

## SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 89

## Anser Island, Anser Group, Victoria

**Location:** 39°08'S., 146°19'E., the largest island of the Anser Group, 1.5 km to the south-west of the Wilsons Promontory mainland.

**Status:** Part of Wilsons Promontory National Park. Access is controlled by the National Parks Service (Vic.).

**Description:** 74 ha; a granite island about 1.8 km long, 1 km wide, and of maximum height 152 m. In the south-west there are high and steep cliffs but elsewhere the island slopes gradually to low basal cliffs. Most of the island is dominated by two plant communities, a *Poa poiformis* tussock grassland and a herbfield of *Lavatera plebeia* within which *Rhagodia baccata* covers large areas. Elsewhere small areas are dominated by *Senecio lautus* and *Carpobrotus rossii*. Weathering has eroded the soil in parts of the island and exposed the granite, but most of the island has adequate soil depth for burrowing shearwaters.

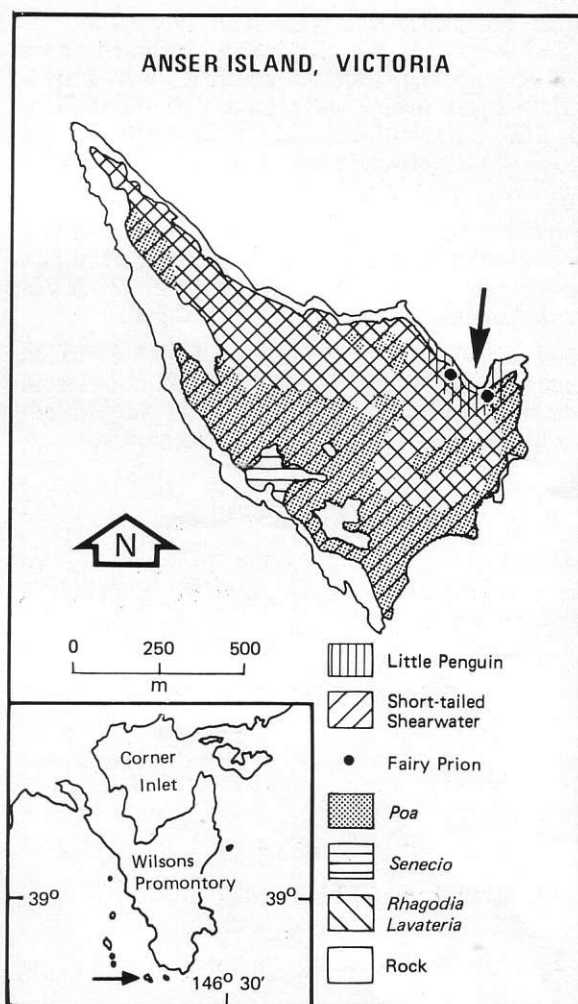
**Landing:** Onto rocks in a small bay on the south-eastern side of the island.

**Ornithological History:** Dorward and Pizze<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>, recorded Cape Barren Geese on the island in June 1964. S. G. Lane and H. Battam were on the island for 3.5 hours on 25 November 1978; in addition to geese they recorded Little Penguins, Short-tailed Shearwaters, Fairy Prions and Pacific Gulls nesting<sup>4</sup>. We visited the island for 2.5 hours on 11 December 1978.

## Breeding Seabirds and Status

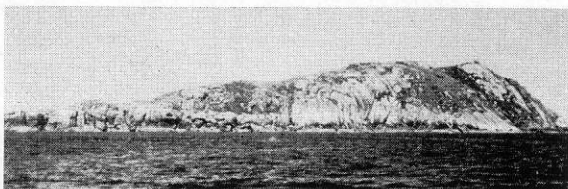
*Eudyptula minor* Little Penguin — Most were found breeding around the landing bay although we saw a few burrows elsewhere along the coast. The population must exceed several hundred pairs.

*Pachyptila turtur* Fairy Prion — Lane<sup>4</sup> recorded one bird on an egg and we found a few burrows



above the landing but none elsewhere. Nesting may occur in areas not searched.

*Puffinus tenuirostris* Short-tailed Shearwater — Shearwater burrows were found throughout the island, wherever the depth of soil was sufficient. Burrow density (one hundred and twenty-two



• *Anser Island.*

Photo: S. G. Lane.

20 m<sup>2</sup> quadrats) was highest in *Poa* (0.6/m<sup>2</sup>), and lowest in the *Lavatera*-dominated area (0.2/m<sup>2</sup>). The product of area and burrow densities (in six areas) gave an island estimate of 251 700 burrows but this would increase with allowance for ground slope. Thirty of 50 burrows examined in December contained an egg.

*Cereopsis novaehollandiae* Cape Barren Goose — Dorward and Pizzey<sup>3</sup>, and Lane<sup>4</sup>, recorded this species as breeding. We counted 38 birds on the island and two nests were found.

*Larus pacificus* Pacific Gull — Lane<sup>4</sup> recorded some 50 birds in November 1978 and found four nests with eggs. About 20 pairs were breeding at the time of our visit (December).

### Factors Affecting Status

Apart from possible illegal harvesting of shearwaters, the island's seabird populations appear secure.

### Other Seabirds Recorded

*Leucocarbo fuscescens*  
*Haematopus fuliginosus*  
*Larus novaehollandiae*

Black-faced Shag  
Sooty Oystercatcher  
Silver Gull

### Banding

25 November 1978.

*P. tenuirostris* — 25 "adults".

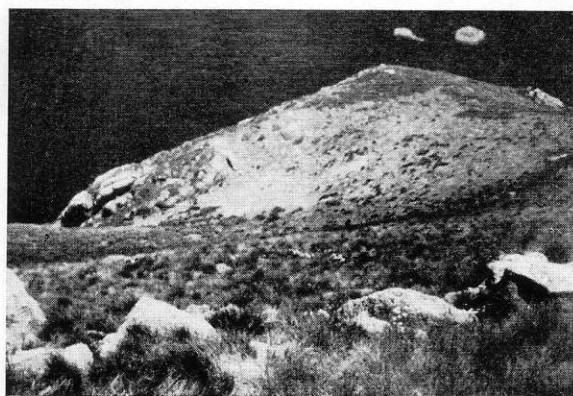
*C. novaehollandiae* — 2 "runners".

### Bibliography

1. Dorward, D. F. (1967), 'The status of the Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novae-hollandiae*', *Bull. int. Comm. Bird. Preserv.* 10:56-71.
2. Dorward, D. F. and G. M. Pizzey (1964), 'Breeding of the Cape Barren Goose on the Anser and Glennie Islands and a discussion of conservation', Mimeo. report. Department of Zoology, Monash University.



• *Part of the north-eastern corner (looking east), with Wattle Island and Wilsons Promontory in the background.*



• *Part of the western end, from the summit.*

Photo: H. Battam.

3. Dorward, D. F. and G. M. Pizzey (1965), 'Breeding of the Cape Barren Goose on the Anser and Glennie Islands, Victoria, Australia', *Rep. Wildfowl Trust* 16:64-67.
4. Lane, S. G. (1979), 'A visit to islands of Wilsons Promontory, Victoria', *Corella* 3:29-30.

Date compiled: 30 August 1979.

M. P. Harris\*, R. S. Brown†, D. M. Deerson† and F. I. Norman†.

\*Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Banchory Research Station, Hill of Brathens, Banchory, Kincardineshire, AB3 4BY, U.K.

†Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, Fisheries and Wildlife Division, 123 Brown Street, Heidelberg, Vic., 3084.