

Movements of Little Penguins *Eudyptula minor* banded at Rabbit Island and the Seal Island Group, Wilsons Promontory, Victoria

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Between 1979 and 2002, 5044 Little Penguins *Eudyptula minor* were banded (4796 adults, 248 chicks) at Rabbit Island, Wilsons Promontory, Victoria. Recoveries of dead banded birds and recaptures away from the island of banded adult and fledging birds made up to June 2009 are reviewed: mention is also made of results obtained from banding smaller numbers of birds (823) on Seal, Rag and Notch Islands in the nearby Seal Island Group between 1991 and 2001. For birds originally banded at Rabbit Island, most recoveries were made to the west of the banding site, although some birds were found dead in New South Wales and in northern Tasmania. Recoveries were made in and out of presumed breeding periods, particularly during winter/early spring and mid-summer for adults, usually within 400 kilometres of Rabbit Island and less than five years after banding. While causes of death were rarely reported (if known), there was a substantial increase in recoveries following a die-off of Pilchards *Sardinops sagax* in southern Australian waters in 1995. Recoveries of banded birds from Rabbit Island and the Seal Island Group fit within a pattern shown by banding at other colonies, namely that those from colonies to the west and south tend to move to the coasts of western Victoria and South Australia whereas those to the east may move north and south. Such results suggest that Little Penguins disperse away from breeding colonies to areas of presumed increased productivity and prey availability.