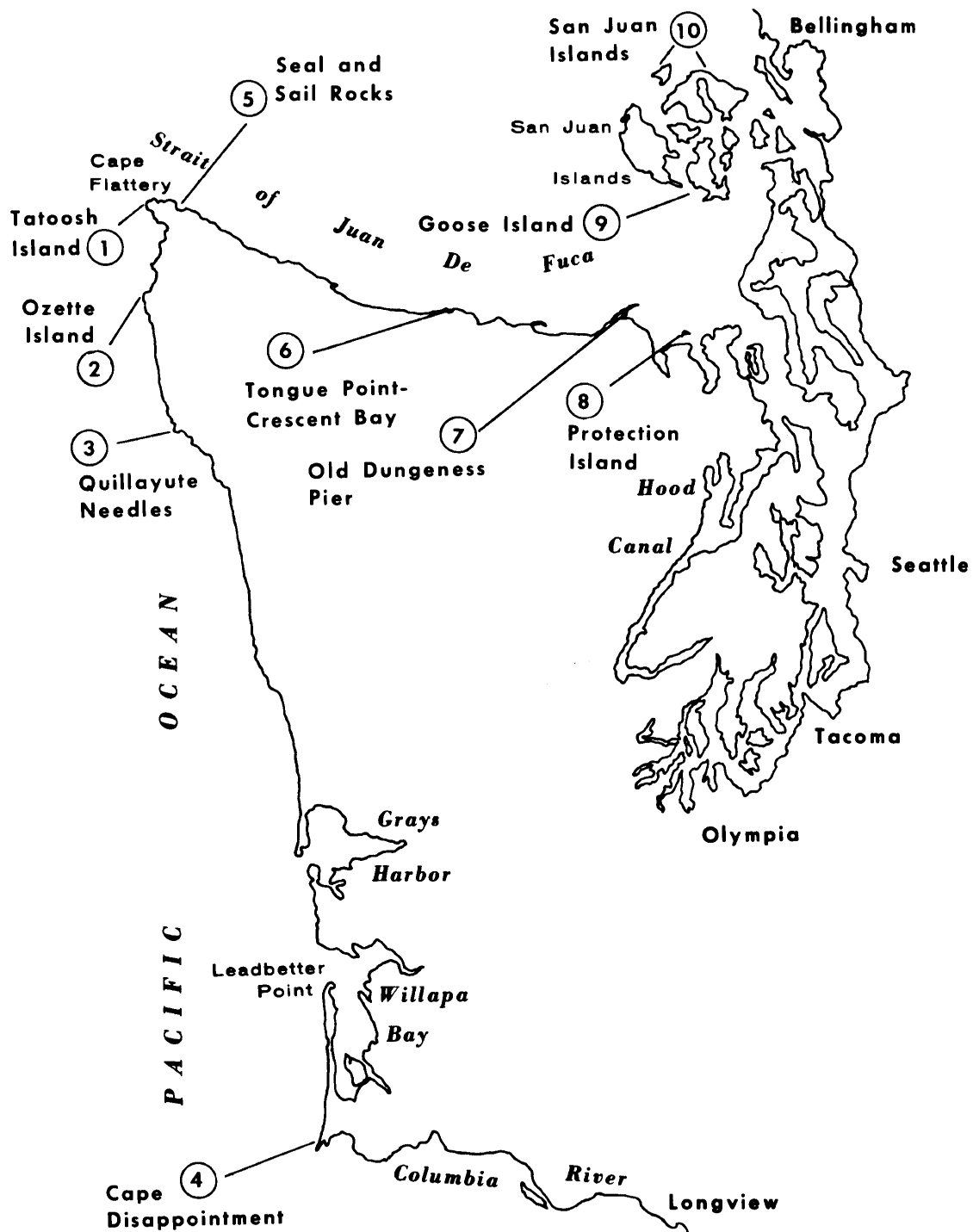
Washington also has what many other places do not--passenger and car ferries traveling through waters where there are many seabirds to observe in the appropriate season. While the routes in the southern inland waters of Puget Sound do not often encounter many birds, two Washington State Ferry routes do have abundant birds. The "Keystone Ferry" between Whidbey Island and Port Townsend crosses the tidal fronts of Admiralty Inlet, which drains most of Puget Sound into the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Pacific Ocean. While large numbers of birds of many species may be seen during the 35-minute crossing, the most abundant species are Rhinoceros Auklets in summer, and Common Murres in winter, and gulls during all seasons. Thousands of Rhinoceros Auklets, from the colonies at Protection Island and Smith

Island, can be seen particularly on the west side of Admiralty Inlet. Tufted Puffins are also possible here.

The other ferry route with good bird observation possibilities is the ferry from Anacortes to Friday Harbor or Sidney, British Columbia. The ferry passes, at some distance, a number of important colonies. Foraging birds and others moving from one feeding area to another are often seen close to the vessel. The ferry to Sidney normally passes close to Mandarte Island, B.C., which has hundreds of nesting cormorants, thousands of nesting gulls, as well as Pigeon Guillemots and Black Oystercatchers. This is one of the largest colonies in the inside waters of Washington and British Columbia. Bald Eagles are often seen in the San Juans and Gulf Islands, with largest numbers in winter.

One excellent location for viewing nesting seabirds is not listed below. That is Point Grenville, where the many offshore rocks and islands can be seen well from the lighthouse site. However, the access to this former Coast Guard station is questionable at present. The property itself is now under Quinault Indian Tribal jurisdiction and access has not been allowed recently, at least at writing of this catalog.

