

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 20

North Rock, Broughton Island, New South Wales

Location: 32°36' S., 152°19' E.; 16.5 km north-east of Port Stephens, N.S.W. (1.4 km north of Broughton Island) and 3.4 km off shore.

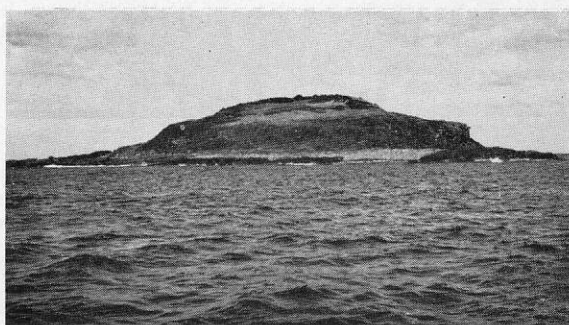
Status: Part of Broughton Nature Reserve controlled by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (N.S.W.): entry permit required.

Description: Irregularly shaped with a rocky shore line, this island is about 350 m long by 250 m wide and rises to some 23 m at the eastern end. There is a small sand and shell spit at the west end with vegetation consisting mainly of Pigface *Carpobrotus glaucescens* and Tape Vine *Stephania japonica*. Although the vegetation provides reasonable cover, some burrow destruction is inevitable due to the very friable, sandy soil. However, most of the island is thickly covered with Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia*, with patches of Tuckeroo *Cupaniopsis anacardioides* growing in the higher parts. Other species which have been identified include the following:

Canavalia maritima, *Commelina cyanea*, *Correa alba*, *Dianella laevis*, *Elaeodendron australe*, *Enchylaena tomentosa*, *Imperata cylindrica*, *Ipomea cairica*, *Kennedia rubicunda*, *Opuntia stricta*, *Parsonsia straminea*, *Rhagodia baccata*, *R. hastata*, *Scirpus nodosus*, *Senecio lautus*, *Tetragonia tetragonioides*, *Westringia fruticosa* and *Zoisia macrantha*.

Landing: At the south-west end and difficult except in very calm weather.

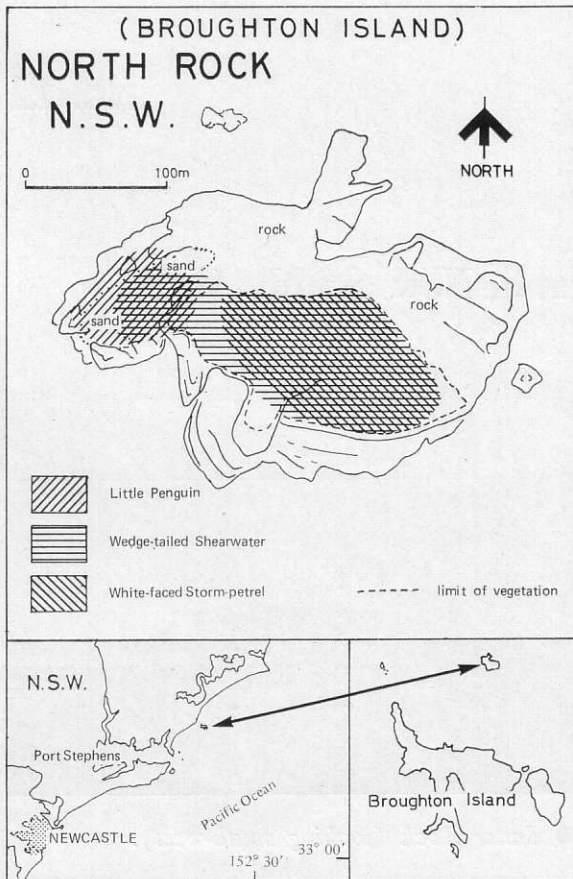
Ornithological History: On 11 March 1911, A. F. Basset Hull³ made an unsuccessful attempt to land on this island. On 29 December 1939, A. F. D'Ombra¹ "passed quite close to the islet"



● North Rock, Broughton Island (looking east).

Photo: M. Dodkin

while fishing and noted that Silver Gulls were nesting, about 50 birds being present. The first recorded ornithological visit was made by S. G. Lane with A. K. Morris and three other NPWS rangers who landed in very difficult conditions on 10 December 1973. Some unoccupied burrows were found barely above high water mark; they appeared to have been recently vacated by penguins. In the same area and also well distributed over the island, both under the vegetation and wherever soil depth permitted, were burrows which contained Wedge-tailed Shearwaters brooding their single egg. Interspersed and likewise well distributed were burrows of White-faced Storm-petrels. Two Sooty Oystercatchers were seen, and the small sand spit could provide a suitable nesting site. On 14 February 1974, M. Dodkin found a Little Penguin in a burrow; it is likely that a few pairs breed on the island.



Breeding Seabirds and Status

Puffinus pacificus Wedge-tailed Shearwater—Breeds extensively over the island; probably present to breed from August to early May. Estimated 1000(+) breeding pairs in 1973.

Pelagodroma marina White-faced Storm-petrel—Breeds extensively under the thick vegetation in areas too shallow for shearwaters, and also among the shearwater burrows. Probably present to breed from September to February. Estimated 1000(+) breeding pairs.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull—A small colony of some 20 pairs was reported nesting in December 1973.

Factors Affecting Status

No unnatural factors evident; although probably the island is visited occasionally by spear fishermen. Due to the friable soil, burrow destruction would inevitably result from anyone walking on the island, as the areas of easiest access are those where most damage would result. Bones and feathers reported by NPWS rangers indicate predation presumably by White-breasted Sea-eagles *Haliaeetus leucogaster*.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

None recorded in 1973.

Other Seabirds Recorded

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin
Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher

Banding

One visit—10 December 1973.

Puffinus pacificus—34 adults banded.
Pelagodroma marina—1 adult, 4 nestlings banded.

Bibliography

1. Hindwood, K. A. (1948), 'Notes on the Sea-birds Breeding on the Coastal Islands of New South Wales', *Emu* 48: 73-81.
2. Hindwood, K. A. and A. F. D'Ombrian (1960), 'Breeding of the Short-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) and other Seabirds on Broughton Island, N.S.W.', *Emu* 60: 147-154.
3. Hull, A. F. Basset (1911), 'Avifauna of New South Wales Islands', Part 1, *Emu* 11: 99-104.
4. Hull, A. F. Basset (1922), 'The Islands of New South Wales and Their Birds', *Aust. Mus. Mag.* 1: 139-146.

Acknowledgements

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S. G. Lane,
65 Wood Street,
Lane Cover, N.S.W.

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