

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 80

Tullaberga Island, Victoria

Location: 37°34'S., 149°51'E., about 1 km offshore, to the east of Mallacoota.

Status: Included in Croajingolong National Park (April 1979), controlled by National Parks Service (Victoria); access under review.

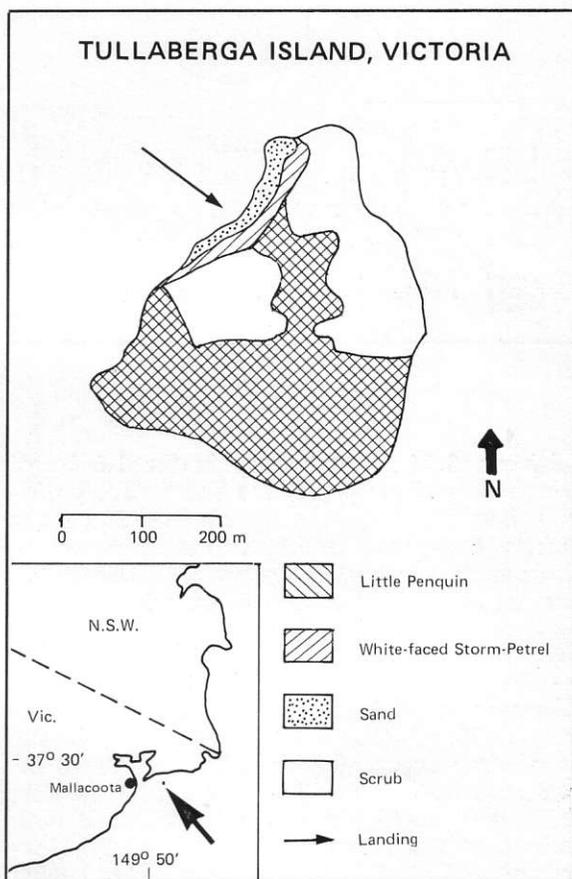
Other Names: Tellaberga; Tullaburga.

Description: 2.9 ha; 240 m long by about 200 m wide; the highest point is only 8.5 m above high water mark. This granite island, which is covered by a thin layer of sand, has four distinct vegetation zones: an area of low *Rhagodia baccata*, including *Tetragonia tetragonioides* and *Muehlenbeckia adpressa* on the southern half of the island; a central area of *Poa poiiformis* tussock grassland with scattered *Senecio glomeratus*; a narrow band of *Atriplex cinerea* behind the sandy beach; and a scrub flora including *Acacia melanoxylon* or *longifolia*, *Coprosma repens*, and *Myoporum insulare* which covers the remainder of the island. These vegetation zones are associated with different soil depths, the *Rhagodia* growing on soil of mean depth 160 mm, *Poa* on soil of 300 mm and *Atriplex* on soil of 670 mm. Seabird burrows were found over most of the island, except for that part dominated by scrub.

A steeply sloping sand beach is present on the north-western side of the island; the geology has been described elsewhere¹.

Landing: Landing on the steep sand beach is fairly difficult but is possible in calm conditions.

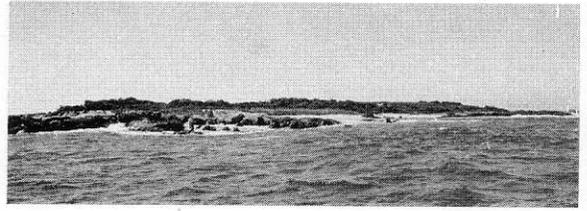
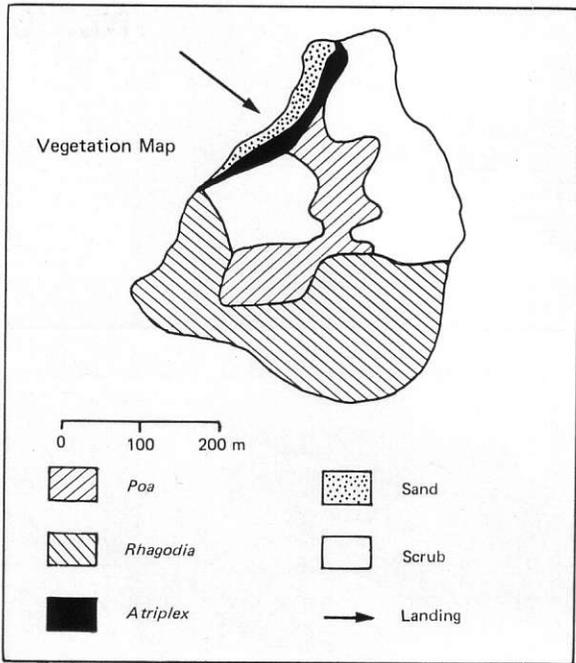
Ornithological History: The only previous ornithological information for this island concerned breeding White-faced Storm-Petrels (specimens in the British Museum) which were collected there in November 1919.



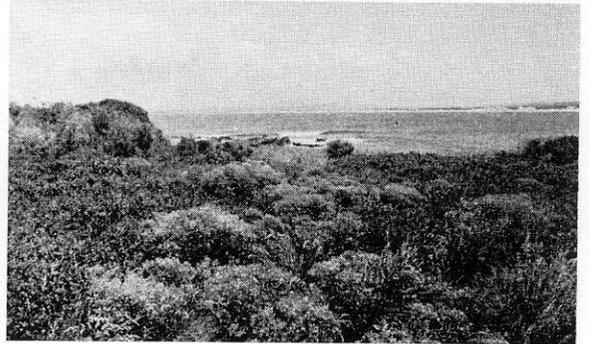
On 16 November 1978 we mapped the island, mapped the vegetation zones and estimated the number of burrows during a visit of almost two hours.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Average burrow density in *Poa* (0.5 ha) was 0.04/m² (twenty-five 20 m² quadrats), and 0.018/m²



• Tullaberga Island (looking south-east) showing the landing beach on the north-west end.



• Looking north across the storm-petrel colony.

(eighteen 3.14 m² quadrats) in the 1.3 ha of *Rhagodia*, and the population was probably 400-500 burrows. In addition, about 130 empty burrows may have belonged to penguins, or to Short-tailed Shearwaters, though the latter species has not been recorded on the island.

Pelagodroma marina White-faced Storm-Petrel — Mean burrow density in the 1.3 ha of *Rhagodia* was 1.37/m² (eighteen 3.14 m² quadrats), 0.76 m² (five 3.14 m² quadrats) in 0.1 ha of *Atriplex* and 0.24/m² (twenty-five 20 m² quadrats) in 0.5 ha of *Poa*. Based on these data the burrow population was estimated at 20 000; each of several burrows examined (on 16 November 1978) contained an egg. The colony appears to be the largest in Victoria.

Factors Affecting Status

The island was reported as "infested by rabbits" in 1912², but no rabbits or predatory mammals were seen during our visit. The disappearance of the rabbit population and the difficulty of access have probably allowed the seabird colonies to flourish.

Other Seabirds Recorded

<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Southern Fulmar (beach washed)
<i>Puffinus gavia</i>	Fluttering Shearwater (dead)
<i>Phaenocorax carbo</i>	Great Cormorant
<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Pied Cormorant
<i>Huematopus fuliginosus</i>	Sooty Oystercatcher

Banding

Nil.

Bibliography

1. Douglas, J. G. (1978) 'Geology of Tullaberga Island and the adjacent mainland', *Mining, Geology and Energy Journal of Victoria* 7(3):31-33.
2. Bureau of Census and Statistics (1912), 'Islands off the coast of the Commonwealth', *Commonwealth Year Book*. 5:51-80.

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