

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 71

Georges Island, Georges Rocks, Tasmania

Location: 40° 55' S., 148° 20' E.; 8 km north-north-west of Eddystone Point in north-east Tasmania. It is one of a small group of islands known as Georges Rocks.

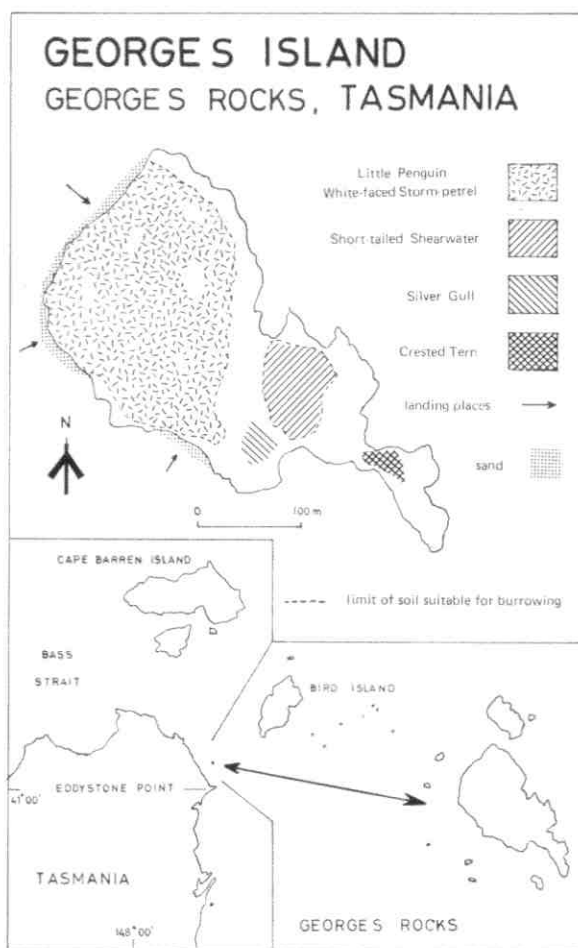
Status: State Reserve, included in the Mt William National Park.

Description: 1.5 ha; about 150 m long by 120 m at the widest, very irregular in shape with the main axis north-west/south-east. The several small stacks close offshore are not used by seabirds for breeding. The basic rock is granite with some very large boulders on the highest part. There are two sandy beaches, one on the south shore and one on the west shore, while the shallow soil cover supports the following dominant plant species: *Leucopogon parviflorus*, *Muehlenbeckia adpressa*, *Sagina maritima*, *Car-pobrotus* sp. and *Poa* sp.

Landing: Very easy onto either beach in calm weather from a small boat. Local knowledge is advisable as the approaches contain many submerged reefs.

Ornithological History: J. R. Napier and T. A. Singline made 14 visits to the island between 4 November 1970 and 16 November 1977. R. H. Green was also on the island in November 1977. These visits provided the only known ornithological records.

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Burrows are sparsely spread throughout the area of soil cover. Adults are on eggs in September and large chicks





• *Georges Island (looking eastward).*

Breeding Seabirds and Status

are present in November. Estimated 100 breeding pairs.

Puffinus tenuirostris Short-tailed Shearwater — Breeds only in a small area on the eastern side of the island and egg laying occurs late in November. This colony has not expanded during the past ten years. About 20 breeding pairs.

Pelagodroma marina White-faced Storm-Petrel — Burrows are spread sparingly over most of the island. Egg laying occurs in the latter half of November. Estimated 200 breeding pairs.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — Breeding usually takes place from September to December. About 100 pairs nest each year.

Sterna bergii Crested Tern — Apparently breeds irregularly on the island. During the period of visits from 1970 to 1977, breeding has occurred twice only. An estimated 2 000 pairs were on eggs and small chicks in November 1976 while in mid-November 1977, breeding was just commencing.

Factors Affecting Status

Formerly, at different times, there were two huts on the island but each was burned to the ground. Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus* and rats *Rattus* sp. occur and undoubtedly have an adverse effect on the breeding seabirds. The Forest Raven *Corvus tasmanicus* and the Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* regularly frequent the island and would predate eggs and birds respectively. Human interference appears to be minimal.

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Great Cormorant
<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>	Little Pied Cormorant
<i>Haematopus longirostris</i>	Pied Oystercatcher
<i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>	Sooty Oystercatcher
<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull
<i>Sterna nereis</i>	Fairy Tern

Banding

Nil.

Bibliography

1. Napier, J. R. and T. A. Singline (1979), 'The Birds of George's Rocks, North East Tasmania', *Aust. Bird Watcher* 8(2).

Acknowledgements

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J. R. Napier,
Millbrook,
St Marys, Tas. 7215.