



FACTSHEET

# Wedge-tailed Shearwater

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**Common Name:** Wedge-tailed Shearwater

**Scientific Name:** *Ardenna pacifica*

**Conservation Status:** Listed as Least Concern under ICUN (2014). All Rottnest Island's fauna is protected under the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987*.

**Habitat:** Coastal habitat

**Body length:** 38-46 cm

**Weight:** 320-490 g

**Gestation period:** 50 days

**Number of young:** 1 (1 egg)

## Description:

Wedge-tailed shearwaters are brownish black all over. They have dark grey bills, brown eyes and pink legs and feet. Their distinctive wedge-shaped tails give them their name. Males are slightly larger than females.

## Diet:

Fish, insects, jellyfish, molluscs, squid, crustaceans.

## In the Wild:

The Wedge-tailed Shearwater is a common migratory bird which is a regular visitor to Rottnest. These birds arrive in August to breed on the Island. They breed in colonies which are made of burrows in soft sand or nests in crevices on the rocky, limestone islets. These burrows can be up to 2m long and are dug by the female and male. The two biggest colonies can be found on Cape Vlamingh and Radar Reef. The female lays one single egg which can weigh around 59g. This is about 14% of her body weight!

The Wedge-tailed Shearwater feeds in flocks on open sea. It holds its wings motionless as it glides closely over the water. While flying, it plunges its head and neck into the water to catch fish. These birds sometimes float on the water surface to feed. They can also dive up to 66m.



### Threats:

- Trampling (by humans and animals such as cattle)
- Pollution (particularly oil spills)
- Predation by snakes and gulls

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Wedge-tailed Shearwater has an eerie, moaning call. It cries when entering its burrow or from inside its burrow during the night.