

The ornithology of the Baudin expedition (1800-1804) Jansen, J.J.F.J.

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Chapter 3.2

Towards the resolution of long-standing issues regarding the birds collected during the Baudin expedition to Australia and Timor (1800-1804): a review of original documents reveal new details about collectors, donors, numbers and disbursement

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Corrections on the published version: style is made uniform with the rest of the dissertation. Also minor corrections on grammar, reference to photos, registration numbers in MNHN and to Archives Nationales and MHNH are altered when needed, in the table (extended with correct Shark Bay landing places, and first visit to Mauritius is dropped).

Abstract: The expedition led by Nicolas Baudin (1754-1803) to Australia (1800-1804) was by far the largest of the European expeditions to Australia and Timor undertaken up to that date. Despite the number of bird specimens collected during the expedition, the original records documenting their identity, origin and disbursement have long been neglected. Only a few brief accounts of the birds collected by the Baudin expedition, by Péron (1809) and Bory de Saint-Vincent (1805), all participants in the expedition, were ever published, while the frequently cited publications of Stresemann (1951a) and Whittell (1954) only repeat information extracted from these sources. Based on recent and on-going research, a new review of the original documents is presented here, revealing hitherto unpublished details about who collected and donated birds to the expedition, how many specimens were collected, and how the specimens were disbursed after the expedition's return.

Key words: Baudin, Maugé, Péron, Lesueur, Bass, Macé, Australia, Timor

INTRODUCTION

When political order was re-established after the French Revolution, France hastened to organize an expedition (Hughes 1987: 121) to explore the as-yet uncharted coasts of western and southern "Nouvelle Hollande" (= Australia) (though the expedition did not have a stated political goal, rumors suggest Napoléon I wanted to see if Tasmania and western Australia could be separated from the British-controlled eastern coast) (Hughes 1987: 121, Bohlander 1998). Captain Nicolas Baudin was chosen to command the expedition and was given two ships to carry out its mission, *Le Géographe* and *Le Naturaliste*. Baudin, who had previously commanded *Le Caroline* (1785) and *Le Josephine* (1786-88), subsequently gained experience leading natural history expeditions as captain of *Le Placeres* (1788-1791), *Le Jardinière* (1792-1794) and *Le Belle Angélique* (1796-1798) (Ly-Tio-Fane 1991). The latter expedition brought back bird specimens from Tenerife, St. Thomas, St. Croix and Puerto Rico, resulting in no less than 296 birds being deposited in the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Paris, France (hereafter MNHN) (Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire 1809: 88).¹

Baudin's Australian expedition lasted nearly three-and-half years and made collections at over a dozen sites in western and southern Australia, Timor, Mauritius, South Africa, and the Canary Islands. Over 100,000 items were collected, including over 4,000 insect specimens,

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Fig. 3-021 | LIST DRAFTED BY LOUIS DUFRESNE possibly end of 1804 / early 1805, from the archives at the laboratory at the MNHN (unregistered), 16 June 2011 (Justin JFJ Jansen / © MNHN).
One of the four lists in existence, one more in MNHN and two in Le Havre.

and 912 birds, 125 mammals and 53 reptile specimens (Jussieu 1804: 10), more than any previous European expedition had ever collected. The expedition's scientific team comprised no less than 24 members including astronomers geographers mineralogists botanists and

no less than 24 members, including astronomers, geographers, mineralogists, botanists and zoologists (Brosse 1983b: 95-107), only six of whom however returned to France at the expedition's end. René Maugé (1757-1802), who was assigned to *Le Géographe* and had previously accompanied Baudin on *Le Belle Angélique*, was responsible for collecting birds and mammals (with no senior zoologist appointed to *Le Naturaliste*, bird collecting was limited on the latter vessel). Table 3-003 lists all the locations where bird specimens were collected by expedition members when ashore (locations at sea where seabirds where collected are not indicated).

For authors of the bird specimens mentioned see e.g. Dickinson (2003), for those of mammalian species see Wilson and Reeder (2005).