Hiking the outer coastal beaches of the Olympic National Park has been a popular form of recreation for years. Many of the offshore nesting colonies may be seen from along the shore, though a telescope is necessary and transporting the necessary equipment while back-packing makes this out of the question for most people.



VIEW POINT: Cape Flattery

COLONY: Tatoosh Island

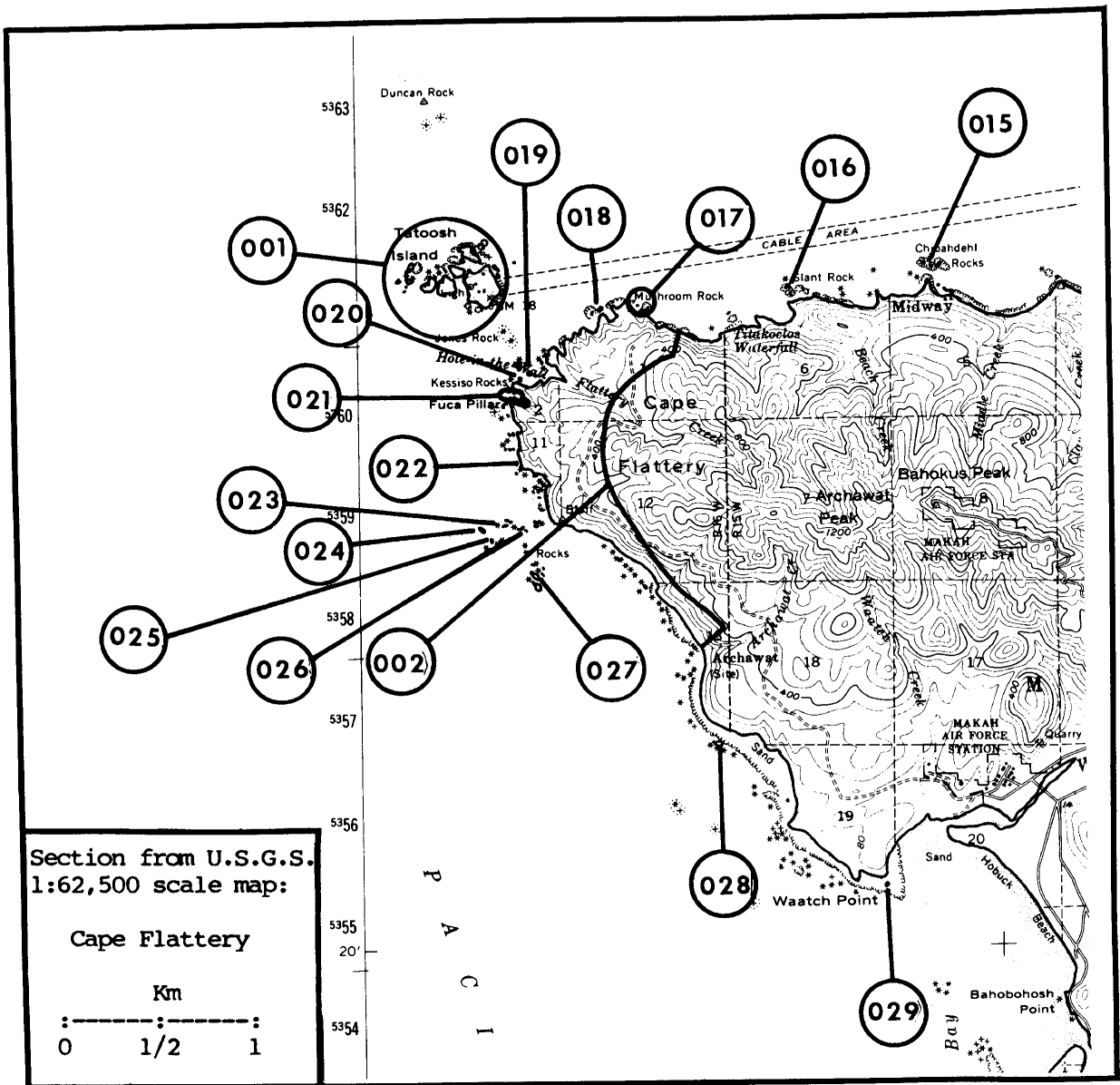
ACCESS Follow the signs in Neah Bay to "Cape Flattery." The road from the west end of Neah Bay circles the Cape itself. The parking area for the trail to the Cape Flattery viewpoint on the cliffs is about 5 miles from Neah Bay. It is about one-half mile down a trail, with some stepping over tree roots under the forest, to the edge of the cliffs.

①

SEABIRD SPECIES:

From the viewpoint at the edge of the cliffs--caution is advised: do not get too close to the edge--

Tatoosh Island is visible offshore, and with a telescope, birds can be seen on nesting territories or flying to and from foraging areas offshore. Pelagic Cormorants, Black Oystercatchers, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, and Tufted Puffins may be clearly, if distantly, seen. Leach's and Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels and Cassin's Auklets nest here, too, but are strictly nocturnal and only infrequently seen near the island during daylight hours. Pelagic Cormorants and Black Oystercatchers also nest on sea stacks closer to Cape Flattery and can be seen there also. A great amount of bird activity can often be seen from Cape Flattery, from vast flocks of shearwaters feeding at the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, to flocks of migrating Brants and hawks passing in the spring. Gray Whales may be seen during their spring migration, with some passing directly under the cliff view point.



