

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 144

Blyth Island, Sir Joseph Banks Group, South Australia

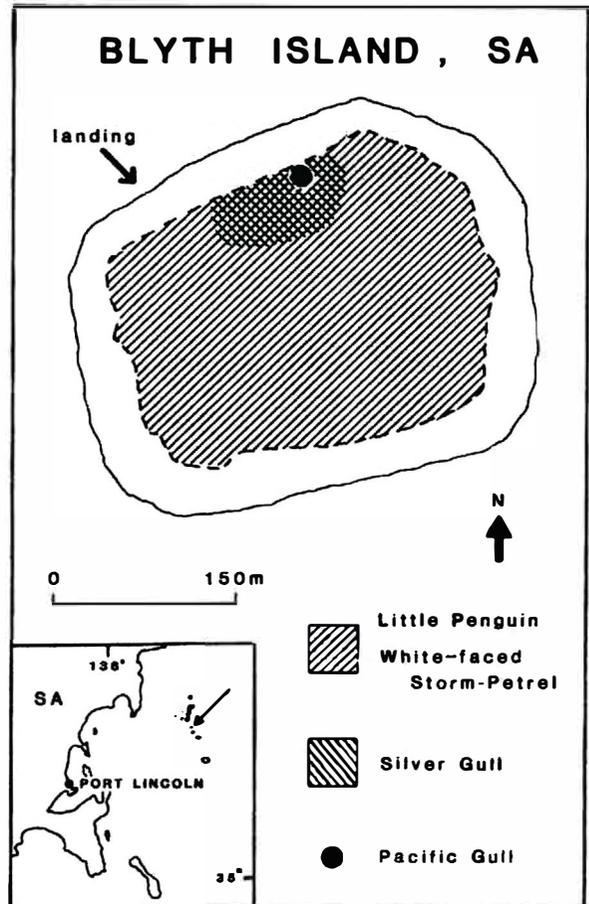
Location: 34°34'S., 136°17'E.; 43 kilometres north-east of Port Lincoln, S.A. and 18 kilometres from the mainland near Point Bolingbroke.

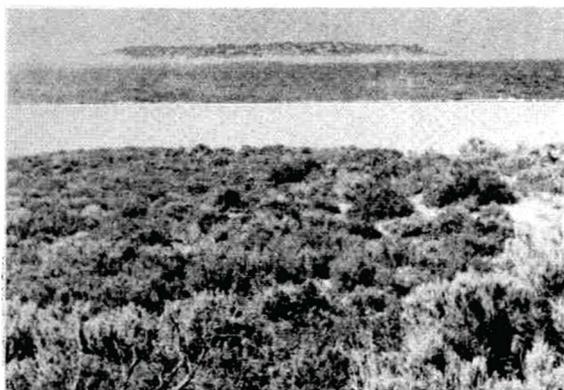
Status: A Conservation Park under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (S.A.).

Description: 4 ha; roughly oval-shaped, about 250 m by 150 m, this small island consists of centrally-depressed sand dunes on a granite base. Rocky reefs surround the sand beach which slopes to the low dunes. Spinifex and Saltbush occur on the dune slopes. The top of the dunes and the enclosed depression are mostly covered with Saltbush and *Nitraria* to about one metre high.

Landing: Onto a sand beach but the approach is reef-strewn.

Ornithological History: Wood Jones¹ apparently visited the island when members of the McCoy Society "camped on Reevesby Island [from 3 December 1936 to 21 January 1937] and, from it, visited all the other islands in the Sir Joseph Banks Group." He wrote of the burrows of White-faced Storm-Petrels on Blyth Island. S. G. Lane and L. F. Lane visited the island for one hour on 20 November 1981², while J. B. Paton (pers. comm.) *et al.* made visits on 12 December 1982 and 13 March 1983.





- Upper — *Blyth Island (looking south-east)*;
Lower — *view of vegetation in the central depression.*

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Burrows are thinly spread over the centre of the island. In 1981, two adults were together in a burrow and two dead nestlings were found. In 1983, one adult, four pairs (adults), nine single birds (probably adult) and four large nestlings were found. Probably about 20 pairs nest on the island.

Pelagodroma marina White-faced Storm-Petrel — In 1981, burrows showing very recent activity were found throughout the centre of the island; of those examined, two each contained an adult on an egg. Many remains of adult birds were scattered about the surface, no doubt the result of predation by the numerous Pacific Gulls. Estimated between 500 and 1000 breeding pairs.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — Twenty were counted and a nest containing two fresh eggs was found (1981).

Larus pacificus Pacific Gull — Seventy were counted and a nest with one egg was found (1981). Lack of time prevented a detailed search but other nests could have been overlooked.

Hydroprogne caspia Caspian Tern — A nest with two eggs was found (1982).

Factors Affecting Status

There appears to be no evidence of human interference. The Pacific Gulls obviously would

take considerable toll of the Storm-Petrels as evidenced by the numerous remains. Two Australian Sealions *Neophoca cinerea* were present on the beach (1981) but there was no sign of their movement elsewhere.

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Leucocarbo fuscescens</i>	Black-faced Shag
<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Pied Cormorant
<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>	Little Pied Cormorant
<i>Cereopsis novaehollandiae</i>	Cape Barren Goose
<i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>	Sooty Oystercatcher
<i>Sterna nereis</i>	Fairy Tern
<i>Sterna bergii</i>	Crested Tern

Banding

Pelagodroma marina — 2 adults (20 Nov. 81).

Bibliography

1. Wood Jones, F. (1937), 'The Breeding of the White-faced Storm Petrel on South Australian Islands', *S. Aust. Orn.* 14(2): 35-41.
2. Lane, S. G. (in press), 'Notes on the birds recorded during a visit to islands of the Sir Joseph Banks Group, South Australia', *Corella*.

Acknowledgements

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