

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 37

Shark Island, New South Wales

Location: 32°45' S., 152°12' E.; about 4 km south-south-east of the entrance to Port Stephens, N.S.W., and some 50 m offshore from the northern end of Point Stephens.

Status: Crown Land.

Description: About 150 m diameter, roughly dome-shaped, with a crevice almost dividing it into two parts, the island rises to about 25 m. It is very rocky with a shallow soil cover which supports low vegetation consisting of some stunted *Lantana camara*, a few small clumps of Prickly Pear *Opuntia stricta*, tussock grasses, creepers and small bushes; regrettably the samples collected were lost before being identified.

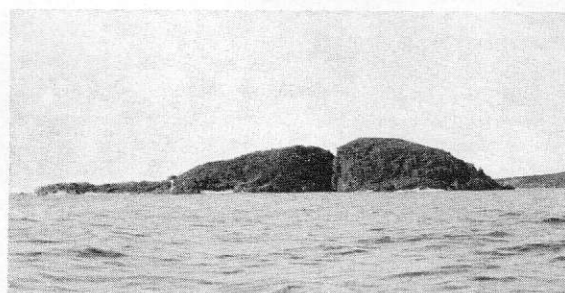
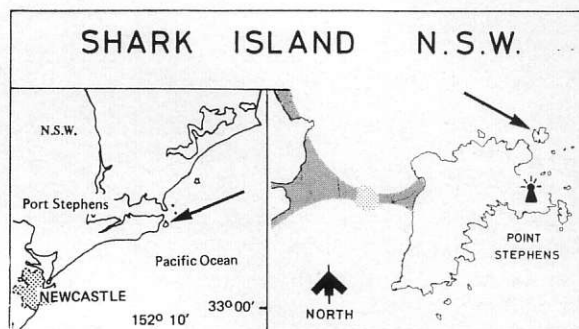
Landing: Onto rocks and difficult except in calm conditions.

Ornithological History: This island was visited by Basset Hull¹ and others on 7 December 1910. They found only Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and two nests of the Reef Heron, although they had been told by the signalman at the Port that three species of seabirds frequented the island. One of the Heron's nests contained two young birds but Hull gave no indication of the number of shearwaters present. The next recorded visit was by H. Battam, L. F. Lane, S. G. Lane and F. W. van Gessel on 30 November 1975. On that occasion two attempted excavations were found on the east part but the birds obviously were deterred by the rocky nature of the ground. After considerable searching, two Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were found on the west side, each in a shallow burrow on an egg.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Puffinus pacificus Wedge-tailed Shearwater — Probably present to breed from late August to late April or early May. A few pairs possibly breed regularly on the island. Estimated 10(—) breeding pairs.

Egretta sacra Reef Heron — Nesting recorded¹; a pair probably nests regularly on ledges in the crevice.



- Shark Island (looking south); Point Stephens is in the background at right and a rock shoal is visible behind the island at left.

Factors Affecting Status

Occasionally fishermen may visit the island but in 1975 there was no evidence of interference.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

None recorded.

Banding

P. pacificus — 2 adults banded on 30.11.75.

Bibliography

1. Hull, A. F. Basset (1911). 'Further Remarks on the Finding of the Nest and Egg of *Oestrelata leucop-tera*', *Emu* 10: 253-258.

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