

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 21

Inner Rock, Broughton Island, New South Wales

Location: 32°36' S., 152°18' E.; 15 km north-east of Port Stephens, N.S.W. and 1.6 km off-shore.

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

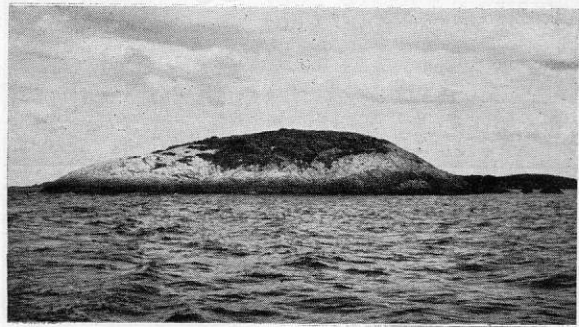
Other Name: West Islet.

Description: About 150 m by 75 m and some 10 m high, this 'rock' has a shallow soil-cap. Barbwire Grass *Cymbopogon refractus*, Pigface *Carpobrotus glaucescens* and Ruby Saltbush *Enchylaena tomentosa* grow around the edge of the cap, while a thick growth of Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia* covers most of the remainder. There is a low patch of Coast Wattle *Acacia sophorae* near the top. Other vegetation identified includes:

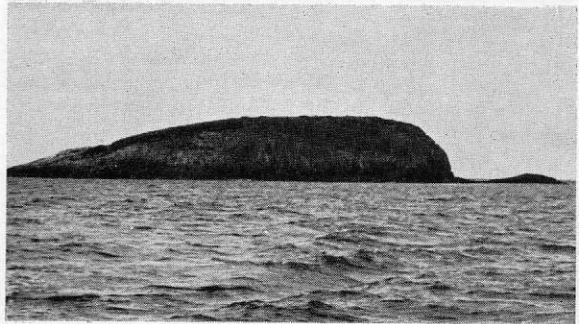
Apium prostratum, *Commelina cyanea*, *Dianella laevis*, *Imperata cylindrica*, *Kennedia rubicunda*, *Monotoca elliptica*, *Opuntia stricta*, *Rhagodia baccata*, *R. hastata*, *Scirpus nodosus*, *Senecio lautus*, *Susuvium portulacastrum* and *Tetragonia tetragonioides*.

Landing: Onto rocks, the location depending on the conditions at the time.

Ornithological History: A. F. Basset Hull² visited this islet on 11 March 1911 and "... found a number of burrows, two of which contained young *Puffinus sphenurus* [= *P. pacificus*] about ten weeks old." The next recorded ornithological



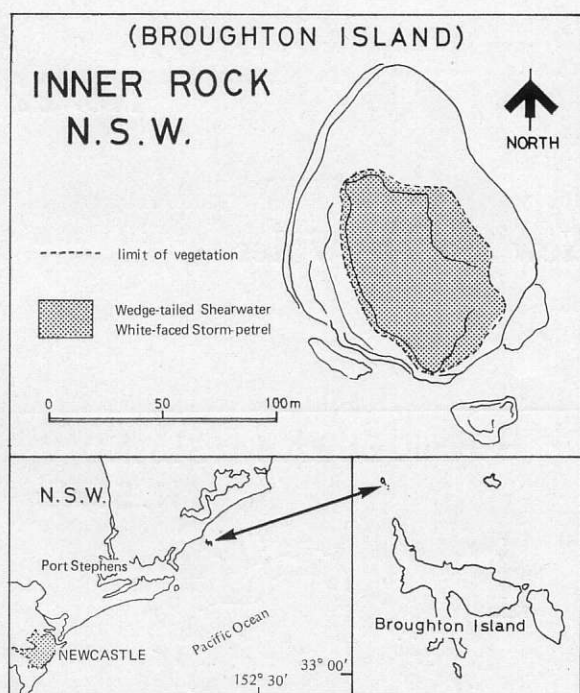
● Inner Rock (looking south-west).



● Another view, looking north-north-east.

Photos: M. Dodkin

visit was over 60 years later on 10 December 1973 when S. G. Lane with A. K. Morris and three other NPWS rangers spent an hour on the islet. In addition to Wedge-tailed Shearwaters they found White-faced Storm-petrels nesting beneath the thick vegetation.



Breeding Seabirds and Status

Puffinus pacificus Wedge-tailed Shearwater — Numerous burrows were located under the thick vegetation which made examination difficult. Three adults were found brooding their single egg. Probably present to breed from August to early May. Estimated 100 (—) breeding pairs.

Pelagodroma marina White-faced Storm-petrel— The small burrows of these birds were well distributed, although difficult to examine as the entrances were situated around the bases and among the roots of the thick growth of Mat-rush. The limited time and the difficulty of access without destroying burrows prevented an extensive examination on 10 December 1973. However, most burrows found clearly indicated occupation even though the birds were not extracted; six burrows checked contained nestlings in down. Probably present to breed from September to February. Estimated 500 breeding pairs.

Factors Affecting Status

No evidence was found of unnatural predation, and the thick vegetation cover provided ample

protection even from the effects of any person walking through it. However, bones and feathers reported by NPWS rangers subsequently, indicate predation presumably by the White-breasted Sea-eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*. The shallow burrows near the edge of the vegetation would give little protection to the shearwaters.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

None recorded.

Other Seabirds Recorded

None during the 1973 visit and no other record.

Banding

One visit—10 December 1973.
Puffinus pacificus—3 adults.
Pelagodroma marina—6 nestlings.

Bibliography

1. 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.
2. Hull, A. F. Basset (1911), 'Avifauna of New South Wales Islands', Part 1, *Emu* 11: 99-104.
3. 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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