EXPEDITION ITINERARY

Le Géographe and *Le Naturaliste* departed from Le Havre on 19 October 1800, stopping at Tenerife (Table 3-003, no. 1) and Port Louis, Mauritius before arriving at Geographe Bay (3-002, N°. 2) on 30 May 1801. On 10 June, they were separated by a storm after leaving the bay; while *Le Naturaliste* anchored off Rottnest Island (Table 3-003, N°. 3) and spent two weeks surveying the Swan River and Rottnest and various other offshore islands, *Le Géographe* headed north and anchored off Bernier Island in Shark Bay (Table 3-003, N°. 4), arriving at Timor (Table 3-003, N°. 5) on 22 August. *Le Naturaliste* remained off Dirk Hartog Island, opposite the middle entrance to Shark Bay from 16 July-5 September before joining *Le Géographe* at Timor on 21 September.

On 13 November 1801, both ships set sail together for Bruny Island (Table 3-003, N° . 6), arriving there on 13 January 1802 and at Maria Island (Table 3-003, N° . 7) on 18 February. After being separated again on 8 March, each ship surveyed Bass Strait (Table 3-003, N° . 8) alone, with *Le Géographe* continuing to Wilson's Promontory (Victoria), Encounter Bay, Kangaroo Island, Nuyts Archipelago (South Australia) and Bruny Island, arriving at Port Jackson (= Sydney) (Table 3-003, N° . 9), on 20 June where *Le Naturaliste* had arrived on 25 April after leaving Bass Strait. On 18 May, *Le Naturaliste* left Sydney bound for Mauritius, but driven back by contrary winds, returned on 28 June and remained at Sydney until 18 November, when it departed again (with *Le Géographe* and *Le Casuarina*, the latter was purchased in Sydney) with all the collections made up to that date and added only a short stop at King Island (Baudin 1974: 493, Horner 1987: 357), *Le Naturaliste* left Australia. After a stop at Mauritius (± 31 January-10 February 1803), *Le Naturaliste* returned to Le Havre on 7 June 1803.²

On 18 November 1802, *Le Géographe* and *Le Casuarina* headed for King Island (Table 3-003, N° 10), and then to Kangaroo Island (Table 3-003, N° 11). After being separated, *Le Casuarina* surveyed St. Vincent and St. Spencer Gulf, while *Le Géographe* made landfall at Eyre Peninsula (Table 3-003, N° 12) at Streaky Bay (6 February) and Denial Bay (7 February), with the two ships reuniting at King George Sound (Table 3-003, N° 13), then being separated again until reunited at Rottnest Island. They subsequently anchored off the north-western tip of Peron Peninsula in Shark Bay (Table 3-003, N° 14) and then, after some surveying of coastal islands and a stop at Timor (Table 3-003, N° 15), did some brief exploring up to the east of Melville Island (Northern Territory) before setting sail for Mauritius on 7 July 1803. After getting separated once more on 24 July, *Le Géographe* docked at Port Louis (Table 3-003, N° 16) on 7 August and *Le Casuarina* on 12 August, with *Le Casuarina* remaining at Mauritius and *Le Géographe* arrived at Lorient on 24 March 1804 (Pinkerton 1814: 739-952).³

COLLECTORS

René Maugé was joined on occasion by Nicolas Baudin (for example at Geographe Bay) when collecting birds (Baudin 1974: 174), until his unfortunate death at Maria Island at 21 February 1802. Baudin had a great interest in birds, as shown in his various letters, for example to Antoine-Laurent de Jussieu (1748-1836) on 11 November 1802 (MNHN, Bibliothèque centrale, Ms 2082), and in his diary (Baudin 1974) and added to the growing MNHN bird collection (Jussieu 1804: 5, Girard 1856: 125). Maugé was the main bird-collector until his death

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Fig. 3-022 | PAGE FROM 'JOURNAL COMMENCÉ LE PREMIER JANVIER 1759', page 86, from the archives at the laboratory at the MNHN (unregistered), 21 September 2016 (Justin JFJ Jansen / © MNHN). This page documents the donation of specimens to the cities of Moulins and Rouen.

(Girard 1856: 125). After skinning the specimens, he gave specimens to artist to be drawn, so that the staff in MNHN could mount them in a more natural state (Horner 1987: 31).

In the last stages of Maugé's life (he was already ill when the expedition left Timor), Charles-Alexandre Lesueur (1778-1846), possibly helped Maugé, assisting him in Tasmania and collecting many birds for the expedition after Maugé's death.⁴⁵ While residing at Sydney and in between packing the specimens with François-Auguste Péron (1775-1810),⁶ Lesueur took the opportunity to make some inland excursions to collect specimens. Lesueur succeeded in securing "no less than 200 birds" (Caley 1966: 52, Finney 1984: 113, Starbuck 2009b: 184).⁷⁸ At Cape Town Lesueur secured 16 birds and 30 insects (Collection Lesueur, MHNH 21001).

