

# LONG ISLAND, PAPUA NEW GUINEA — PEOPLE, RESOURCES AND CULTURE

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## SUMMARY

Long Island provides, in microcosm and on a compressed time scale, an example of the sort of interaction between humans and their environment common to many Pacific islands. The current period of human occupancy of Long Island began sometime during the nineteenth century but until World War II the island remained isolated and population growth remained low. Since that time population growth has accelerated, contacts with the outside world have increased and the islanders are now beginning to enter a cash economy. The effects of these processes on the human society and its interactions with the environment are summarized. Major areas covered include human settlement and population growth, aspects of social organisation, wild resources and their use, outside influences affecting island society, the current status of the Long Island economy and possible future development options.

## INTRODUCTION

This account of the people of Long Island, their resources and their culture is based upon published and unpublished documents and, except where otherwise acknowledged, our own observations and interviews. To the best of our knowledge, all statements herein were accurate as of mid-1979, when this account was completed. Most of the data were collected during nine visits devoted primarily to more specialized biological research and our total time on the island amounts to less than four months. All but three days of this was during October and November, that is, in the late dry season. Nevertheless, visits spread over nine years provided diachronic perspective and opportunities for checking the accuracy of earlier observations. We are impressed by the consistency (between informants, between locations and over time) of informants citing first hand observations and hearsay once removed. The general reliability of oral data in Papua New Guinea and techniques to enhance it are discussed elsewhere by Hughes (1977: 3-7). Our common language was New Guinea Pidgin and even the oldest residents had some command of it.

We italicize foreign words other than names which have been borrowed and published as English (e.g. Arop, Umboi). We are not linguists; we have rendered what we heard in the orthography used for New Guinea Pidgin by Mihalic (1971: 3-8). This is based on the NGP<sub>1</sub> dialect of the Madang area.

In many cases the European names on the old maps have already been replaced by local names but confusion is still possible because of historical lag and the large number of languages and dialects spoken in the area under discussion. Equivalents are:

Early Name	English	New Guinea Pidgin	Long Island
Dampier Is.	Karkar	—	—
Rich's Is.	Bagabag	—	—
Long Is.	Arop, Long Is.	Arop	Pono
Lottin Is.	Tolokiwa	Lokep	Lokep
Tupinier Is.	Sakar	Sakar	Oreng
Rook Is.	Umboi	Biksiasi or Siasi	Kowai (N.W. inland) Siasi (S&E coasts)
Kaiser Wilhelmsland	Siassi Group New Guinea	Siasi Niugini	Siasi Kowalmi

The locations of these and other localities referred to in the text are indicated in