

Beauchêne Island

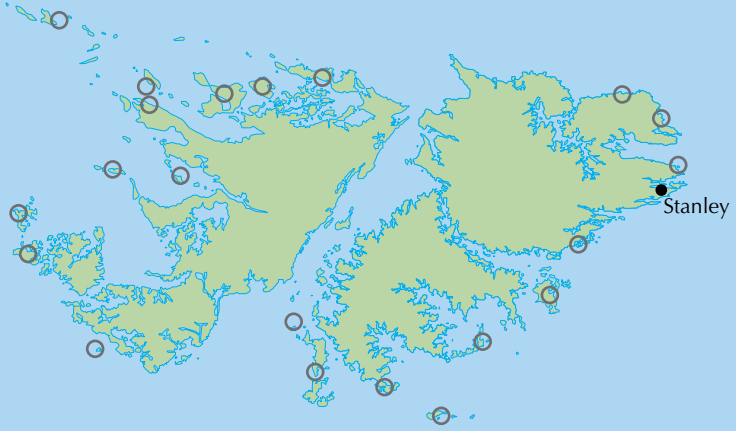
Ref number	FK01
Admin Region	Falkland Islands
Co-ordinates	52°54'S, 59°11'W
Area	172 ha
Altitude	0–70 m
IBA categories	A1, A2, A4ii, A4iii
Status	National Nature Reserve (designated 1964) Owned by Falkland Islands Government.

Site description

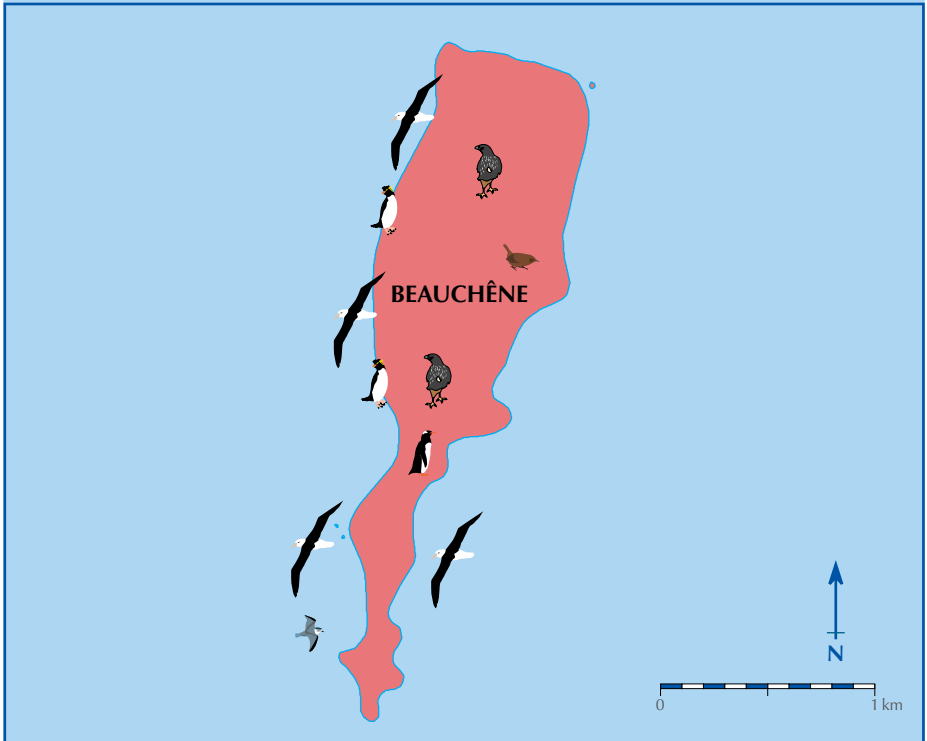
Forming the southernmost land in the Falklands archipelago, Beauchêne Island is located approximately 54km south of Porpoise Point, Lafonia. It has not been grazed or permanently settled, is free of introduced predators and its remote location has protected the island from disturbance in recent years. In the north, the island is covered in dense Tussac and the coastline is gently sloping, up to around 30m high. There are boulder beaches on the western coast. In the south, the land rises to around 70m with higher cliffs on the eastern coast and fissured steep slopes. The southern quarter of the island is almost bare of vegetation.



FK01 Beauchêne Island



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FK01	Beauchêne Island	Breeding (pairs)	Notes
Criteria	Key species		
A1, A4ii	Black-browed Albatross <i>Thalassarche melanophrys</i>	103,050	2000/01 census
A1, A4ii	Rockhopper Penguin <i>Eudyptes chrysolome</i>	61,650	2000/01, similar to numbers for 1995/96
A1	Sooty Shearwater <i>Puffinus griseus</i>		No counts; breeding not confirmed recently
A1	Macaroni Penguin <i>Eudyptes chrysolophus</i>	Few	16 nests in 1980
A1	Gentoo Penguin <i>Pygoscelis papua</i>	750	Increase of 53% since 1995/96
A1, A2	Cobb's Wren <i>Troglodytes cobbi</i>		Numerous, no counts
A1, A2	Striated Caracara <i>Phalacrocorax australis</i>	65 (approx)	Adult population stable from mid-1960s onwards
A2	Tussacbird/Blackish Cinclodes <i>Cinclodes antarcticus</i>		Numerous, no counts
A2	Canary-winged/Black-throated Finch <i>Melanoderes melanoderes</i>	10	Estimated in 2000
A4ii	Fairy Prion <i>Pachyptila turtur</i>	10,000 (approx)	Discovered 1967, numerous, widespread over island
A4iii	Combined seabirds	>175,515	

Birds

See table above for details of key species.

More than 30 species have been recorded, the majority being migratory seabirds that are present in very large numbers during the breeding season. The site is significant for the second largest populations in the world of Black-browed Albatross and Rockhopper Penguin, and apparently the second most dense breeding population of Striated Caracara in the Falklands. Beauchêne Island is also important for Wilson's Storm-petrel, Grey-backed Storm-petrel and Common Diving Petrel. It is the only confirmed breeding site for Fairy Prion in the Falkland Islands. The endemic Cobb's Wren breeds and appears to be fairly numerous. There is an Imperial Shag colony of around 2,500 pairs and White-chinned Petrels probably breed, but this has not been confirmed. Southern Giant Petrel and Magellanic Penguin are present, but populations are too small to qualify. The total congregation of seabirds far exceeds 10,000 breeding pairs, making this site classifiable under the A4iii criterion.

Other species of interest

The island is also host to a few breeding Southern Sea Lion and is a major haul-out station for non-breeding animals, which can congregate in numbers of up to a hundred individuals on the northern part of the island. It is remarkable for the paucity of plant species. Two thirds of its area is covered by Tussac which here reaches exceptional and luxuriant dimensions. Three other vascular species have been recorded including Wild Celery *Apium australe*, Antarctic Starwort *Callitriche antarctica* and Bitter-cress *Cardamine glacialis*.

Conservation issues

Access to the island is difficult because of its remote location, which protects it from most accidental disturbance or visitor pressure. There is no active management plan. Access is restricted: landings require permission from the Falkland Islands Government. It is very important that the Falkland Islands Countryside Code (see Appendix 1) is followed, particularly to guard against the risk of fire, which would devastate the Tussac community. Detailed access guidelines, additional to the Countryside Code are issued for this site by the Falkland Islands Government.

References

Clausen (2001), Clausen and Huin (2002), Huin (2001), Smith and Prince (1985), Strange (1968).

Fairy Prion – Beauchêne Island is the only confirmed breeding site in the Falkland Islands for this species

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