Another notable bird collector was Stanislaus Levillain (1774-1801), the ranking assistant zoologist aboard *Le Géographe* before he transferred to *Le Naturaliste* at Mauritius. Baudin (1974: 33) mentions a bird collection made at Mauritius, which was sold on-board after Levillain passed away. He died when the ship sailed from Timor towards Tasmania on *Le Naturaliste* (Vuacheux 1905, Maury 1954, Jangoux 2004, Black *et al.* 2013).

Various crewmembers made notes regarding birds in their journals, e.g. François-Désiré Breton (Archives Nationales 5/JJ/57), Léon Brèvent (Archives Nationales 5/JJ/56) and Jacques Saint-Cricq (Archives Nationales 5/JJ/48) (cf. Baudin 1974: 319). It is unclear however if they ever collected any birds.

François Michel Ronsard (Archives Nationales 5/JJ/29) may have been responsible for various birds collected on the expedition, which he often mentioned in his journal (cf. Baudin 1974: 213).

Pierre-Bernard Milius (1773-1829) collected some specimens, including live birds, while aboard *Le Naturaliste* during its sojourn in Bass Strait (Archives Nationales 5/JJ/57).

Birds, especially after Maugé died, were collected by various hunters on-board of *Le Géographe* (cf. Baudin 1974: 468, 470, 478), one of them was Jean-Louis Barbe (Baudin 1974: 539), and most likely then skinned by Lesueur.

Although François Péron is often acknowledged as either expedition's sole collector of bird specimens (Plombley *et al.* 1990) or one of its three bird collectors (Black *et al.* 2013), it remains doubtful that he ever collected even a single bird on the expedition. While Péron often made notes in his journal on birds and other fauna at the sites visited by the expedition (Milne-Edwards and Oustalet 1899, Parker 1984, Cheke 2009, 2010, Pfennigwerth 2010), he was obviously not the collector of these; indeed, he records that it was Lesueur who collected and 'stuffed' the birds that he mentions (at least in D'Entrecasteaux Strait) (Collection Lesueur, MHNH 20113), while Péron worked hard to build up his collections on other taxa. Moreover, while Péron recorded extensive descriptions of bird taxa in his manuscripts that were subsequently published by himself or others, he never formally described a single new bird species. His unpublished catalogue in Le Havre (Collection Lesueur, MHNH 21002), recording all "his" specimens and the locations where they were collected, doesn't include any descriptions.

DONORS

Part 1 (an XI)

Jean Macé (<1765->1803), who is mentioned by Louis Dufresne in his files ("Rapporté par L'expedition du capitaine Baudin par le Cm Macé du Bengale", Ms, Archives du laboratoire de zoologie (Mammifères et Oiseaux) du MNHN),⁹ lived in Cape Town from 1789-1792 (Anon. 1848: 81-83), and subsequently Mauritius, where he remained until 1798 (Millin *et al.* 1795: 312-325). In 1798, he was at Tharangambadi (Tamil Nadu, India) and Serampore (West Bengal, India) and at Saharanpur (Uttar Pradesh, India) in January 1800 (Laissus 1981: 284-285). Although 135 bird specimens that arrived at the MNHN are attributed to Macé (Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire 1809: 88), it is uncertain whether these were included in the total number of specimens collected during the Baudin expedition. Most likely these specimens came back via *Le Naturaliste*, as various mammals from India and Madagascar, attributed to Macé were present in the MNHN in 1803 (Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire 1803, Hill 1980) (although Macé is not known to have visited Madagascar, he may have purchased or acquired his Madagascar specimens from friends in Cape Town or Mauritius).¹⁰ He is also likely to visited Reunion.

Some birds were brought back alive aboard *Le Naturaliste*, including two Black Swans *Cygnus atratus* (André Thouin; Archives Nationales AJ/15/590 21 June 1803) (including specimen MNHN-ZO-2014-395), one adult (as three young) Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae* (Jouanin 1959) and at least two Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* (specimens MNHN-ZO-2011-589, MNHN-ZO-2014-475) (François-Désiré Breton; Archives Nationales 5/JJ/57).

