Corella 5 (3)

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 105

Round Top Island, Maatsuyker Group, Tasmania

Location: 43°39′S., 146°22′E.; one of the six islands comprising the Maatsuyker Group, lying 11 km off the south coast of Tasmania and 600 m south-west of Flat Top Island.

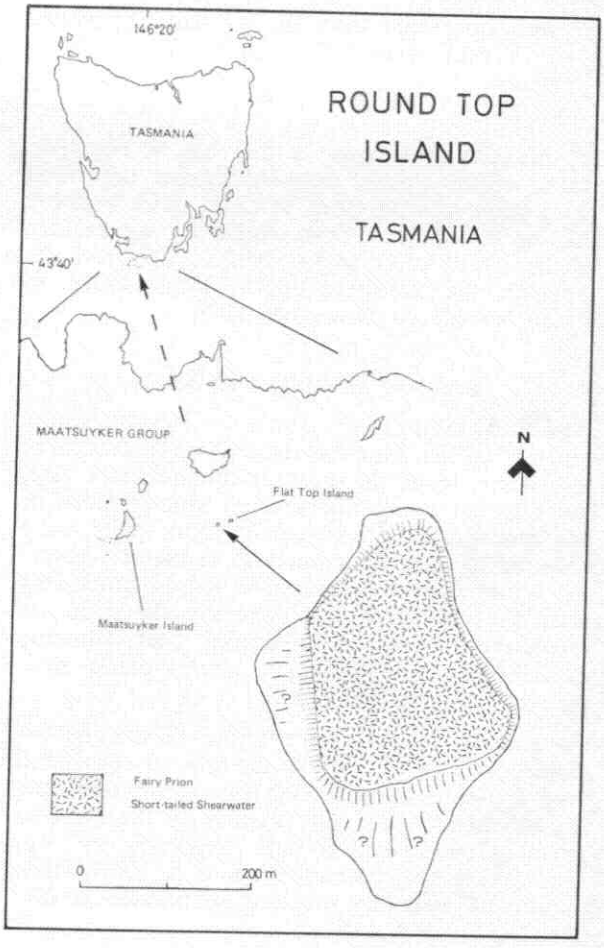
Status: Part of the South-West National Park administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (Tas.).

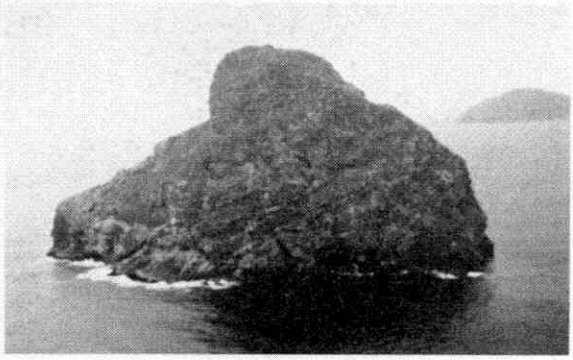
Other Name: West Sister.

Description: 6.5 ha; about 450 m long by 300 m wide, with steep to sheer cliff sides rising to a small, flattish area just below a curving top at a height of 165 m. Vegetation covers the more elevated parts and extends right down the slopes on the eastern side where the cliffs are less sheer. Plant species recorded were *Cyathodes juniperina, Senecio lautus, Carpobrotus rossii, Rhagodia baccata, Poa poiformis* and *Asplenium obtusatum*. Soil cover is extensive but shallow.

Landing: Landing from a boat is possible only in calm conditions which are a rare occurrence in the area. Access is gained on the north-eastern side and involves a steep climb up rocks near the water's edge. Beyond this spot the summit can be reached with little difficulty by following the breaks in the cliffs. Landing by helicopter can be made in the flattish area just below the summit provided the wind is not strong.

Ornithological History: C. Lord[1] in 1927 stated that the island probably provided "rookeries for certain forms", while in 1972 D. Milledge[3] re-





• *Round Top Island (looking west) with part of Maatsuyker Island in the background at right.*

ferred to claims by local fishermen that Short-tailed Shearwaters were nesting on all islands in the Maatsuyker Group. The only recorded ornithological visit to the island was made by G. White, by helicopter, from 13:05 to 14:30 hrs on 28 December 1980.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Pachyptila turtur Fairy Prion — Nesting was most common on the very steep eastern slopes, but also occurred around the summit and in the flattish area just beneath it, the burrows being interspersed among those of Short-tailed Shearwaters. Some birds probably nest on the sheer western side cliffs. Burrows examined contained a small, downy chick. Estimated 1 200 to 1 400 breeding pairs.

Puffinus tenuirostris Short-tailed Shearwater — Burrows were concentrated around the summit and in the flattish area just below, but they also occurred in parts on the very steep eastern slopes. Nearly all burrows examined contained a bird incubating an egg, with only very few non-breeding birds found. Estimated 12 500 to 15 000 breeding pairs.

Factors Affecting Status

The Forest Raven *Corvus tasmanicus* was seen on the island and no doubt takes a few chicks and eggs, while the White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* is probably another predator. Difficulty of access makes human interference unlikely.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

Small-scaled Skink *Leiolopisma pretiosa*, Australian Fur Seal *Arctocephalus pusillus*.

Other Seabirds Recorded

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull

Banding

Nil.

Bibliography

1. Lord, C. (1927), 'Southern Outposts', *Emu* 27: 16-19.
2. Milledge, D. R. (1972), 'The birds of Maatsuyker Island, Tasmania', *Emu* 72: 167-170.

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