

## Place No. 30 Malus Island Whaling Site



Remains of trypots at Malus Island Whaling Site

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Malus Island Whaling Site
Other Name (1)	
Location/Address	
Street Number	
Street Name	King Bay Road
Suburb/Town	Whalers Bay Mermaid Sound, Dampier Archipelago
Other Locational descriptor (text)	482505 mE, 7734694 mN (MGA 94 Zone 50) Longitude: 116.6781 Latitude: -20.5186

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
Crown Land vested in DEC	PO Box 835 KARRATHA 6714	Ph (08) 9143 1488 Fx (08) 9144 1118		
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.
VCL				

LISTING AND ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	4585
State Register of Heritage Places:(Y/N)	No
Classified by the National Trust (Y/N)	No
Register of the National Estate (Y/N)	Yes
Local Town Planning Scheme (Y/N)	Yes
<b>Management Category</b>	<b>B</b>

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	1870
Construction Date (2)	
Site Type (Place Type)	Other Structure
<b>Use(s) of Place</b>	

<i>Original</i>	INDUSTRIAL\MANUFACTURING: Whaling Station
<i>Present</i>	VACANT\UNUSED: Vacant\Unused - Ruin
<i>Other</i>	
<b>Construction Materials:</b>	
<i>Walls</i>	
<i>Roof</i>	
Condition	Very poor
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	Very little
<b>Physical Description</b>	
<p>The site lies in the north east corner of Whalers Bay, providing a well sheltered anchorage with a sandy bottom suitable for processing captured whales. The physical remains of the trying station are located on high ground above the cove.</p>	
<b>History</b>	
<p>The history of whaling at the island begins with American whalers, who had been visiting the Dampier Archipelago and the coastal northwest since the early part of the 1800s. In 1801 the whaler <i>Kingston</i> arrived at the 'Rosemary Islands', as they were sometimes referred to, following Dampier (KWM logbook 263). Log books from several American whalers in the 1840s suggest that the islands were suitable for several months of whaling and that these were reliable waters for whales.</p> <p>In 1870, Pearse Bros and Marmion acquired the schooner <i>Argo</i> to fish for whales on the north west coast, with John Tapper as chief headsman. They had likely been inspired by the success of the <i>Emily Smith</i>, a whaler from the Eastern Colonies, at the Rosemary Islands. An establishment was set up on Malus Island in 1870, which resulted in a very successful season; in July 1870 they sent three tons of oil down to Perth. They were later joined by other whalers. It is not known exactly when the whaling ceased, but it declined rapidly from the late 1870s along the WA coast.</p> <p>In 1971 very little remained of the whaling station: two whaling ovens, one with a pair of try pots, a brick oven and a blubber cutter. One of the try pots and the blubber cutter were removed to the WA Museum. Another try pot, taken by a member of the public, was lost while being towed between Malus Island and Dampier. The site was rebuilt by the local Apex club.</p>	
<b>Archaeology</b>	
<p>The archaeological record includes the remains of the trying station and a small oven. The site has archaeological potential as the whole sandy bay could provide further material evidence of whaling on the island, such as residential areas.</p>	

<b>SIGNIFICANCE</b>	
<b>Historic theme (s)</b>	3. OCCUPATIONS 305 Fishing & other maritime industry
<b>Statement of Significance:</b>	
<p>The Malus Island whaling site is the most northern and remote colonial-era shore-based whaling station in Western Australia. It provides an evocative reminder of an early phase of resource extraction in the Pilbara of fuels for export. There is potential for further archaeological evidence to be located at the island through excavation.</p>	

<b>ASSOCIATIONS</b>	
Architect/Designer (1)	
Architect/Designer (2)	
Other Associated Person(s)	

<b>OTHER</b>
<b>References</b>

McIlroy, J. 1979, *Dampier Archipelago Historic Sites Survey*, for Australian Heritage Commission.

Paterson, A. and C. Souter 2004, *Cultural Heritage Assessment & Management Proposal for Historical Archaeological Sites – Dampier Archipelago, Western Australia*, Karratha: Conservation and Land Management (Karratha).

Paterson, A. 2006, 'Towards a Historical Archaeology of Western Australia's Northwest', *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 24, pp 99-111.

Souter, C., A. Paterson and F. Hook 2006, 'The Assessment of Archaeological Sites on Barrow Island and the Dampier Archipelago, Pilbara, Western Australia: A Collaborative Approach', *Bulletin of the Australasian Institute of Maritime Archaeology* 30, pp 85-92.

Vinnicombe, P. 2002, 'Petroglyphs of the Dampier Archipelago: Background to Development and Descriptive Analysis', *Rock Art Research* 19, pp 3-27.

'Local and General News', *The Perth Gazette and West Australian Times*, Friday 15 July 1870, p 3.

MHI 1996	Site assessed and Place Name Record created
MHI 2012	Entry updated