Part 2 (an XII)

In a note in Péron's hand, written on 22 March 1804 aboard at *Le Géographe*, he mentioned various purchases (at least five) made for the Baudin expedition (MNHN, Bibliothèque centrale, Ms Letter 414) (fig. 3-024).¹¹

Some birds were purchased or donated by George Bass (1771-1803) (Collection Lesueur, MHNH21001), who sold supplies (including pork and other items) to the Baudin expedition (Estensen 2005: 160-161) as well as donating 160 artefacts (Starbuck 2009b: 171). Per Horner (1987: 329) the number of artefacts is 206; however, the total number of bird-specimens donated by Bass is not mentioned (Collection Lesueur, MHNH21001). On 21 November 1801,

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 Fig. 3-023 | PAGE FROM THE NOTES TAKEN BY STANISLAS LEVILLAIN

 (25 April – 20 September 1801), and registered as Collection Lesueur,

 MNHN 07008FI (© Muséum d'histoire naturelle, Le Havre).

 At this page – for example - the Galah Eolophus roseicapilla is documented.

Bass left Sydney and travelled around the Pacific, visiting New Zealand, the Austral Islands, the Tuamotu Archipelago, Tahiti, Mo'orea, Hawai'i Island, Oahu, Moloka'i, Tahiti (again), the Marquesas, Tonga, and Samoa, returning to Sydney on 14 November 1802 (cf. Estensen 2005: 149-161). During this trip: two Tui Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae (specimen MNHN-ZO-2014-432) were collected at Facile Harbour, Dusky Sound, New Zealand (visited on 7-21 December 1801), a Crimson-crowned Fruit-dove Ptilinopus porphyraceus fasciatus =coralensis (specimen MNHN-ZO-2005-2563) was collected in the Tuamotus (January 1801) and a Polynesian Triller Lalage maculosa (specimen MNHN-ZO-2016-523) was collected in Tonga ("visited sometime between August and November 1801"). Bass became interested in Natural History by Joseph Banks (he sent two bird skins¹² in May 1799 together with the skin of a Common Wombat Vombatus ursinus and a skull to Banks; Estensen 2005; 120, 128) and by William Paterson; the latter introduced him as member of the Linnaean Society in 1799 (Estensen 2005: 70, 72). He collected for example plant and animal specimens with his friend Mathew Flinders in 1798-99 (Estensen 2005: 120). The four specimens mentioned above are all attributed to the Baudin expedition, but how many other birds Bass donated is unknown. The birds did not end up on Le Naturaliste as the specimens aboard that vessel were already packed by early November 1802; hence Péron mentions Bass in his journal (Collection Lesueur, MHNH 21001). However, Bass sent some letters back to France with Le Naturaliste (Estensen 2005: 162).

Jean-Baptiste-Désiré Dumont (1771-1822), was attached to the first part of the Baudin expedition, and oversaw the entomological aspect of the expedition at *Le Naturaliste*. He collected together with Jean-Baptiste-Geneviève-Marcellin Bory de Saint-Vincent (1778-1848) at Mauritius in April 1801 (Bory Saint-Vincent 1805: 65-66). He then became sick, and left the Baudin expedition (Bory Saint-Vincent 1805: 75). He remained at Mauritius until 1810, and then moved to Reunion. He married and remained there until his death in 1822 (Vinson 1944: 424). In the inventory of Baudin specimens made by Louis Dufresne (Archives du laboratoire de zoologie (Mammifères et Oiseaux) du MNHN: Ms), 30 specimens from Dumont are mentioned in the total number of specimens from the expedition.¹³ These birds were addressed to Bernard-Germain-Étienne de la Ville-sur-Illon de Lacépède (1756-1825). The same lot also included some insects for Jean-Baptiste-Pierre-Antoine de Monet de Lamarck (1744-1829), and some natural history items for Louis-Jean Vieillot (1748-1831).

Jan Willem Janssens (1762-1838), Governor-General of the Cape Colony, donated 15 live birds and 20 live mammals (from Anjouan, Madagascar and the Cape) (Collection Lesueur, MHNH 21001).

Willem Bartholomé Eduard Paravicini di Capelli (1778-1848), Janssens's chief of staff, donated 30 birds (Collection Lesueur, MHNH 21001) to the crew of *Le Géographe*. The bird originated from 'Afrique Meridionale', skins of a Bontebok *Damaliscus pygargus* and two Springboks *Antidorcas marsupialis* were also donated.

Reinier de Klerk Dibbetz (1764–1808) donated 27 birds from "Bengale" when *Le Géographe* visited Cape Town between 3 and 24 January 1804 (Collection Lesueur, MHNH 21001). Dibbetz probably acquired these birds from travelers.

