

DIURNAL LAND VISITATIONS BY RHINOCEROS AUKLETS

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Scott et al. (Western Birds 5:13-20, 1974) reported the range expansion and diurnal activity of Rhinoceros Auklets (*Cerorhinca monocerata*) on the coasts of Oregon and California in recent years. Diurnal activity has been noted on the Farallon Islands, California, and at Sea Lion Caves, Oregon. In this latter location they have been seen carrying fish into the cave indicating that they were feeding young during daytime.

My ornithology students from Walla Walla College Marine Biological Station, Anacortes, Washington, and I observed a Rhinoceros Auklet associating on rocks, and flying circles, with Tufted Puffins (*Lunda cirrhata*). On 23 June 1977 a single auklet came to Williamson Rocks, Rosario Strait, Washington, while our boat was anchored close to shore. It entered a burrow and remained there for at least 10 minutes. The auklet then emerged to rest on the rocks for another 30 minutes or more until a Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*) landed nearby.

Visits to the location were made at least three times a week after the first sighting. The single auklet was always present and usually came to land while I observed other alcids.

On 31 July two Rhinoceros Auklets landed on the rocks in association with Pigeon Guillemots (*Cepphus columba*) and Tufted Puffins.

On one occasion the two auklets disappeared into a rock crevice for several minutes during which time I could plainly hear their growls and fricative wheezings. Since I had no permit to land on Williamson Rocks, I could not determine if an actual nest attempt had been made by the pair.

On 3 August I noticed that a Tufted Puffin kept edging towards a Rhinoceros Auklet. The auklet moved to maintain distance until it had been displaced approximately 15 m and then, apparently tired of the threat, it flew to the sea.

Additional diurnal activity was seen on an islet in Mackaye Harbor, Lopez Island, in mid-July. Two auklets flushed from the turf as my boat approached at about mid morning.

These observations show that Rhinoceros Auklets do occasionally come to land during daylight hours and may do so over a wide extent of their range.

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Rhinoceros Auklet

Sketch by Narca Moore