

THE LITTLE PENGUIN ON GRANITE ISLAND

Having discovered during a trip to Victor Harbour on July 26, 1943, that the Little (Fairy) Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) nested on Granite Island, it was thought that this species might again be seen when we were on the Island on August 27, 1950.

A search was made during a walk around the Island on the side opposite the Bluff. Two men were noticed attempting to reach something under a granite boulder very close to the main track, and looking under this rock later we saw a Penguin in a depression—apparently nesting.

During a subsequent visit to Granite Island on September 20, another search was made under the same boulder and a Penguin was seen sitting well back from the entrance: a dead bird was noticed lying a few feet away.

Further along the track towards West Island a dull white egg was discovered in a depression under a large mass of granite.

On September 22 two birds were seen nesting under boulders, one bird within a few feet of a seat. These birds attempted to peck when we approached them.

On September 27 a bird was again seen nesting near the seat mentioned above.

While having lunch at the kiosk, we were informed that Penguins frequently come up to the kiosk after dark, and are fed by the two persons in charge.

In the evening it was decided to go over to the Island in the hope of seeing some of these birds.

Before reaching the kiosk many weird noises were heard resembling scolding and barking, and on reaching the pile of rocks near the stairway a torch was flashed at the base of the rocks from where the sound came, and single birds were noticed near the entrance of two hide-outs in the crevices of the boulders. These birds remained standing erect in the beam of the torchlight for several minutes, looking to see the cause of the disturbance, then slowly disappeared in the crevices. Both entrances were within a

few feet only of a seat frequently used by visitors.

Barking and scolding was heard from the other side of the kiosk, so we decided to walk over and investigate. Three Penguins flapped out of crevices between the rocks which have been built up to take the rail tracks near the kiosk, and these birds flopped along a narrow ledge and eventually disappeared in crevices several feet away.

More noises were heard in the rocky cliffs cut away to form the Island gardens, so we now turned our attentions to this spot, but were unable to see any birds. From the sounds heard, the birds appeared to be numerous in this part of the Island.

On September 30, a search was made under many granite boulders from near the Causeway to the Umbrella rock, but no birds were found; all birds seen or heard during our searches were in the area a little past the Umbrella rock around to the kiosk and cliffs behind the gardens.

On October 2, two eggs were found in one nest on the side of the Island facing the Bluff.

During a further visit to Victor Harbour during Easter, 1951, a search was again made for Penguins.

About 7 a.m. on March 26, a bird was found in a sandy depression between two large granite boulders on the side of Granite Island facing the Bluff. No young birds were seen. Numerous tracks were noticed on the Island slopes, among the rocks where the birds usually nest. The vegetation among the rocks was Native Spinach (*Tetragonia* sp.) and small-leaved *Mesembryanthemum*.

In the evening we searched the rocks near the kiosk, and by the aid of torches 10 Penguins were seen, some sitting on the rocks. One bird apparently became confused by the torchlight and tumbled into the water where it was seen to swim a few yards. Many other birds were heard giving their quaint barking calls.

The proprietors of the kiosk informed us that a bird came to the back door on the night of March 25, and that children occasionally bring young birds to the kiosk.

—By L. S. and F. M. FRANCIS