

## SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 18

## Broughton Island, New South Wales

**Location:** 32°37' S., 152°19' E.; 2.3 km off-shore and 15 km north-east of Port Stephens, N.S.W.

**Status:** Part of Myall Lakes National Park, controlled by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (N.S.W.).

**Description:** 138 ha; irregularly shaped, 2.5 km at longest and 1.4 km at widest.

The main island, the largest of the costal islands of N.S.W., is undulating and rises to a rocky, quartzite ridge some 91 m high at the north-east corner before dropping steeply to the sea. Smaller cliffs are interspersed with beaches on the northern, southern and eastern sides. The undulating ridges are mostly sandy with some rocky outcrops in a few places; there is a swampy area in the centre. Much of the island is covered with Kangaroo Grass *Themedeia australis*, Blady Grass *Imperata cylindrica* and Bracken *Pteridium esculentum*. There are a few scattered trees including sapling Broad-leafed Paperbark *Melaleuca quinquenervia* and stunted Coral Trees *Erythrina sp.* around the edge of the swamp. Tree Broom-heath *Monotoca elliptica* grows in clumps mainly at the western end with isolated specimens elsewhere. Pigface *Carpobrotus glaucescens* is scattered over the island and patches of Prickly Pear *Apuntia stricta* are found mainly at the south-east corner. Other vegetation includes the following:

*Blechnum indicum*, *Casuarina glauca*, *Cenchrus caliculatus*, *Clematis glycinoides*, *Correa alba*, *Cupaniopsis anacardioides*, *Cyperus polystachyos*, *Doodia aspera*, *Duboisia myoporoides*, *Enchylaena tomentosa*, *Hydrocotyle bonariensis*, *Juncus kraussii*, *J. subsecundus*, *Kennedia rubicunda*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Paspalum dilatatum*, *Poa poiformis*, *Rhagodia hastata*, *Samolus repens*, *Scirpus nodosus*, *Spinifex hirsutus*, *Tetragonia tetragonioides*, *Westringia fruticosa*.

Three of the satellite islands or islets, Little Broughton or East Head, North Rock and Inner Rock are dealt with separately on pages 14-19. A fourth, South Rock, also known as Looking Glass or South Island, is at the south-east end, close to, but separated from the main island. It is very steep-sided and rocky, rising to 46 m,

with little soil supporting vegetation such as Ruby Saltbush, Mat-rush and Prickly Pear, the last-mentioned being very prevalent in 1972 and 1973.

Also at the south-east end near South Rock are several small, rocky outcrops, the largest of which is known as Snapper Rock. It is connected to the main island at low tide, but two adjoining outcrops are separated. At the north-west end and also connected to the main island is a rocky outcrop known as West End with rather shallow soil supporting a thick growth of Mat-rush, Tree Broom-heath and Coast Wattle *Acacia sophorae* interspersed with Pigface and creepers.

**Landing:** A sandy beach at the end of Esmeralda Cove provides easy landing. Landings may also be made onto other beaches depending on weather conditions, and emergency light aircraft landing is possible.

