

some outlying islands lying nearly parallel to Admiralty Island, forms a natural breakwater completely sheltering the space enclosed between it and the coast of that island. This reef has been named after D'Entrecasteaux, who made a running survey of the northern portion of the Admiralty group in 1792, and whose positions and sketch of the land are apparently correct.

The whole of the space enclosed between D'Entrecasteaux Reef and Admiralty Island is not available for anchorage, part of it being occupied by several small islands and shoals; there is, however, sufficient room to afford shelter to several vessels, and if the whole of the harbour were sounded it would probably be found quite large enough for all requirements of trade at this group for many years.

D'Entrecasteaux Reef is 7 miles long W.N.W. and E.S.E., and 6 cables in width at its broadest part. On it are three low, flat, sandy islands (named D'Entrecasteaux, Suhm, and Wild), all of which are thickly wooded, two of them, D'Entrecasteaux and Wild Islands, being inhabited; and close to its eastern extremity is a small sandy cay with a few trees on it, named Observatory Islet, being the observation spot of the Challenger in 1875.¹ The northern or outer edge of the reef is well defined, and has apparently no outlying dangers, none having been seen from the masthead when sailing along it in the Challenger, nor any found by the boats when sounding close to the breakers, which in March are very heavy. At a distance from its edge of $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles, one sounding of 150 fathoms was obtained. The southern or inner edge of the reef is not well defined; it has, as is usual with coral reefs, several mushroom-shaped rocks cropping up close to it, with deep water around, and must therefore be approached with caution. In the centre of the reef is a shallow lagoon, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from its western extremity there is an opening, through which apparently a boat or even a small vessel might pass into smooth water under favourable circumstances, but the sea breaks at times across it.

D'Entrecasteaux Island is the westernmost of the three on the reef of that name, and lies 3 cables from its edge. It is nearly half a mile in length and 2 cables in breadth, low and flat, but covered with trees, which, rising from 80 to 100 feet, can be seen at some distance. The natives live in a village on its north side, which is guarded by a rough stockade. The landing place is on the south side. There is no good water to be found there, nor in fact on any of the small outlying islands visited; the natives use the sea water which filters through the sand into wells dug near their habitations, and is very brackish even in the rainy season.

Suhm Island, a little over a mile to the eastward of D'Entrecasteaux Island, is of nearly the same size and height as that island, but is uninhabited. Four cables to the eastward of it is the break in the reef before mentioned.

The space to the westward of Suhm Island appeared from the masthead of the Challenger, when outside the reef, to be free from danger, and good anchorage will most likely be found there. The west point of D'Entrecasteaux Reef may probably be rounded at a distance of a quarter to half a mile, and anchorage found between the two islands to the southward of the reef; but it must be borne in mind, in entering the harbour by the western passage, that no soundings have as yet been obtained there, and therefore it is imperatively necessary that a good lookout should be kept from aloft for any shoal heads that may exist.

Wild Island lies nearly 4 miles E.S.E. of Suhm Island, is three quarters of a mile in length, and 250 yards in breadth at its widest part, and is low, flat, and covered with trees, like Suhm and D'Entrecasteaux Islands. Wild Island is inhabited, the village being on the south coast, near its

¹ The native names not being procurable, it was considered justifiable to give names to the various islets, &c.