VIEW POINT: Cape Alava

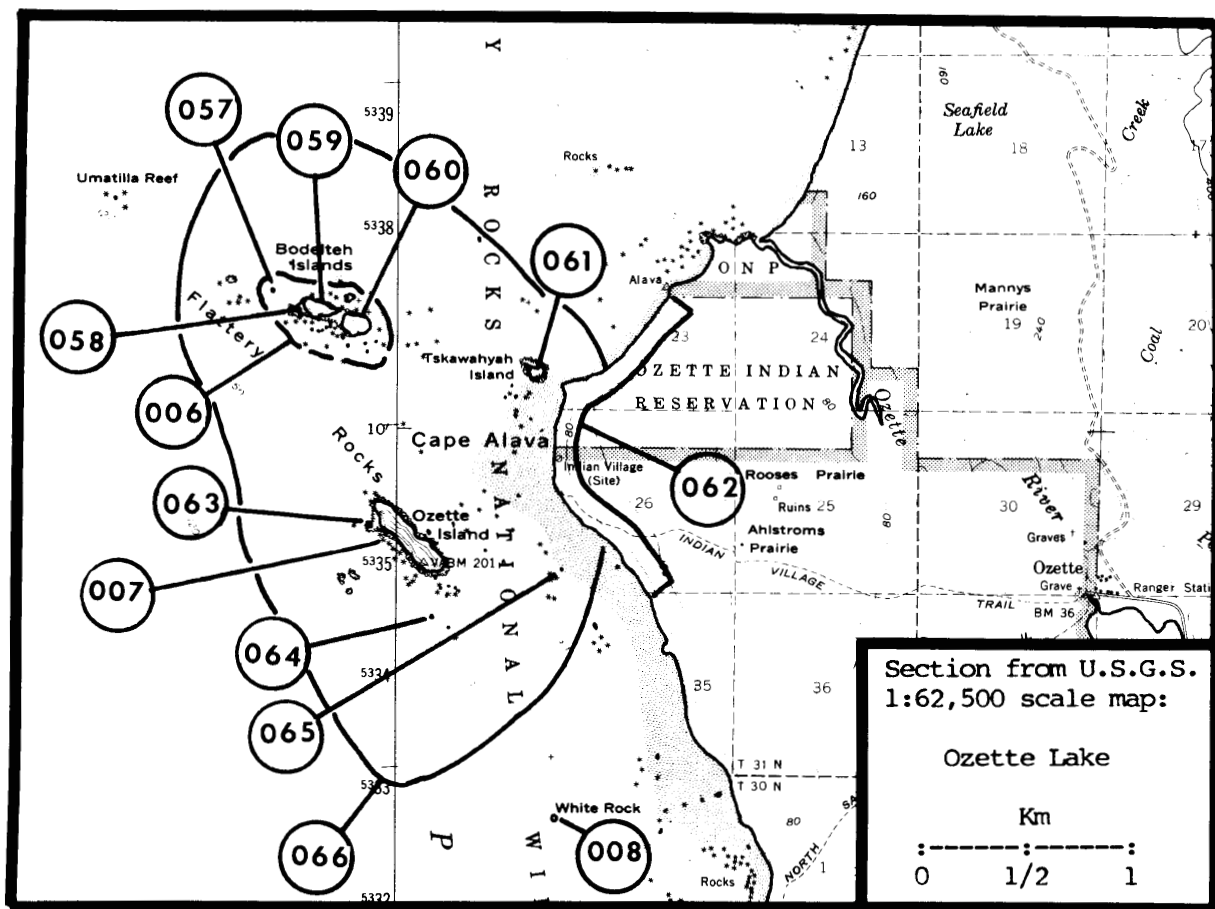
SEABIRD SPECIES:

COLONY: Bodeliteh Islands,
Ozette Island

Pelagic Cormorants, Black Oystercatchers, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots and Tufted Puffins can be seen by telescope on the islands offshore. In addition, storm-petrels and Cassin's Auklets nest there. One of the few places in the State where Sea Otters may be seen from shore is near Ozette Island, to the south of Cape Alava.

ACCESS: The Cape Alava trail is 3.3 miles long, from Lake Ozette to the Cape. The trail is reached by a road leaving Highway 110 west of Sekiu.

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VIEW POINT: Rialto Beach or LaPush

