

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 141

Big Caroline Rock, Tasmania

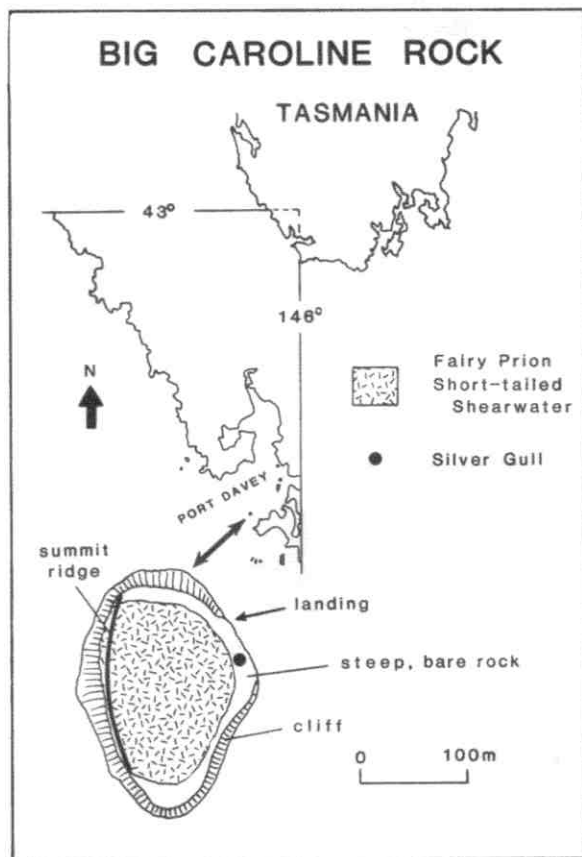
Location: 43°22'S., 145°56'E.; about 2 kilometres NNW of Hilliard Head at the southern side of the entrance to Port Davey on the south-west coast of Tasmania.

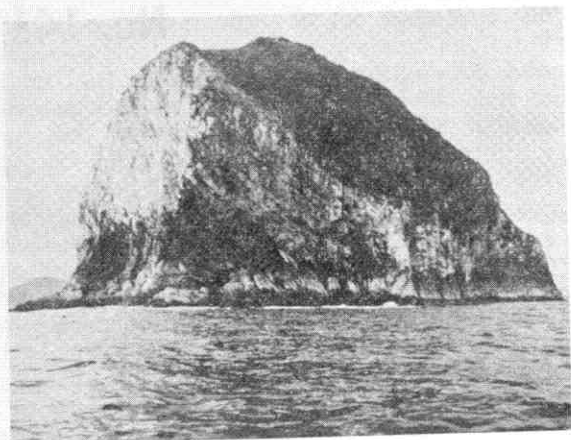
Status: Part of the South-west National Park.

Description: 4 ha; roughly oval-shaped, 228 m long by 158 m wide and 86 m high. Cliffs on the western side rise vertically to within 20 m of the summit whereas on the eastern side 20 m cliffs give way to steep vegetated slopes which extend to the summit. Thirteen species of plants have been recorded *Senecio lautus* and *Carpobrotus rossii* being dominant. Shrubs including *Tetragonia implexicoma*, *Correa backhousiana* and *Leptospermum scoparium* are mainly confined to the summit and areas of less steep ground within 20 m of it.

Landing: The only suitable place to land and negotiate cliffs to reach vegetated areas is on the north-eastern end. Landing onto the cliff face would be difficult in all but calm seas. Once the vegetated area is reached it is still necessary to select a route to all areas with caution since these slopes are very steep and unstable.

Ornithological History: There is no known record of previous visits. N. P. Brothers, N.





• *Big Caroline Rock (looking west).*

Mooney and M. Holdsworth visited the rock on 2 December 1981.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Pachyptila turtur Fairy Prion — Burrows containing incubating birds were found throughout most of the vegetated area except where shearwater burrows were dense. Near the summit and just below it on the western side prion burrows were most numerous. Estimated 1000-2000 breeding pairs.

Puffinus tenuirostris Short-tailed Shearwater — Burrows were most dense in areas where *Senecio*

laetus was dominant. Insufficient depth of soil prevents burrowing in the lower 10-15 m of vegetated areas. Elsewhere soil is loose, soft and peaty. Burrows occurred in an area of about 1 ha with a burrow density of 1.47/m². Estimated 15 000 burrows.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — Two pairs were defending inaccessible cliff ledges on the central eastern side.

Factors Affecting Status

Difficult access will ensure that this island remains undisturbed.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

Two skins, as yet unidentified, were collected.

Banding

Nil.

Acknowledgements

Messrs V. Careless and J. Chesterman were most helpful in transporting equipment to Port Davey. Messrs N. Mooney and M. Holdsworth assisted with the survey. Mr M. J. Brown identified plants collected.

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