The sealer/fisher Daniel Cooper "sold" some birds to the Baudin expedition when King Island was visited on 24 December 1802 (Jouanin 1959, Baudin 1974: 453, 456).

Some birds were brought back alive aboard *Le Géographe*, including two "Dwarf" Emus *Dromaius ssp.*, Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*, Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio ssp* and others (Jangoux *et al.* 2009).

INVENTORY

According to lists made by Louis Dufresne (Collection Lesueur, MHNH 21036, (26 June 1804), Archives du laboratoire de zoologie (Mammifères et Oiseaux) du MNHN: N° 180) and a letter from François Péron (MNHN, Bibliothèque centrale, Ms 2528), the Baudin expedition brought back a total of 912 birds. This figure agrees with those published by Jussieu (1804: 10) and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1809: 88). A manuscript list by Péron written in March 1804 also lists 912 birds from 289 species, 144 of which, according to him, were new to science (MNHN, Bibliothèque centrale, Ms 2717 / Ms 2528).¹⁴

Of these 912 specimens, Dufresne lists 90 as having been given away or exchanged and 19 as living in Malmasion and at Jardin du Plantes (the Empress Joséphine's residence, where she

maintained a menagerie (Jangoux *et al.* 2009)).¹⁵ Dufresne lists the remaining 803 specimens from 297 species per family names (recorded in a mix of French and Latin). These 803 specimens clearly indicate skins/mounts, and no living birds are included.

Per list made by Péron (Collection Lesueur, MHNH21001), 422 birds (including living, purchased, and donated birds) were collected on the second leg of the Baudin expedition, between 22 November 1802 and 21 January 1804, after the departure of *Le Naturaliste*. This indicates that 490 birds (912 total - 422 from expedition's second leg) were collected during the first leg of the expedition.

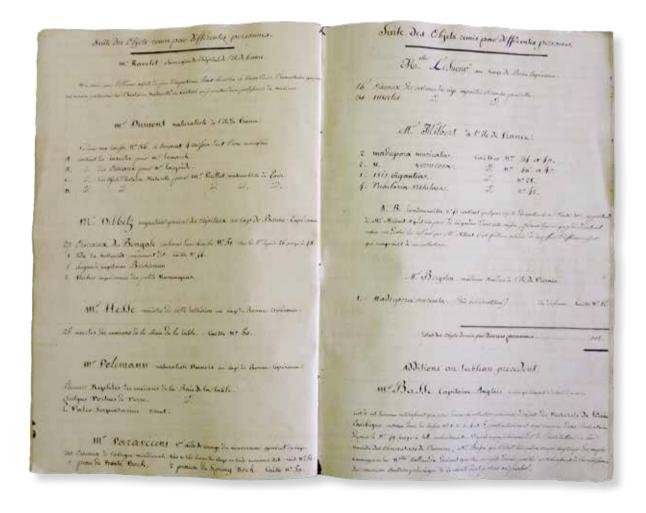


Fig. 3-024 | TWO PAGES FROM 'OBSERVATIONS ZOOLOGIQUES DE PORT JACKSON A LA NOUVELLE HOLLANDE' from the hand of François Péron, and registered as Collection Lesueur, MNHN 21001, 27 June 2013 (Justin JFJ Jansen / © Muséum d'histoire naturelle, Le Havre).

DISBURSEMENT OF THE SPECIMENS

Of the 803 specimens listed by Dufresne, only 403 entered the Paris Museum,¹⁶ of which 325 were prepared for the galleries (Archives du laboratoire de zoologie (Mammifères et Oiseaux) du MNHN: Dufresne Ms list) (fig. 3-021). The remainder followed different routes.

It is uncertain how many of the 893 bird specimens (deducting the 19 live birds from the total of 912) were in good condition upon the expedition's return, considering that the ships were probably infested with swarms of cockroaches and rats (Laurent 1997), or how many deteriorated soon after their arrival in France. It is therefore impossible to establish how many were turned into useful study skins or mounts. Clearly 20+ mounts/skins were in a bad state already in 1804 (Collection Lesueur, MHNH 11036).

The 325 birds that were mounted for the galleries were restuffed and treated with arsenic soap by Louis Dufresne and lost their original notes (if any existed). This is also indicated in the type descriptions made by Louis-Jean Vieillot and Coenraad Jacob Temminck (Stresemann 1953).