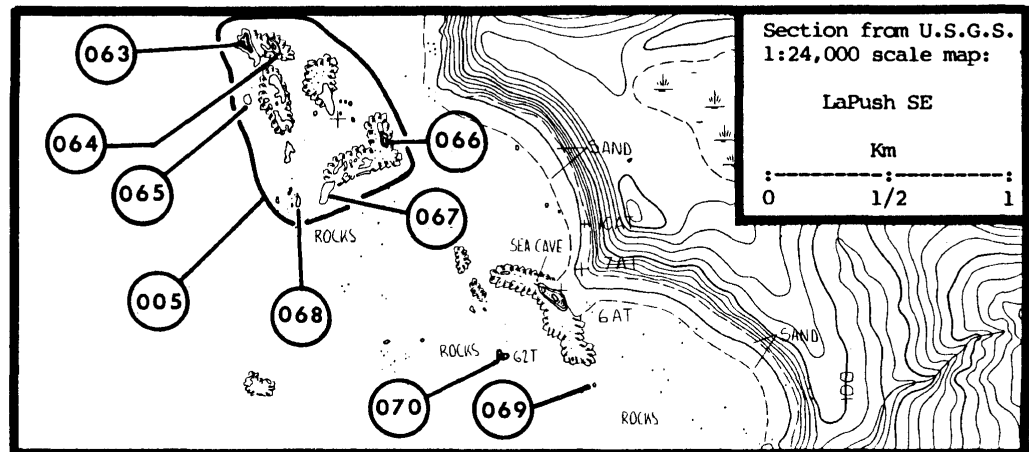
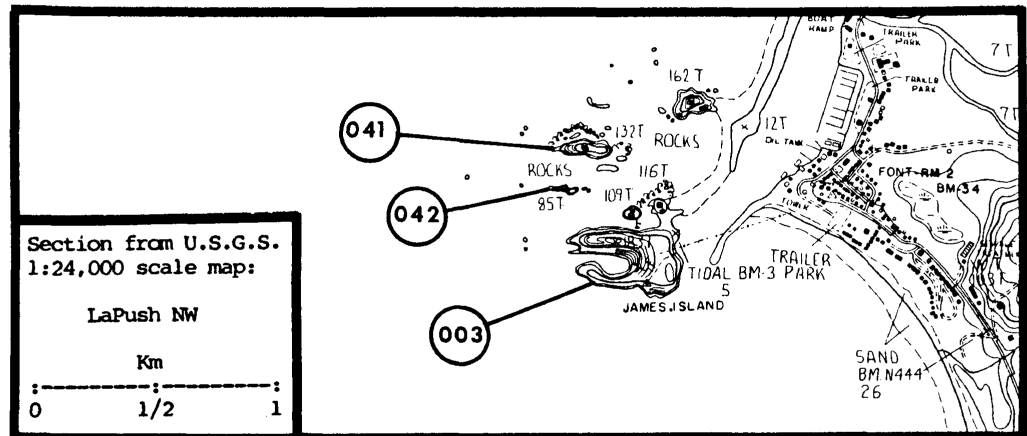
COLONY: Quillayute Needles

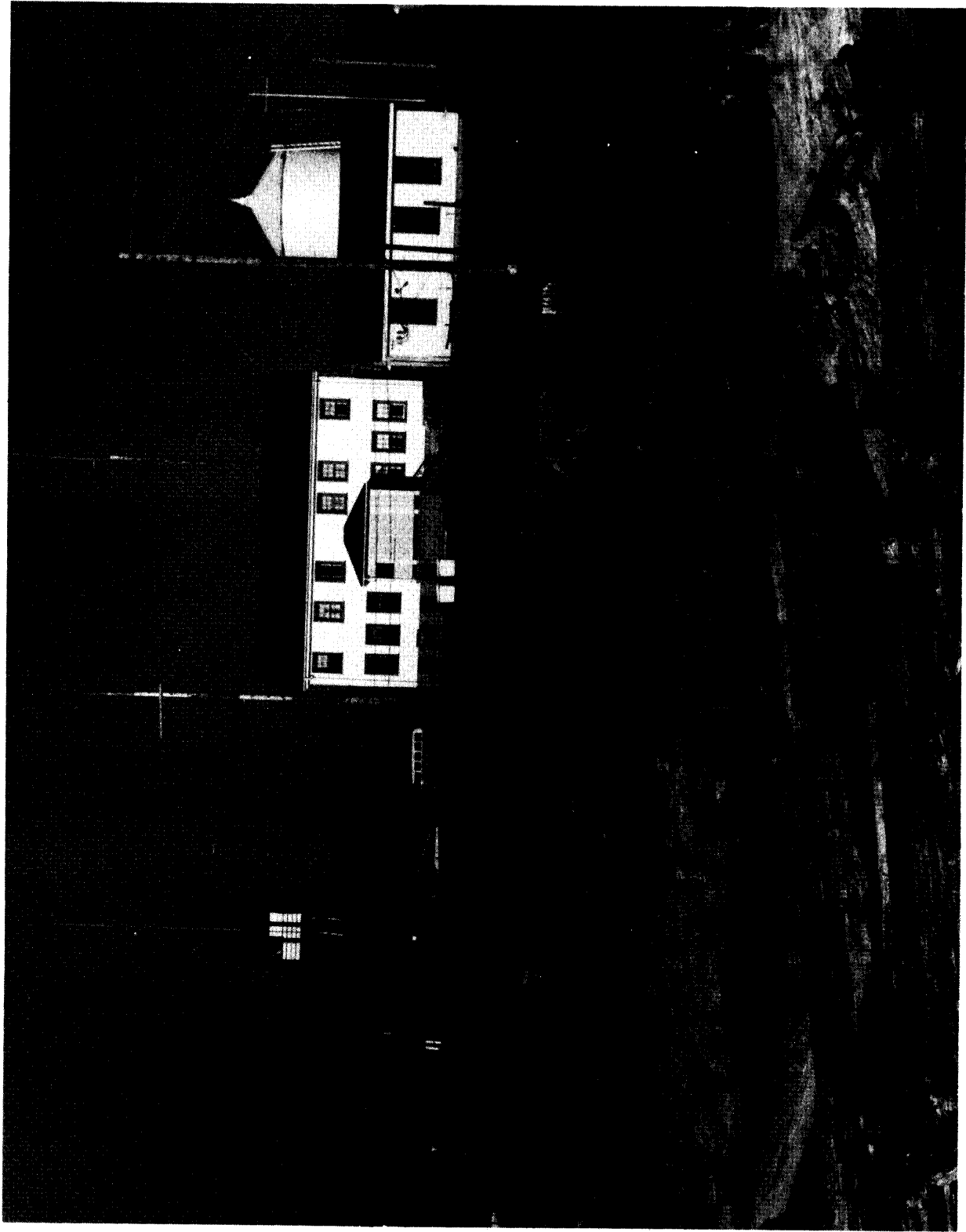
ACCESS: Leave Highway 101 just north of Forks, go about 10.5 miles where the right fork in the road goes to Mora Campground, Olympia National Park, and then to Rialto Beach, just across the river from LaPush. The left fork goes to the town of LaPush.

