Toponymic Data Collection on Norfolk Island, South Pacific

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GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do humans name an uninhabited island?

2. How do humans remember, name and locate locations offshore?

3. How does the linguist acquire toponymic data on an isolated island such as Norfolk Island?
Toponymic data collection

Offshore fishing ground names

Traditional documentation methods

1. Mental/memory
2. Journals/diaries
3. Using rulers and maps
Fishing ground names

Is it an ‘anti GPS’ taxon?
Argument

• Offshore fishing ground names are an integral part of the folk toponymy (local and unofficial placenames) of Norfolk Island (and Kangaroo Island).

• Offshore fishing ground names constitute an important part of the locational/orientational idiolect associated with fishing on the Island, particularly Norf’k speakers.
Fred's Ground

Valley

MT Bonython
Hills
Gunsight
Marino Lighthouse
Stanvac Flame
Stanvac Tanks

White Glenelg P.O. Tower
Bunch of Trees Near Beach
White Houses

About Six Miles

Snapper
Whiting
Flathead
Sharks
Mackerel
Garfish
Field at stevens point tide E. wind N.E. and choppy
Shoal at trumpeter caused
Running time 45 mins

MID-DO STONE

RED STONE AT CAICONE

Friday Monday
Tanked on short water
Caught a sack of trumpeter
Tide strong wind S. and
Choppy tide E. then fished
At hand belly stone and
Said many plenty of fish
Running time 40 mins
Powder’s Tilley’s Frankie’s
No Trouble Reef
Horse & Cart
## Norfolk Island Fishing Ground Names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 O'Clock Bank</td>
<td>Joowho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acme</td>
<td>No Trouble (Reef)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred's</td>
<td>Pine fer Robinson's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ar Side fer Doddes</td>
<td>Puss's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ar Yes / Ike's</td>
<td>Shallow Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcadia</td>
<td>Short Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down to the East</td>
<td>Sweat Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddy's</td>
<td>Teeny's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankie's</td>
<td>The Crack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Eye</td>
<td>The Thumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse &amp; Cart</td>
<td>Up the Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac's</td>
<td>Whale's Hump</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RESEARCH QUESTION

How does the linguist document and classify Norfolk offshore fishing ground names?
Possible interview questions

1. What is the name of the fishing ground?
2. Who named it and when was it named?
3. What is the history of the name and the place?
4. Where is it and how do you triangulate it?

1, 2, 3 are fairly innocuous. 4 is a more touchy and sensitive question.
Kangaroo Island - comparative study
Kangaroo Island experiences

• Giving out the name and the history of the name is usually no problem.

• Asking informants for the location of these grounds is tricky as they feel sensitive about giving out this information.

• For my research, the location of these places is not so important rather the linguistic background as well as any other spatial/grammatical information encapsulated within the name.
Conclusion and Contribution

• Fishing ground names are an important taxon of the unofficial and/or folk toponymy of island environments.

• Similar triangulation system is used on Norfolk Island and Kangaroo Island.

• Refined research methodology from Kangaroo Island experiences.