Baudin specimens ended up in the private collections of Louis-Antoine-Francois Baillon (1778-1855) (Christophe Gouraud *in litt.*, Gouraud 2014a, b), William Bullock (c. 1773-1849),¹⁷ Pierre-Antoine Delalande (1787-1823),¹⁸ Louis Dufresne (Levaillant 1806, Dufresne 1818, Sweet 1970), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna, Austria (Bauer and Wagner 2012: in Acquisition Book 1: 91-92),¹⁹ Joséphine vicomtesse de Beauharnais (1763-1814)²⁰ and Coenraad Jacob Temminck (Temminck 1807, Stresemann 1953a), as well as in museums, including, Switzerland, Muséum d'histoire naturelle de la Ville de Genève (Jouanin 1959, Hume and Walters 2012), in Italy, the Museo Zoologico de 'La Specola', Sezione del Museo di Storia Naturale, Florence, Italy (Giglioli 1907, Balouet and Jouanin 1990, Barbagli and Violani 2010), the Museo di Zoologia, Università degli Studi di Padova, Pavia, Italy (Rovati et al. 2007, Violani and Rovati 2010: 16),²¹ the Museo dell'Istituto Nazionale per la Fauna Selvatica Bologna,²² and in France, in museums in Rouen (Collection Lesueur, MHNH 21111 and 21114 (dated 23 April 1806))²³ and at Moulins (Girard 1856: 132) (fig. 3-022). Various other collections, yet unknown, probably also received a share of the expedition's specimens. But also, some ended up with merchants like Bécoeur in Paris,²⁴ and M. Gigot'orcia in Paris.²⁵ And specimens were used for exchange and specimens in a bad condition were destroyed.26

FURTHER RESEARCH

The issues addressed above are only an indication of what remains to be done to give a complete account of the Baudin expedition. There are still many questions to be answered, problems to be solved, and persons to be researched, for example: Jean Macé, Barthélemy Faujas de Saint-Fond (1741-1819) and Alexandre Brongniart (1770-1847) and Pierre-Auguste Broussonet (Voisin and Voisin 2008: 16-17). What were their ties with the expedition? What roles did Louis Dufresne and Bécoeur (Stresemann 1951a) play? What specimens were donated or given away?²⁷ At what locations and by whom were the specimens collected (fig. 3-023)? Identifying all the collections where specimens from the Baudin expedition ended up also provides many interesting avenues to explore.

This article is only the first of several publications on the Baudin expedition I intend to publish.

 Table 3-003 | Collecting localities of bird-specimens, as noted in various sources.

Visit	Date	Place	Province	Country	Main collector
1	2 - 14 November 1800	Santa Cruz de Tenerife	Tenerife	Canary Islands	Maugé
2	30 May - 10 June 1801	Geographe Bay	Western Australia	Australia	Maugé, Levillain
3	14 - 28 June 1801	Rottnest Island / Swan River	Western Australia	Australia	Levillain
4	26 June - 14 July 1801	Shark Bay	Western Australia	Australia	Maugé, Levillain
5	22 August - 13 November 1801	Kupang Bay	Timor	Indonesia	Maugé, Levillain
6	13 January - 16 February 1802	Bruny Island	Tasmania	Australia	Lesueur
7	27 February - 8 March 1802	Maria Island	Tasmania	Australia	Lesueur
8	8 March - 18 April 1802	Bass Strait	Tasmania	Australia	Lesueur, Milius
9	20 June - 18 November 1802	Sydney	New South Wales	Australia	Lesueur, purchased
10	8 - 27 December 1802	King Island	Tasmania	Australia	Lesueur, purchased
11	2 January - 1 February 1803	Kangaroo Island	South Australia	Australia	Lesueur, Baudin
12	6 - 7 February 1803	Eyre Peninsula	South Australia	Australia	Lesueur, Baudin
13	17 February - 1 March 1803	King George Sound	Western Australia	Australia	Lesueur, Baudin
14	16 - 23 March 1803	Shark Bay	Western Australia	Australia	Lesueur, Baudin
15	6 May - 3 June 1803	Kupang Bay	Timor	Indonesia	Lesueur, Baudin, purchased
16	7 August - 16 December 1803	Port Louis	Port Louis district	Mauritius	Lesueur, purchased
17	3 - 24 January 1804	Cape Town	Western Cape	South-Africa	Lesueur, purchased