

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 95

Norman Island, Wilsons Promontory, Victoria

Location: 39°01'S., 146°15'E.; 6 km west-north-west from Tidal River, Wilsons Promontory, Victoria.

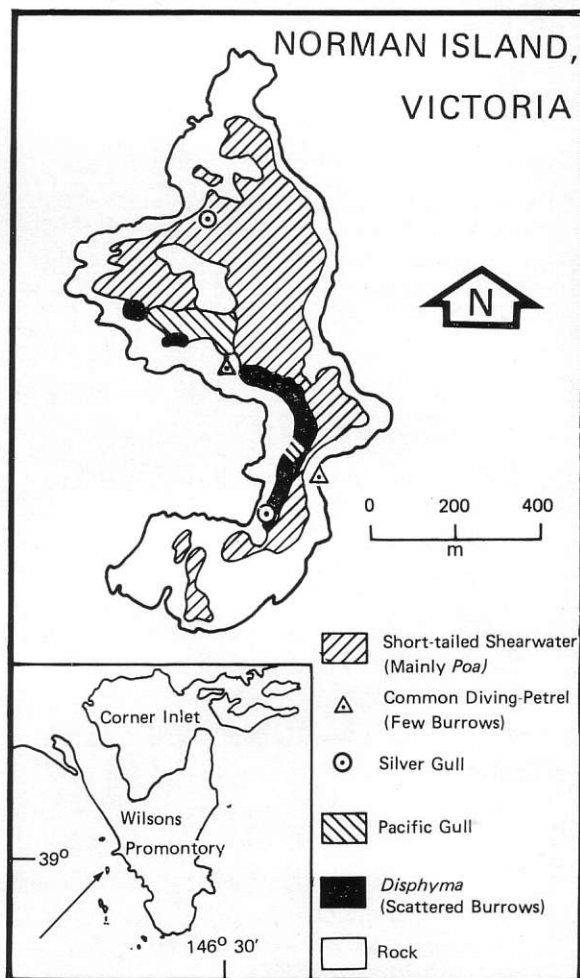
Status: Reserved within the original Promontory National Park and controlled by the National Parks Service (Vic.); camping is not allowed.

Description: 48 ha; this granite island has domed peaks at both ends, with a low, flat central region. It is about 650 m at the widest point and 1 400 m long with the northern peak reaching 96 m. The island is generally well-vegetated, though the exposed western side is bare in places. Most cover is provided by *Poa poiformis* tussock which includes *Bulbine bulbosa*, *Pelargonium australe*, *Helichrysum* spp. and other species. Mixed shrubs formed another community comprised primarily of *Alyxia buxifolia*. *Acacia* (?) *stricta*, *Leucopogon parviflorus*, *Melaleuca ericifolia* and *Kunzea ambigua* are locally abundant as are *Correa alba*, *Apium prostratum* and *Rhagodia baccata*. Areas of coast, and along the western side of the central shoulder, are dominated by *Disphyma australe*. Some 27 plant species have been recorded from the island⁴.

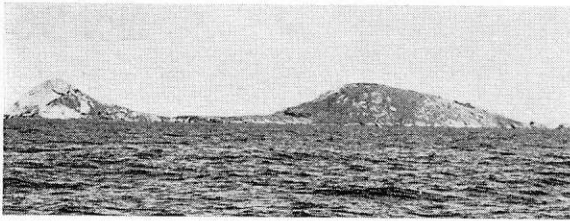
Where present, soil depth varied, depending on underlying rock, exposure and slope. On the more gentle eastern slopes depths of 0.4 m or more were common.

Landing: Onto rocks around the island, depending on prevailing wind or swell; the central region perhaps provides most shelter.

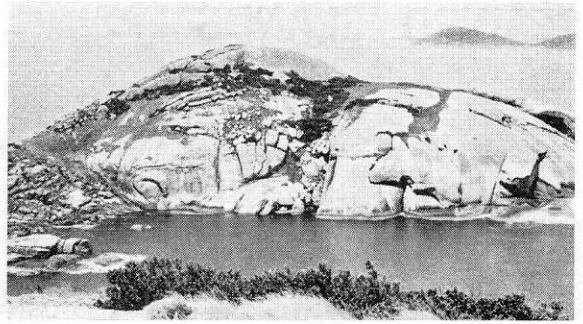
Ornithological History: A. H. E. Mattingley apparently considered that the island had penguins, muttonbirds, Cape Barren Geese, Hooded Plover and oystercatchers¹. S. G. Lane and H.



Battam³ visited the island for 7.5 hours on 7 November 1979, and we were there on 17 January 1980.



• *Norman Island (looking west).*



• *The southern knoll from the north end with Great Glennie Island in the background at right.*

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Relatively few burrows were found on the island and nest sites were generally under rocks. Lane and Battam³ estimated that possibly 400-500 pairs could breed on the island.

Pachyptila turtur Fairy Prion — Dead birds were found near the centre of the island during both visits and, though no nest burrows were positively identified, the species presumably breeds.

Puffinus tenuirostris Short-tailed Shearwater — Burrows were found throughout the *Poa* wherever soil depth was sufficient. Densities in quadrats and extrapolation of burrowed area suggests a total of some 145 000 burrows⁴.

Pelecanoides urinatrix Common Diving-Petrel — In November 1979³, two nestlings were found, as were remains of a large nestling and two "adults". Three nests with eggs were found in January 1980.

Cereopsis novaehollandiae Cape Barren Goose — Dorward² recorded five pairs of geese on the island. Lane and Battam³ counted 70 birds including non-flying young. We saw eight birds in January 1980.

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher — Two nests containing eggs were found in November 1979³, and we estimated that the island held at least six pairs.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — Nesting was recorded in November 1979³ and two breeding colonies, of about 35 and 50 pairs, were present in January 1980.

Larus pacificus Pacific Gull — In November 1979³, five new nests were found and 11 others contained eggs; the number of birds present on the island was estimated to be 100-120 birds. At the time of our visit 35 pairs were present.

Factors Affecting Status

Apart from natural predation by Pacific Gulls on prions and diving-petrels, there appears to be little affecting the status of any species.

Other Seabirds Recorded

Leucocarbo fuscescens
Ardea novaehollandiae
Sterna bergii

Black-faced Shag
White-faced Heron
Crested Tern

Banding

7 November 1979.

P. tenuirostris — 5 "adults".

P. urinatrix — 2 nestlings.

C. novaehollandiae — 17 almost-flying young.

Bibliography

1. Bureau of Census and Statistics (1912), 'Islands off the coast of the Commonwealth', *Commonwealth Year Book* 5:51-69.
2. Dorward, D. F. (1967), 'The status of the Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novae-hollandiae*', *Bull. int. Comm. Bird Preserv.* 10:56-71.
3. Lane, S. G. and H. Battam (1980), 'Seabirds of Norman and Wattle Islands, Wilsons Promontory, Victoria', *Corella* 4:37-38.
4. Norman, F. I., R. S. Brown and D. M. Deerson (1980), 'The flora and avifauna of Dannevirg, Norman and Wattle Islands, Wilsons Promontory, Victoria', *Victorian Nat.* (in press).

Date compiled: 2 April 1980.

F. I. Norman, R. S. Brown and D. M. Deerson, Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, Fisheries and Wildlife Division, 123 Brown Street, Heidelberg, Vic., 3084.