3

SEABIRD SPECIES:

From Rialto Beach, the Quillayute Needles are visible just beyond wooded James Island. With a telescope, nesting murrelets, guillemots, and Tufted Puffins, may be seen along with many other species, including Harlequin Ducks (Histrionicus histrionicus), scoters, Bald Eagles (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), and shorebirds. For better views of the Quillayute Needles colonies, take the road to LaPush (left-hand fork). From LaPush it is possible to walk the beach south and from there to look at the offshore islands and their colonies.





LaPush U.S. Coast Guard

VIEW POINT: Cape Disappointment Interpretive Center overlook, lighthouse

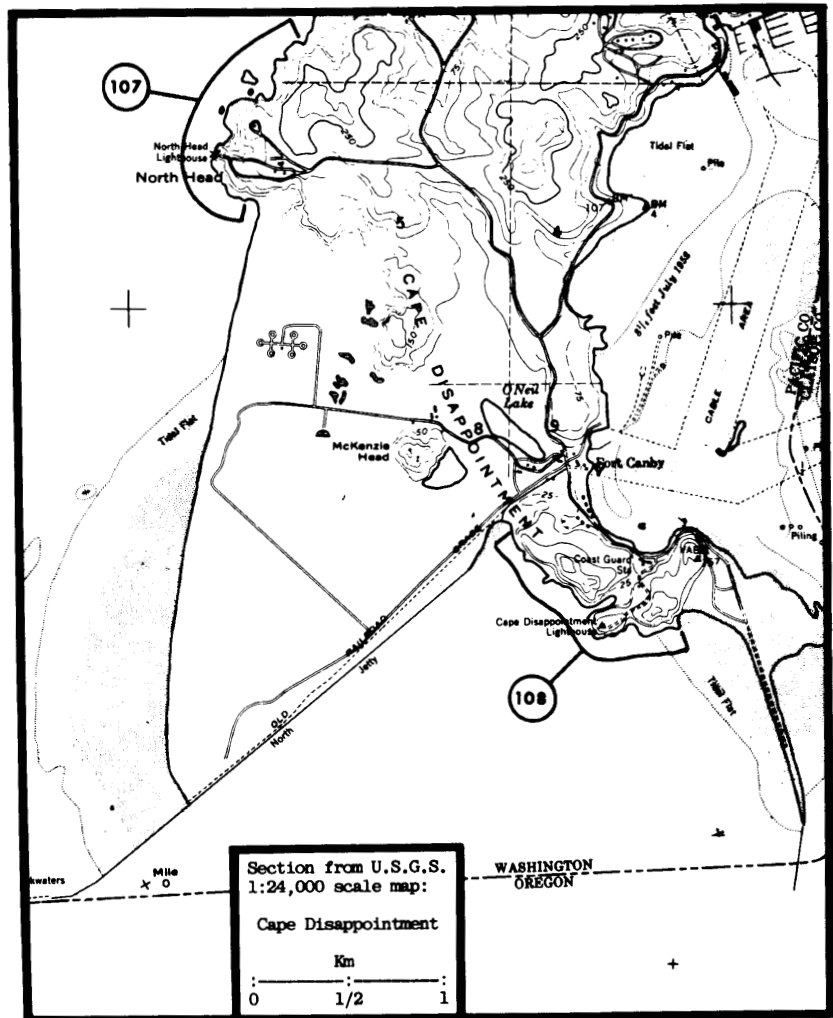
COLONY: Cape Disappointment

ACCESS: Reach the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center by following directions from Ilwaco. The access trail to the Cape Disappointment lighthouse is also marked.

4

SEABIRD SPECIES:

The nesting Brandt's and Pelagic cormorants can be seen by peering over the edge of the cliff at the interpretive center (stay behind the fence!) or from the lighthouse site with a telescope. This is one of only four known locations where Brandt's Cormorants nest in Washington and views here are good.





Cape Disappointment (174108) U.S. Coast Guard

VIEW POINT: Highway 112 east of Neah Bay

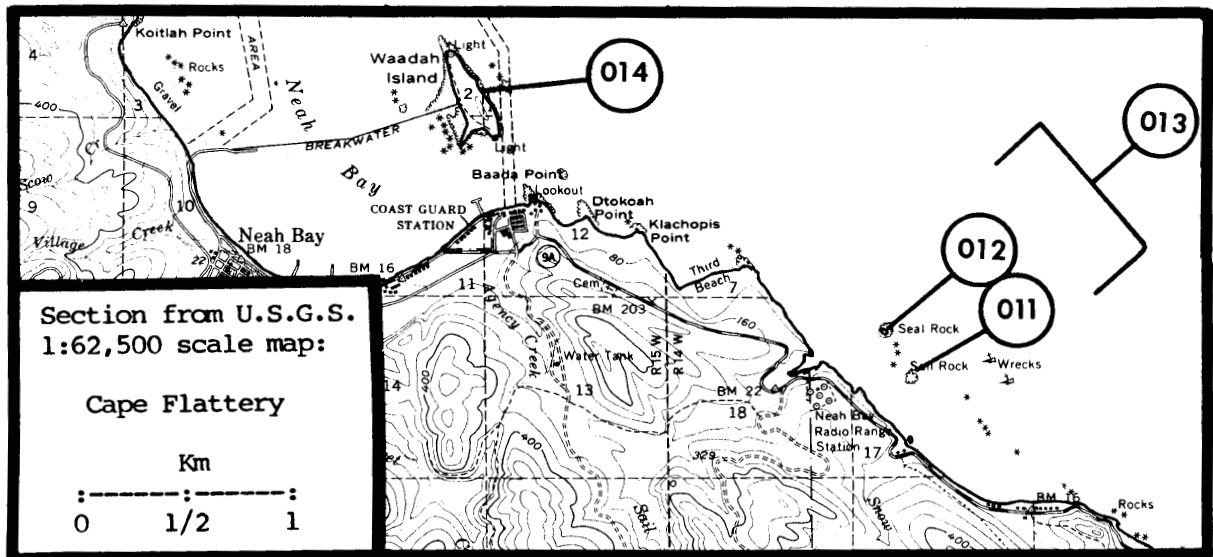
SEABIRD SPECIES:

