

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 9

Split Solitary Island, New South Wales

Location: 30° 14' S., 153° 11' E.; about 2.4 km offshore and 8 km NNE from Coffs Harbour.

Status: Nature Reserve controlled by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (N.S.W.): entry permit required.

Description: Roughly circular, about 200 m diameter with rocky sides rising steeply to about 40 m; the island is divided by an almost precipitous-sided crevasse running WNW-ESE through which the sea passes occasionally. The top of the island is a gently sloping plateau with shallow soil which supports low vegetation consisting of grasses and herbaceous plants including Climbing Saltbush *Rhagodia nutans*, Variable Groundsel *Senecio lautus*, Pigface *Carpobrotus glaucescens*, *Wedelia biflora*, Wandering Jew *Commelina cyanea*, Sword Bean *Canavallia maritima* and Coastal Yellow Pea *Vigna marina*.

Landing: On to rocks and difficult except in very calm seas; the exact location depends on conditions at the time and may include swimming.

Ornithological History: The first recorded ornithological visit was by H. Battam, B. Jones and S. G. Lane¹ on 3 December 1969 from 04:55 to 05:55. Due to weather conditions the visit was necessarily short but time enough to permit a fairly thorough check for breeding seabirds. Only Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were found. This was confirmed during another brief visit by Lane and A. K. Morris on 28 April 1974 when five nestlings of this species were located in some 50 burrows examined.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Puffinus pacificus Wedge-tailed Shearwater—Probably present to breed from August to early May; estimated 100 breeding pairs.

Factors Affecting Status

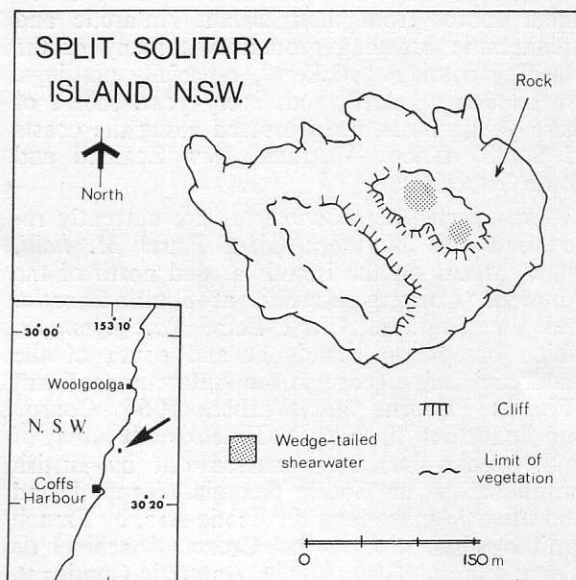
Interference or unnatural predation was not apparent in 1969. Probably few people have visited the island but the increasing use of small launches could change this in the future.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

None recorded (No record was made during the 1969 visit and none was seen during the visit in April 1974).



• Split Solitary Island from the north-west.



Other Seabirds Recorded

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher

Banding

P. pacificus—53 adults; 5 nestlings.

Bibliography

1. Lane, S. G. (1972), 'Breeding Seabirds of the Solitary Islands, NSW', *Emu* 72: 182-184.

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