

SEABIRD ISLANDS

Battery Island, Furneaux Group, Tasmania

Location: 40°28'S., 148°11'E.; 1.5 kilometres off the south coast of Cape Barren Island, between Cape Barren Island and Clarke Island in the Furneaux Group, Tas.

Status: Crown Land.

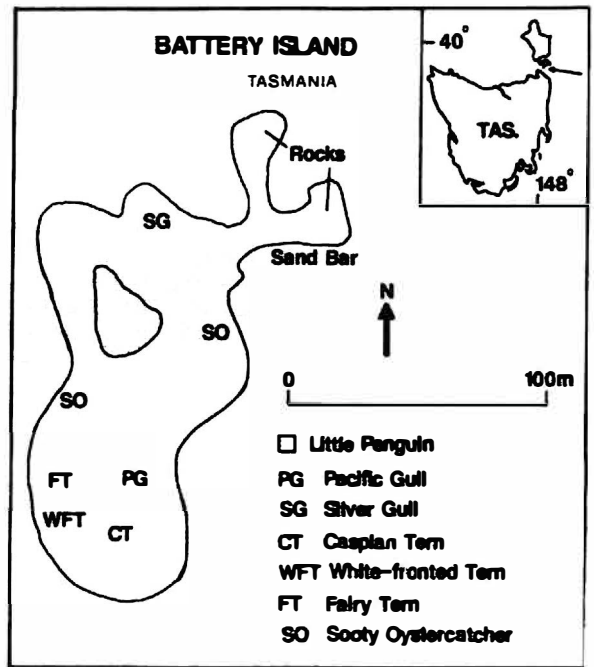
Description: 2 ha; 20 m long and up to 100 m wide. This is a low, gently sloping islet of granite with prominent boulders protruding at the northern end. Two rocky islets off the north-eastern side are connected by a low sand bar which is just above high water. It is estimated that 30% of the island is bare granite. J. Whinray³ recorded seven plant species of which *Stipa teretifolia* was dominant.

Landing: Easy anywhere depending on wind direction.

Ornithological History: Matthew Flinders visited the island in February 1798 and found Short-tailed Shearwaters there¹. Whinray first visited the island on 5 June 1976³ and several times later^{4,5}. I. J. Skira visited on 6 December 1982 and N. P. Brothers on 25 November 1986.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Breeds among the *Stipa* mat, overgrown with *Tetragonia im-*



plexicoma. In November 1986 about 50 burrows with eggs and chicks were found.

Puffinus tenuirostris Short-tailed Shearwater — Flinders¹ said "sooty petrels, . . . were found there." As his visit was in February the birds



• Battery Island (looking north) with Cape Barren Island in the background.

Photo: N. P. Brothers

were probably breeding. There are no subsequent records. No evidence of their presence was found in either December 1982 or November 1986.

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher — In November 1986 two pairs each had one small chick.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — Found breeding by Whinray^{4,5}. In November 1986 Brothers found five empty nests, two with 1 egg, one with 2 eggs, ten with 3 eggs, one with 1 egg and 1 chick, one with two dead chicks, and one dead runner. The nests were on the northern side among boulders with *Stipa*; some were on the beach.

Larus pacificus Pacific Gull — One nest with 1 egg and 1 large chick was found in December 1982. In November 1986 Brothers found seven used nests, two nests with 1 egg, one with 2 eggs, one quarter-grown chick, one small downy chick and a clutch of 2 small downy chicks. This suggests that 10 to 12 pairs bred in the 1986/1987 season.

Hydroprogne caspia Caspian Tern — Skira found one nest with 2 chicks in December 1982, and Brothers found one pair with a quarter-grown chick in November 1986.

Sterna striata White-fronted Tern — On 8 January 1979 Whinray⁴ found two nests with 1 egg, one nest with 2 eggs, and 3 chicks nearby. This was the first record of breeding in the Furneaux Group since 1924². On 15 December 1979 there were 14 nests with eggs or chicks; on 6 December 1980 there were 12 nests with eggs or chicks; and on 23 October 1981 there were three nests with eggs⁵. Skira found 22 nests on 6 December 1982. Four were new, eleven had 1 egg each and seven had 2 eggs each. The nests were on the south-western side on Pigface *Carpobrotus rossii*. Brothers did not see any nests or terns during his visit on 25 November 1986.

Sterna nereis Fairy Tern — Recorded breeding by Whinray^{4,5}. In December 1982 Skira recorded one nest with 1 egg, next to the White-fronted Terns.

Factors Affecting Status

Disturbance by visitors, particularly during the breeding season, is the greatest threat to the breeding seabirds.



• View over part of the island (looking south).

Photo: N. P. Brothers

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>	Australian Pelican
<i>Leucocarbo fuscescens</i>	Black-faced Shag
<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>	Little Pied Cormorant ³
<i>Cereopsis novaehollandiae</i>	Cape Barren Goose
<i>Sterna bergii</i>	Crested Tern ³

Banding

Two visits—29 Dec. 79, 25 Dec. 80.

Sterna striata—13 "runners".

Bibliography

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3. Whinray, J. (1978). Some records for Battery Island, Tasmania. *Victorian Nat.* 95: 62-66.
4. Whinray, J. S. (1980). The first Australian breeding record of the White-fronted Tern. *Aust. Bird Watcher* 8: 137-146.
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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Jim Luddington and Neil Smith for taking us out to Battery Island.

Date compiled: 13 March 1987.

I. J. Skira and N. P. Brothers, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7005.