

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 85

Rag Island, Seal Islands Group, Victoria

Location: 38°57'S., 146°41'E.; 20 km east of Wilsons Promontory, Vic.

Status: Crown land, reserved under the Lands Act, 1958.

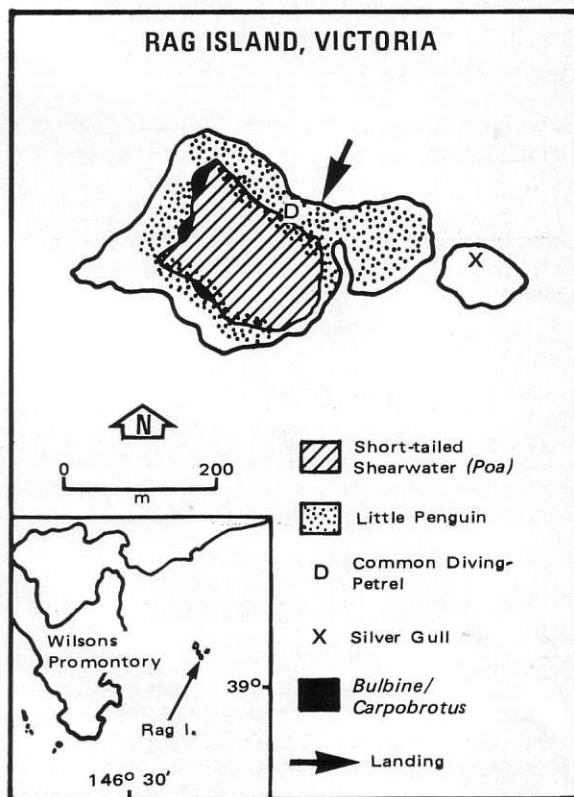
Description: 7 ha; 600 m long, 260 m wide and 28 m high, this granite island is divided into three parts; the main island which is mostly covered with *Poa poiformis* tussocks, fringed with *Bulbine bulbosa* and *Disphyma australe*; a rocky peninsula with a few *Poa* tussocks; and an isolated rock covered by pigface (? *Disphyma*). The island has low cliffs.

Landing: Onto rocks on the northern side, probably not possible in rough weather.

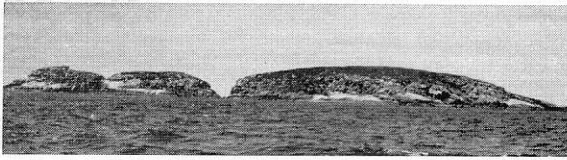
Ornithological History: The only published detail appears to be a reference by D. F. Dorward¹ to three pairs of Cape Barren Geese on the island. We visited the island for about 1.5 hours on 21 December 1978.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

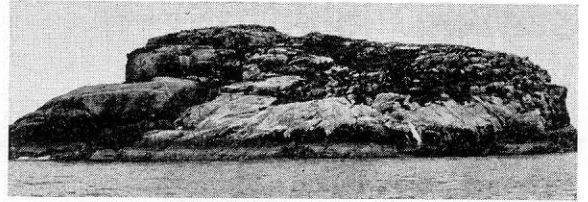
Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Breeds in most of the rocky areas but not in the main *Poa*



area. The total population was thought to be large, possibly several hundred pairs. Many dead young were found.



• *Rag Island (looking south).*



• *View of the south-western end.*

Puffinus tenuirostris Short-tailed Shearwater — Burrows were found throughout the 2.7 ha of *Poa*. The mean burrow density (thirty-one 20 m² quadrats) was 0.68/m², and extrapolation gave an estimated total of 18 200 burrows (95% confidence interval 16 100-20 300).

Pelecanoides urinatrix Common Diving-Petrel — One young diving-petrel was found dead on a rocky slope which appeared suitable for nesting.

Cereopsis novaehollandiae Cape Barren Goose — One flightless juvenile with primaries just out of pin and about 10 adults were seen on the island.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — There was a small colony of 20 pairs nesting on the isolated rock.

Larus pacificus Pacific Gull — About five pairs were breeding during our visit and eggs were present

Factors Affecting Status

The isolation of the island, and the apparent absence of any predation, implied the security of the various species' populations.

Other Seabirds Recorded

Pachyptila turtur Fairy Prion — A. S. Gilmore (pers. comm.) found one dead adult in 1977.
Leucocarbo fuscescens Black-faced Shag
Haematopus juliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher

Banding

Nil.

Bibliography

1. Dorward, D. F. (1967), 'The status of the Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae*', *Bull. int. Comm. Bird Preserv.* 10:56-71.

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