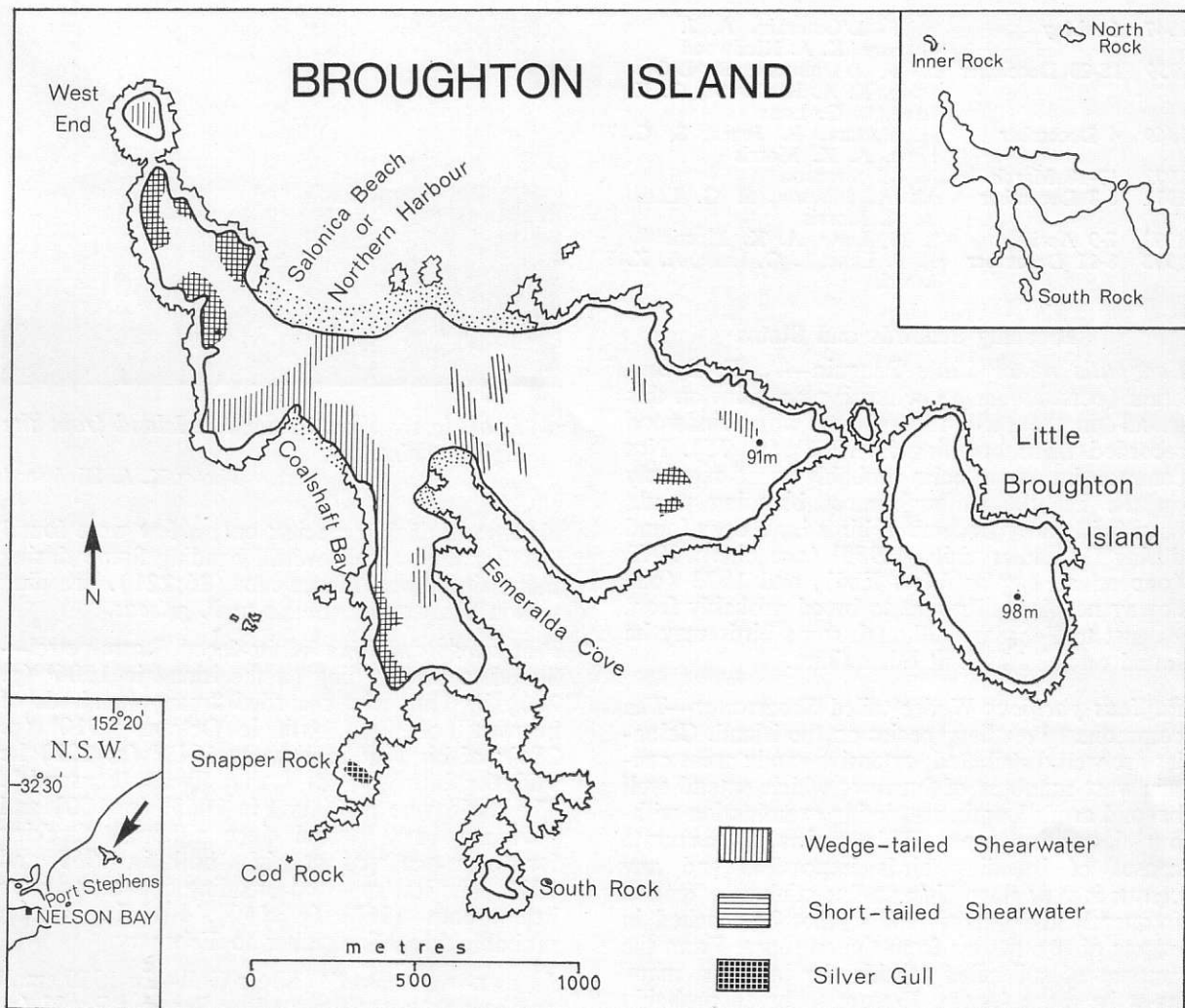
**Ornithological History:** Period summarised — 1906 to December 1973.

In December 1906 A. F. Basset Hull '... had received an egg of the Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) collected for him by L. Harrison on Broughton Island'<sup>2</sup> (p. 147) and in the same month learned that storm-petrels bred there.

Broughton Island was the first recorded breeding place in Australia of the Sooty Shearwater. This species was 'unearthed' by Hull and Jackson<sup>5</sup> (p. 101) in 1911 but the burrow contained no egg. However, Rohu<sup>8</sup> collected a specimen and 'eggs' in 1912. In 1959 the Short-tailed Shearwater<sup>2</sup> (p. 151) was also found breeding there. Banding of the shearwaters commenced in 1959 in order to determine breeding biology and dispersal.

As relatively few ornithological visits have been made to the island during the past 70 years, those recorded follow:

1910	October	A. F. Basset Hull
1910	December	A. F. Basset Hull
1911	29 January	A. F. Basset Hull, S. W. Jackson, R. Grant
1911	March	A. F. Basset Hull
1912	29 December	S. E. Rohu



● Broughton Island (looking west). South Rock is at the left of the picture and Little Broughton Island is in the foreground.

Photo: RAAF