

495169

SEA ELEPHANT RIVER

Around the north-east of King Island from Granite Lagoon to Sea Elephant Bay is a coastal complex of beaches, dunes and associated salt flats. This ribbon of country averages about one kilometre wide but extends inland almost twice that distance at Lavinia Point. The strip of beaches and parallel dunes (components No. 5 and No. 6) is similar to Peggs Beach land system (Richley, 1978), but on King Island it truncates a zone of randomly oriented high dunes (component No. 3). In most situations the high dunes are backed by salt flats.

Below the dark sandy peat surface of the soils in component No. 1 the sand is quite pale then the profile becomes gradually darker with depth.

Carbonate was not detected in this soil. Also carbonate seems to have been leached from the top half metre of the solum in the high dunes. The sand was too moist to determine total depths by augering in components Nos 1, 2 and 4.

There is a marked difference between the closed scrub vegetation on the dunes and in the swales when compared with the diminutive open sedgeland community growing on the salt flats.

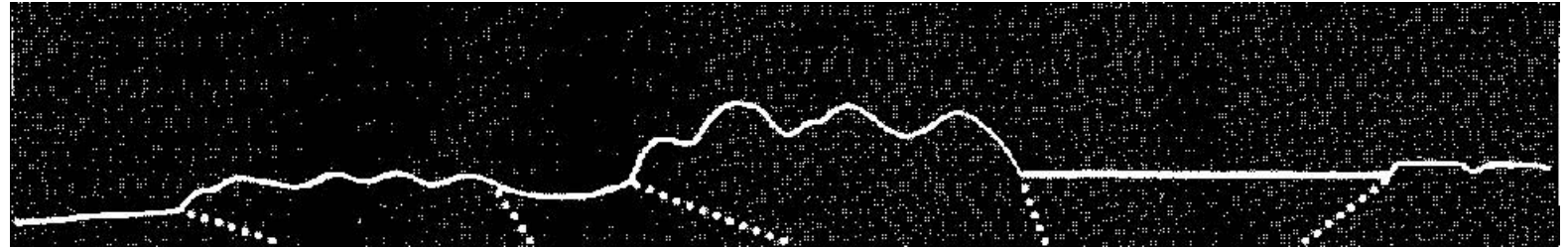
Recreation and bush grazing are the two main exploitive uses of this area but it also serves as a zone of nature conservation, a role aided by its relative inaccessibility to conventional vehicles.

Areas of coastal sand are highly susceptible to serious wind and wave erosion and their sensitive ecosystems are subject to rapid degradation.

LAND SYSTEM

495169 Sea

Elephant River



COMPONENT	1	2	3	4	5	6
PROPORTION %	10	25	25	10	20	10
CLIMATE	Average Annual Rainfall 750-1 000 mm					
GEOLOGY	Quaternary coastal calcareous sands					
TOPOGRAPHY Land form Position Average Sideslope ⁰	River flats Swamps < 1	Coastal beaches, dunes and flats High dunes 7		Swales 1	Parallel dunes 3	Beaches 1
NATIVE VEGETATION Structure Association	Open sedgeland Salt tolerant sedges, herbs and shrubs		Closed scrub Paperbark, honeysuckle, coast wattle, prickly mimosa, bracken		Bare	
SOIL Surface Texture Permeability Average Depth m	Brown (10 YR 4/3) sand soil becoming darker with depth Sandy peat >1.3	Grey (5 Y 5/1) calcareous sand soil Sandy peat >0.5	Weakly differentiated very pale brown (10 YR 7/4) calcareous sand soil Organic sand >1.8	Brown (10 YR 4/3) sand overlying olive grey (5 Y 5/2) calcareous sand Sandy peat High >0.8	Weakly differentiated pale calcareous sand soil Loamy sand >1.8	Undifferentiated pale calcareous sand soil Sand
PRESENT LAND USE	Nature conservation, recreation, grazing					
HAZARDS	High waterlogging and salting		High wind erosion	High waterlogging	High wind erosion	High wind and wave erosion