

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 182

Billy Goat Reefs, Furneaux Group, Tasmania

Location: 40°13'S., 148°16'E.; two kilometres south-east of Lady Barron, on Flinders Island, and one kilometre east of Little Green Island, Tas.

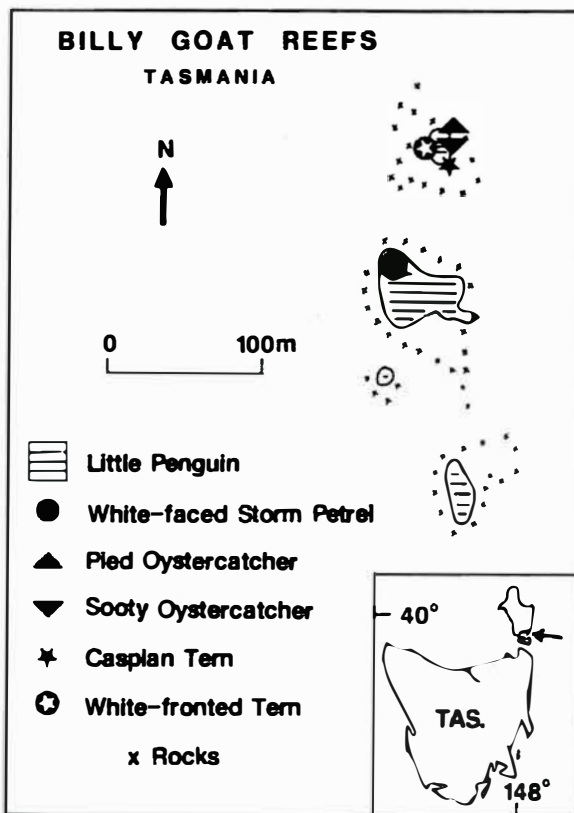
Status: Crown Land.

Other Name: Peter Scott Reef.

Description: The reefs consist of four small, granitic islets. REEF 1 — the northern-most reef is about 0.5 ha in area and up to 50 m in diameter. It is low lying with the highest point 3 m above sea level. The main vegetation is *Poa poiiformis* and *Carpobrotus rossii*. REEF 2 — the largest in size, it is about 50 m from Reef 1 and rises to 15 m above sea level. It is well vegetated with *Tetragonia implexicoma*, *Poa poiiformis*, *Geranium* sp., *Coprosma repens* and *Lycium feroicissimum*. REEF 3 — situated 50 m from Reef 2 and 100 m from Reef 4. It is mostly bare rock and rises to 5 m above sea level. *Stipa stipoides* grows in the cracks with several bushes of *Coprosma repens*. REEF 4 — the second largest in area of about 0.75 ha, it is some 60 m long and up to 40 m wide. The highest point is 10 m above sea level. There is little soil on this reef and the dominant vegetation is *Poa poiiformis* and *Coprosma repens* with some geranium. *Carpobrotus rossii* and *Tetragonia implexicoma* grow at the southern end.

Landing: Easy anywhere depending on wind direction.

Ornithological History: Serventy *et al.*² list breeding reports from Billy Goat Reefs under the name of Peter Scott Reef. Napier¹ visited in November 1981 and recorded White-fronted Terns breeding. I. J. Skira and N. P. Brothers have both visited the reefs over a number of years. S. G. Lane and L. F. Lane visited for one hour with Skira on 5 December 1985. Brothers visited on 7 December 1986 as part of his seabird island survey of the Furneaux Group.



Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — On 7 December 1986 all burrows contained chicks or eggs. REEF 1: 15 burrows, mostly under clumps of *Stipa stipoides*. REEF 2: 98 burrows found occupied over much of the reef. REEF 3: one pair in a shallow, short burrow at the base of *Stipa stipoides*. REEF 4: 35 pairs nesting, of which only two were in burrows and the remainder in rock crevices or under *Coprosma repens*.

Pelagodroma marina White-faced Storm-Petrel — REEF 2: On 7 December 1986 three birds, each on an egg, were in burrows amongst *Poa poiiformis* at the northern end.



● *Billy Goat Reefs (looking south-east).*

Photo: I. J. Skira

Haematopus longirostris Pied Oystercatcher — REEF 1: Skira found one pair with one egg on 11 December 1982.

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher — REEF 1: Skira found one pair with two eggs on 10 December 1980, one pair with two eggs on 15 December 1982, and one chick was found on 5 December 1985. Brothers found one pair with two eggs on 7 December 1986.

Hydroprogne caspia Caspian Tern — REEF 1: Skira found one pair with two eggs on 10 December 1980 and one pair with two eggs on 11 December 1982. On 7 December 1986 Brothers located one pair with two eggs.

Sterna striata White-fronted Tern — REEF 1: Napier¹, on 17 November 1981, found one nest with two small chicks and five nests each with two eggs at the northern end of the reef. Skira found one live and one dead chick on 15 December 1982. On 5 December 1985 there was one nest with two eggs.

Factors Affecting Status

The four reefs are thought to be free of mammalian predators such as *Rattus rattus*. The reefs are not often visited and human disturbance to breeding seabirds is minimal. The introduced *Coprosma repens* is overtaking the native vegetation and eventually may cover the reefs.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

One lizard species (not collected) and one

White-lipped Whip Snake *Drysdalia coronoides* have been recorded.

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Leucocarbo fuscescens</i>	Black-faced Shag
<i>Cereopsis novaehollandiae</i>	Cape Barren Goose
<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	Silver Gull
<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull

Banding

One visit — 5 December 1985.

Eudyptula minor — 1 adult.

Pelagodroma murina — 1 adult.

Haematopus fuliginosus — 1 chick.

Bibliography

1. Napier, J. R. (1982). Note on the breeding of the White-fronted Tern in Franklin Sound, Furneaux Group, Tasmania. *Aust. Bird Watcher* 9: 210-212.
2. Serventy, D. L., V. Serventy and J. Warham. (1971). The Handbook of Australian Sea-birds. A. H. and A. W. Reed. Sydney.

Acknowledgements

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

Date compiled: 1 February 1988.

I. J. Skira and N. P. Brothers, Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife, G.P.O. Box 44A, Hobart Tas. 7000.