

The Ninepin Group

Background

The Ninepin Group (Chinese: 九針群島) or Kwo Chau Islands (果洲群島) is a group of 29 islands in the easternmost waters of Hong Kong. It comprises mainly the South Ninepin Island, North Ninepin Island and East Ninepin Island. The Group is located in the open sea and is thus subject to the impact of strong wind and waves, resulting in diverse peculiar coastal landforms. These include steep cliffs, sea arches and various strangely-shaped rocks.

Naming

The name “Ninepin” was inspired by an old British game similar to bowling. When British seamen first saw the array of these islands, ninepin bowling came to their mind. The Group was however named Kwo Chau in Chinese as it looked like scattered fruit from an overturned platter from heaven.

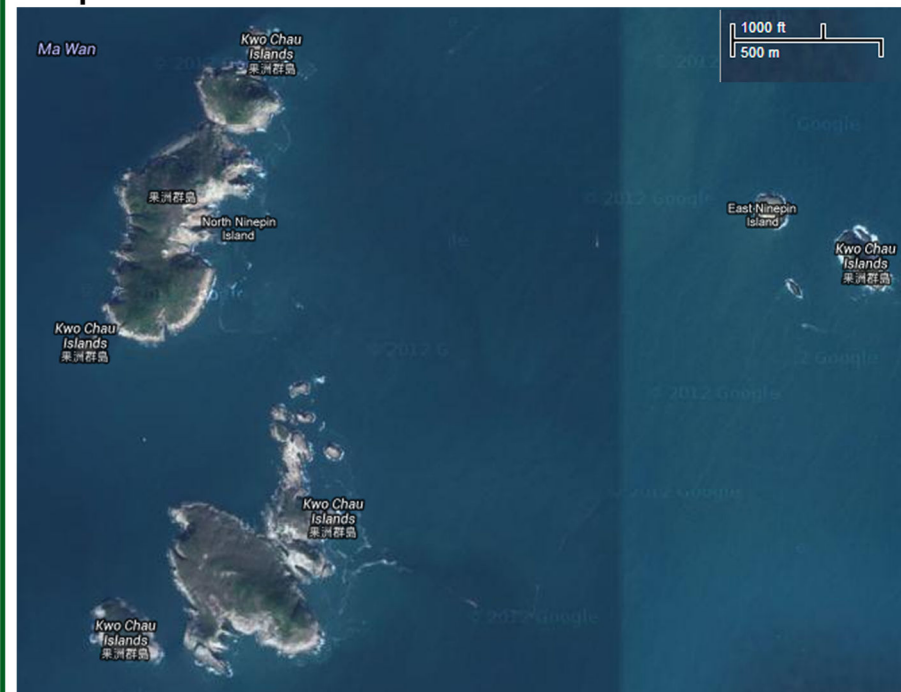
Formation of the rocks

About 160 million years ago, a massive volcanic eruption happened in the area. Volcanic ash and acidic lava spewed out from the volcano and covered the land. The huge volume of volcanic ash and lava gradually cooled and solidified, the contraction effect then gave rise to the uniform hexagonal cracks and joints. The combined impact of wind, rain and ocean surge over millions of years brought the hidden minerals within the rocks to the surfaces, therefore the pale rock surfaces now appear to be decorated with a dash of color.

Geological details

The outcropped volcanic rocks with columnar joints belong to acidic rhyolite volcanic rock. The rocks are composed mainly of potash feldspar and quartz phenocrysts. This rock set (High Island Formation) forms part of the Early-Cretaceous Kau Sai Chau Volcanic Group.

Map 1



Map 2



Islands making up the Ninepin Group

- East Ninepin Island (Tung Kwo Chau; 東果洲)
- Lung Shuen Pai (龍船排) or Fo Siu Pai (火燒排)
- Tuen Chau Chai (短洲仔)
- Tuen Chau Mei (短洲尾)
- Shue Long Chau (蕃荳洲) or Kong Tau Pai (光頭排)
- North Ninepin Island (Pak Kwo Chau; 北果洲)
- Hok Chai Pai (殼仔排)
- Ngan Peng Keng
- Ngan Peng Tau
- North Ninepin Island (北果洲)
- Sai Chau Mei (細洲尾)
- Tuen Keng
- South Ninepin Island (Nam Kwo Chau; 南果洲)
- Tai Chau (大洲)
 - where the Kwo Chau Wan (果洲灣) beach is located
- Tai Chau Mei (大洲尾)
- Ta Long Pai (打浪排)
- Lai Chi Pai (荔枝排)

Columnar Joints



Sea Stack ("chopped neck")



Sea Arches



The "Cannon Rock"



Cliff face 千丈壁



Sea Caves

