

## SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 12

## North-West Solitary Island, New South Wales

**Location:** 30°02' S., 153°16' E.; about 7 km offshore and 11 km north-north-east of Woolgoolga, N.S.W.

**Status:** Nature Reserve controlled by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (N.S.W.); entry permit required.

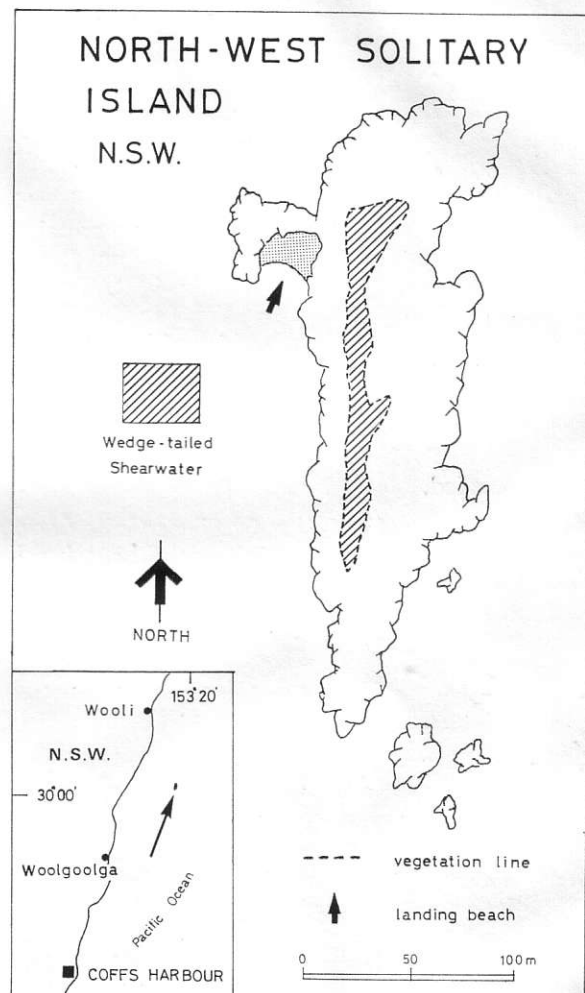
**Description:** 1.9 ha; 300 m by 100 m at widest; one of the smaller islands of the Solitary Group, it is long, narrow and of highly metamorphic rock running roughly north-south. The middle ridge rises to 20 m. Some 70% of the island is bare rock except for crevices and overhangs supporting primary colonising succulents including Pigface *Carpobrotus glaucescens*, Rounded Pigface *Sesuvium portulacastrum* and Saltbush *Rhagodia nutans*. The remaining 30% supports a low-lying mat of which Prickly Couch *Zoisia macrantha*, Wandering Jew *Commelina cyanea* and Coast Morning Glory *Ipomoea cairica* are the predominant species. The vegetation is less diverse and more evenly distributed than on the other islands of the Group.

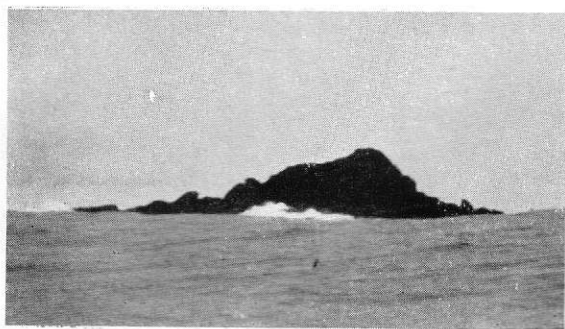
**Landing:** Access is difficult and most easily gained by anchoring offshore and swimming to the small, sandy beach near the north-west tip.

**Ornithological History:** The first recorded visit by scientists was that of Ranger J. Winter and Ranger/Naturalist M. Dodkin of the NPWS on 30 November 1973 when adult Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were found on eggs, a nest of the Sooty Oystercatcher was also found. A further visit was made by Winter, A. Floyd, S. G. Lane and A. K. Morris on 27 April 1974. About 80 burrows of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were examined and 16 contained almost fully fledged young. It is possible that some young had already departed from the island prior to this visit. No other seabirds were found nesting.