COLONY: Seal and Sail Rocks

Cormorants, Black Oyster-catchers, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Pigeon Guillemots, and Tufted Puffins can be seen by telescope on these rocks: the only sizeable colony between Cape Flattery and Port Angeles.

ACCESS: Pull off where space permits. Can be viewed by small boat from a distance.

5



VIEW POINT: Tongue Point, Salt
Creek Recreation
Area

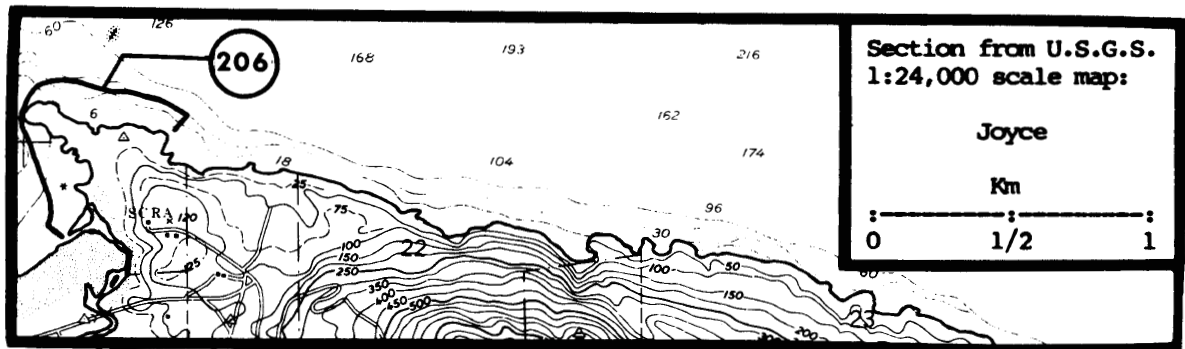
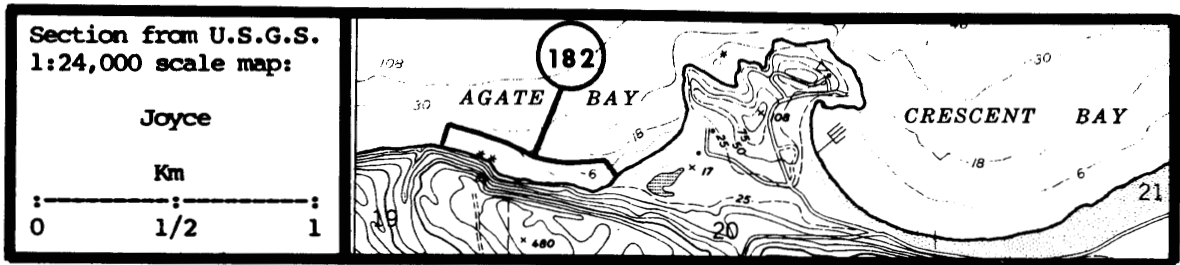
COLONY: Tongue Point-
Crescent Bay

ACCESS: Leave Highway 112
about 13 miles west
of Port Angeles at
signs from Salt
Creek Recreation
Area (Clallam County
Park). Follow the
road through the
camping area to
Tongue Point.

6

SEABIRD SPECIES:

While this is not a "colony" as such, it is a good place to see Black Oystercatchers and Pigeon Guillemots at close range during the nesting season. Marbled Murrelets are usually here, too.



VIEW POINT: Old Dungeness ("3 Crabs")

