

## SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 133

## The Thumbs, Tasmania

**Location:** 43°06'S., 147°59'E.; 100 m offshore from Thumbs Point on the eastern side of Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania.

**Status:** Crown Land.

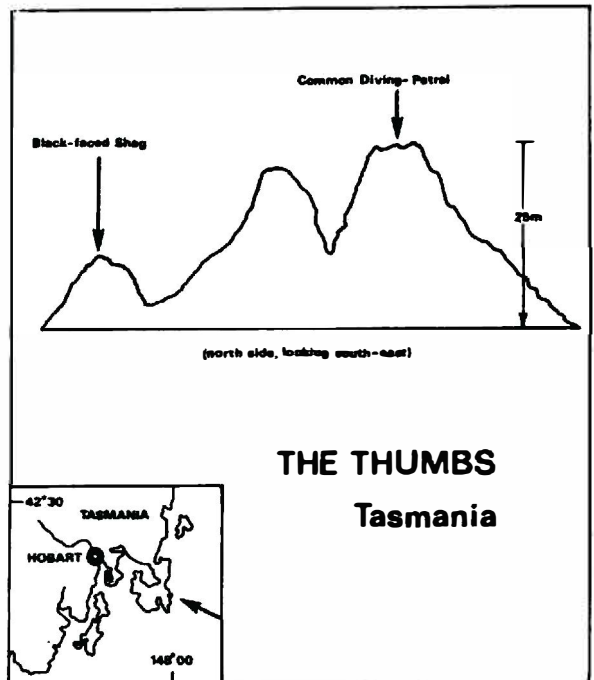
**Description:** < 1 ha; 150 m long by 20 m wide, the island consists of three peaks, varying in height from 15 m to 25 m; the peaks are separated by saddles less than 8 m high. The only flat ground is on the top of the eastern-most peak and some bare rock below 15 m. Twenty-one plant species were found by the author in November 1980; these included *Helichrysum reticulatum*, *Rhagodia baccata* and *Tetragonia implexicoma* on the cliffs. *Poa poiformis* and *Carpobrotus rossii* were dominant wherever burrows were found.

**Landing:** Calm seas are required to land on rock platforms on all but the south to south-western sides where the rock is sheer to the sea.

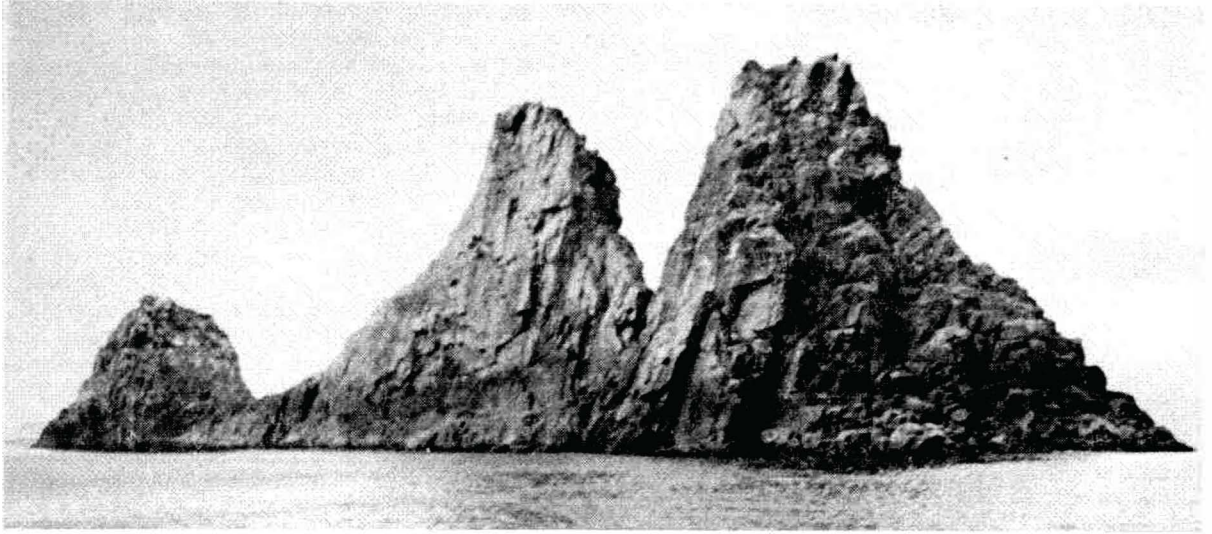
**Ornithological History:** There are no previously published accounts relating to The Thumbs. N. P. Brothers spent two hours on the island on 21 November 1980.

## Breeding Seabirds and Status

*Pelecanoides urinatrix* Common Diving-Petrel — Breeds in rock crevices and in shallow soil beneath the roots of *Carpobrotus* and *Poa*. Burrows in crevices or those dug in soil were all less than 0.5 m long; access to the nest chambers was difficult due to the tunnels wind-



ing around rock obstructions. Burrows were only found on the summit of the western-most peak. Conditions suitable for nesting are very limited. A few pairs may possibly breed on the centre peak, but it was not possible to investigate this site; cliff-climbing equipment, necessary to reach that summit, was not at hand. Two burrows each contained a chick, with very little down remaining. All other burrows inspected were empty; chicks may have already fledged from these. Estimated less than 20 breeding pairs.



• *The Thumbs* — north side (looking south-east).

*Leucocarbo fuscescens* Black-faced Shag — Although not breeding in November 1980, old nest sites and guano-covered rock on the eastern-most peak indicated that, in some years the rock is a breeding site. One adult bird was perched at the eastern end. Old nest sites counted suggest that about 20 pairs may breed on the island in some seasons.

#### Factors Affecting Status

Two diving-petrel burrows, with clumps of feathers in them, had obviously been interfered with and the Forest Raven *Corvus tasmanicus* was probably responsible. Three species of raptor passed overhead during the visit but would be unlikely to affect the diving-petrels; however, they may interfere with the shags when they are breeding.

#### OTHER VERTEBRATES

The skink, *Leiopisma metallica*, occurs in small numbers and the Australian Fur Seal *Arctocephalus pusillus* regularly uses the rock for breeding.

#### Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Eudypula minor</i>	Little Penguin (carcass)
<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	Sooty Shearwater (skull only)
<i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>	Short-tailed Shearwater (skull only)
<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	Little Black Cormorant
<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	Silver Gull

#### Banding

Nil.

#### Acknowledgements

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