## Breeding Seabirds and Status

*Puffinus pacificus* Wedge-tailed Shearwater — Due to the shallow soil, burrows as such, are rare and the birds nest wherever the vegetation cover is sufficient. Estimated 100 breeding pairs.



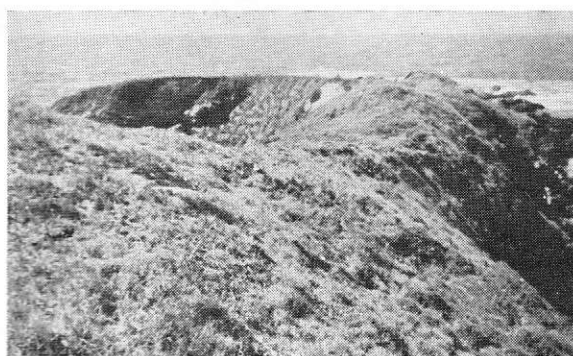


- Above — View of the island from the north during a rain squall.

Photo: S. G. Lane

- Left — View of the island from the east, showing the limited vegetation.

Photo: M. Dodkin



- Vegetation on the ridge, looking south.

Photo: M. Dodkin

*Haematopus fuliginosus* Sooty Oystercatcher — On 30 November 1973, a nest containing two eggs was found near the north-east corner among rocks.

#### Factors Affecting Status

Evidence indicates that the White-breasted Sea-eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* is a predator of the shearwater population due to the ease with which the birds can be extracted from their shallow 'burrows'.

#### OTHER VERTEBRATES

None recorded

#### Other Seabirds Recorded

*Egretta sacra* Reef Heron

*Sterna bergii* Crested Tern

#### Banding

One visit on 27 April 1974.

*P. pacificus* — 16 nestlings. No recoveries.

#### Bibliography

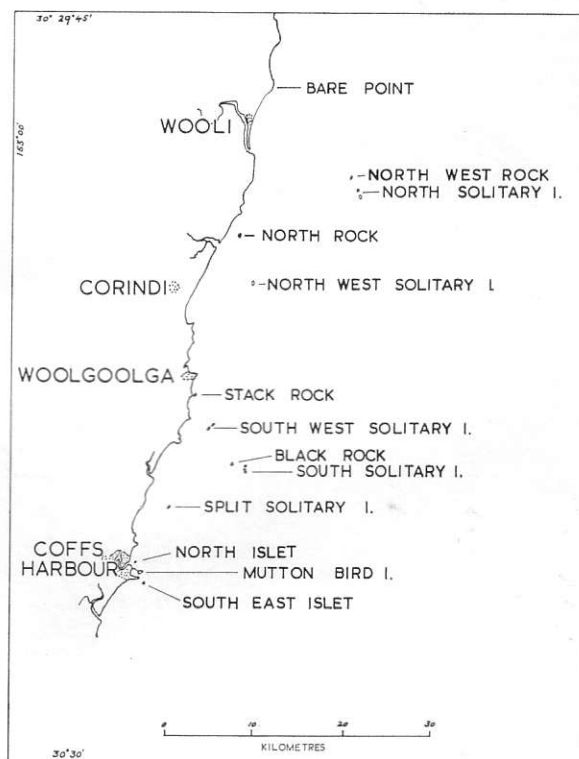
1. Lane, S. G. (1972). 'Breeding Seabirds of the Solitary Islands, N.S.W.', *Emu* 72: 182-183.
2. Lane, S. G. (1975). 'Further Notes on the Seabirds of the Solitary Islands, New South Wales', *Aust. Bird Bander* 13: 56-57.

#### Acknowledgements

Ranger J. Winter (NPWS) provided the transport for the visits; Ranger/Naturalist M. Dodkin supplied details of the vegetation.

Date compiled:  
6 March 1975

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- Map showing the location of the Solitary Islands.