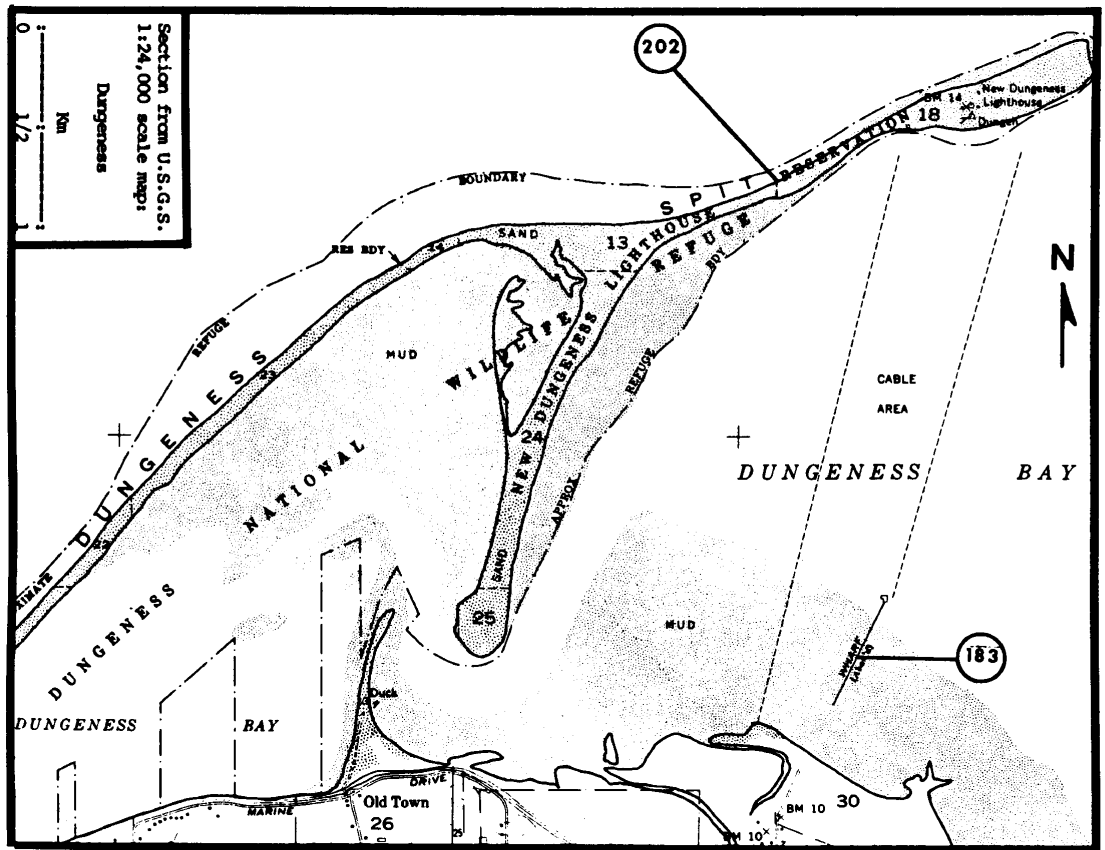
COLONY: Abandoned pier

ACCESS: Limited parking is available at the end of the road next to the 3 Crabs Restaurant (do not use the restaurant parking lot).

7

SEABIRD SPECIES:

The old pier offshore is used by nesting Pelagic Cormorants and Glaucous-winged Gulls, which can be seen quite closely by telescope.



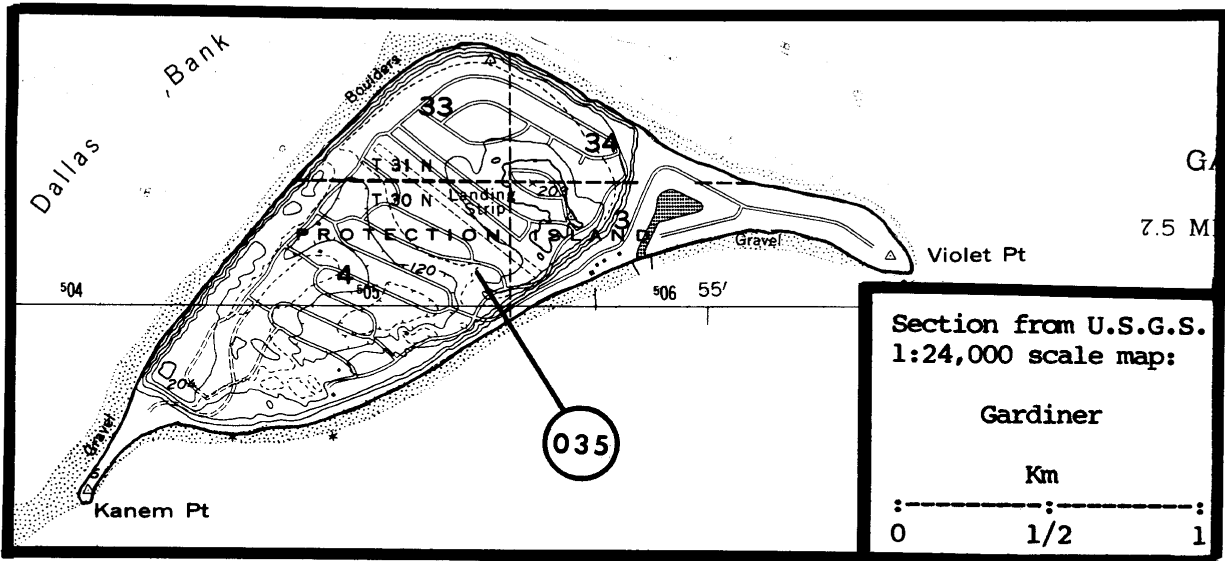
VIEW POINT: Boat
 COLONY: Protection Island
 ACCESS: Boats may be rented or larger vessels chartered in Port Townsend.

8

SEABIRD SPECIES:

This colony contains the largest number of Rhinoceros Auklets in Washington, along with impressive concentrations of Black Oystercatchers, gulls, Pigeon Guillemots, and Tufted Puffins. However, this colony is included in this section only because it is so well known and accessible, and compared to the open ocean coast, it is in relatively sheltered waters. Because of possible disturbance of nesting cormorants,

puffins, and hauled-out harbor seals, close approach is ill-advised. The north side of the island is fraught with navigational hazards and puffins in particular can be chased off cliffs on the south side. Most of the nesting seabirds can be seen much better at foraging areas. Rhinoceros Auklets can be seen close at hand at dusk offshore from the west end of the island as they bring food to chicks. Thousands of Rhinos feed during the daytime in Admiralty Inlet and can be seen from Point Wilson and the Keystone Ferry. The completion of acquisition of Protection Island by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a refuge and subsequent development of interpretive facilities and programs will minimize disturbance to animals and provide viewing possibilities in the future.



