

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 183

Little Green Island, Furneaux Group, Tasmania

Location: 40°14'S., 148°15' E.; one kilometre south of Lady Barron on Flinders Island, Tas.

Status: Conservation Area; Muttonbird Reserve.

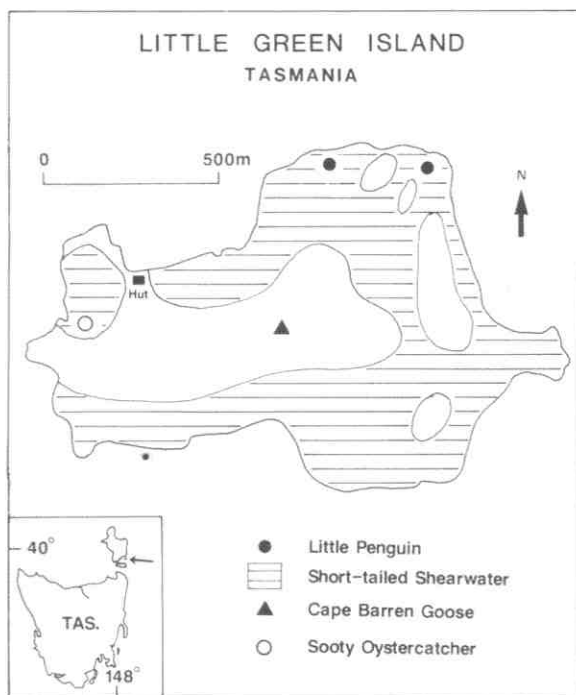
Description: 92 ha; 1.5 km long and 1 km at the widest part. The island, which is surrounded by extensive mudflats and reefs, is predominantly flat with granite outcrops in the middle reaching 25 m above sea level. The main plant cover is *Poa poiformis* since most of the original bushes and trees have disappeared. Individual specimens of African Boxthorn *Lycium ferocissimum* are scattered around the island while weed species and Bracken Fern *Pteridium esculentum* are common.

Landing: Easy anywhere depending on wind direction.

Ornithological History: Dr D. L. Serventy used part of the large Short-tailed Shearwater colony for his research on these birds¹. I. J. Skira, S. G. Lane and L. F. Lane made a short visit of 45 minutes on 1 December 1985; the latter two spent 4.5 hours on the island on 6 December 1985. N. P. Brothers visited Little Green Island on 7 December 1986.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Uncommon. About 50 pairs were found breeding amongst the shearwaters at the north-eastern corner of the island and another 20 pairs from there towards the hut.



Puffinus tenuirostris Short-tailed Shearwater — Abundant over some 59 ha. Burrow density calculated from 37 transects (four of 100 m × 2 m, one each of 80 m × 2 m, 75 m × 2 m, 50 m × 2 m, and 30 of 30 m × 1 m) and placed at random was 0.46 ± 0.06 burrows/m² (at 95% con-



● Vegetation along part of the shoreline on Little Green Island (looking south). The northern end of Great Dog Island is in the background.

Photo: I. J. Skira

fidence limits ± 2 S.E.). Density by area gives an estimated 271 000 burrows.

Cereopsis novaehollandiae Cape Barren Goose — Two or three pairs breed each year near the centre of the island. Two chicks were seen on 6 December 1985.

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher — N. P. Brothers (7 December 1986) found one pair with an egg on the western side of the island.

Factors Affecting Status

Little Green Island was officially reserved for commercial harvesting of shearwaters in 1891 although the industry was operating much earlier. An average of about 30 000 chicks were taken annually from up to six sheds until 1957. At present shearwaters may be taken by licensed recreational muttonbirders. Twenty-three hectares of the island is private freehold and the island is regularly fired. Firing and grazing of sheep have caused much deterioration of native vegetation and soil. Feral Cats *Felis catus* are common. There are several small navigation beacons but these have little apparent effect on the shearwaters.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

The Tiger Snake *Notechis ater serventyi* is uncommon. There is no record of either the

House Mouse *Mus musculus* or the Black Rat *Rattus rattus* for the island but they probably occur.

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Pelagodroma marina</i>	White-faced Storm-Petrel
<i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>	Australian Pelican
<i>Leucocarbo fuscescens</i>	Black-faced Shag
<i>Haematopus longirostris</i>	Pied Oystercatcher
<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	Silver Gull
<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Caspian Tern
<i>Sterna nereis</i>	Fairy Tern

Banding

Period Mar. 47 to Mar. 76; also 1 and 6 Dec. 85.

Puffinus tenuirostris — 2 402 (including 22 in Dec. 85); 3 390 fledglings. One bird banded on 5 Jan. 71 was recaptured on 6 Dec. 85; another, banded on 6 Dec. 85, was recovered at Austinmer, NSW on 11 Nov. 87, 698 km NNE. No other recovery data are available.

Bibliography

1. Serventy, D. L. and Curry, P. J. (1984). Observations on colony size, breeding success, recruitment and inter-colony dispersal in a Tasmanian colony of short-tailed shearwaters *Puffinus tenuirostris* over a 30-year period. *Emu* 84: 71-79.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Neil Smith for taking one of us (NPB) to Little Green Island in his vessel "Wild Wind".

Date Compiled: 22 January 1988.

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