VIEW POINT: Cattle Point

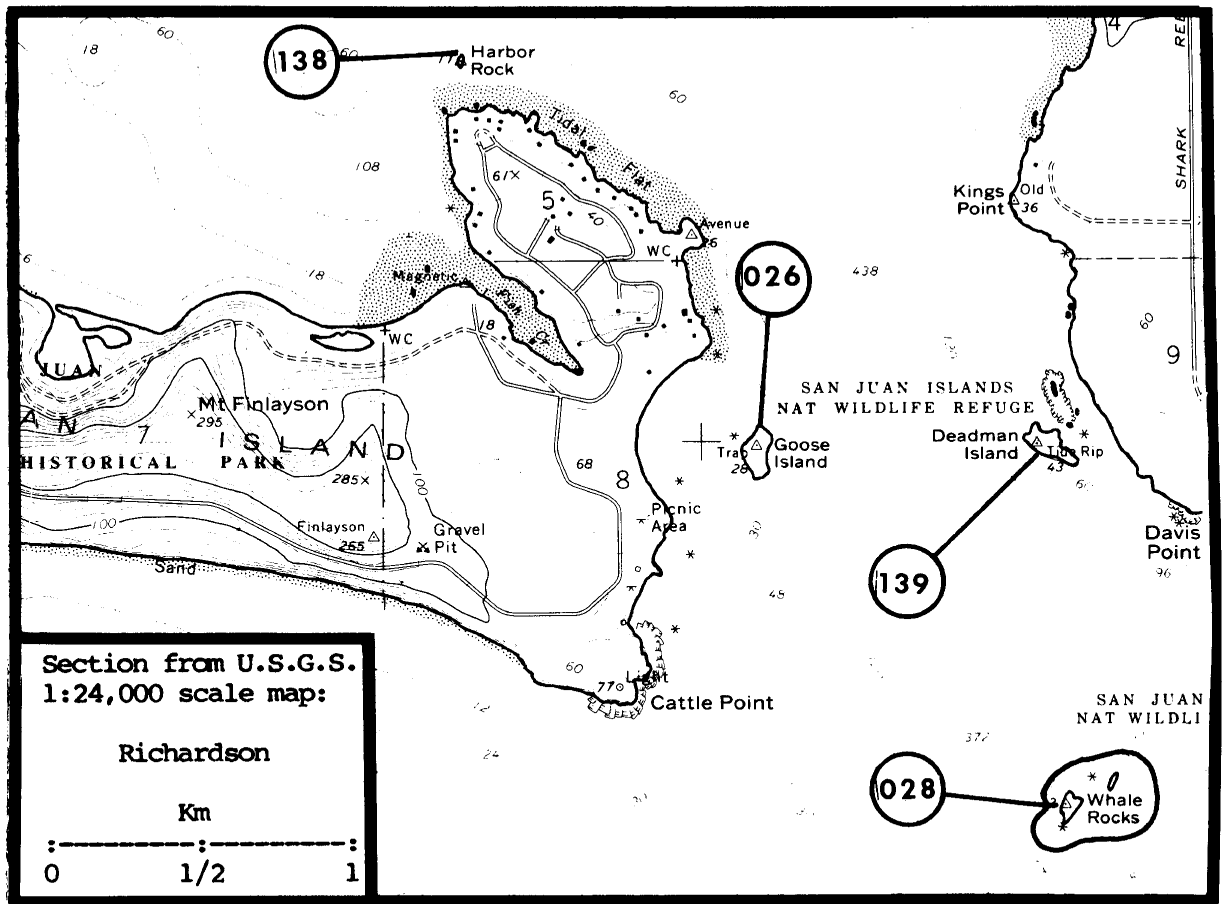
SEABIRD SPECIES:

COLONY: Goose Island

ACCESS: Drive from Friday Harbor on San Juan Island to Cattle Point at the south end. There is a State Department of Natural Resources park on the site of an old lighthouse generator station.

Goose Island is a small island offshore from Cattle Point, in the narrow entrance to San Juan Channel. Glaucous-winged Gulls and Black Oystercatchers nest here, and many other seabirds can be seen foraging in the tidal currents and along the shorelines. Whale Rocks and Mummy Rocks are visible to the east, near Lopez Island. These are very important cormorant roosting sites. Sea lions may be seen near them in the winter, and Minke Whales may be seen in the passage. Bald Eagles are also numerous in the area, and river otters may be seen.

9



VIEW POINT: Boat

COLONY: Colonies in San Juan Islands area

ACCESS: Small boats may be chartered in Anacortes and Friday Harbor.

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SEABIRD SPECIES:

There are many accessible small islands throughout the San Juan Islands. Almost all of these already have a great deal of disturbance due to small boats, scuba diving, and other

activities, however, and close approach is not advised.

Species nesting in the San Juans include Double-crested and Pelagic cormorants, Black Oystercatcher, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Pigeon Guillemot, and very few Tufted Puffins. Refer to individual site maps and listings for specifics. Marbled Murrelets may be seen in numbers at several locations in the San Juan Islands. The shoreline of Lopez Island near Point Colville and Watmough Head, Peavine Pass, and Obstruction Pass between Orcas and Blakely Islands, and the southwestern shoreline of Lummi Island are among the best places.



Colville Island (156032) D. Marshall