

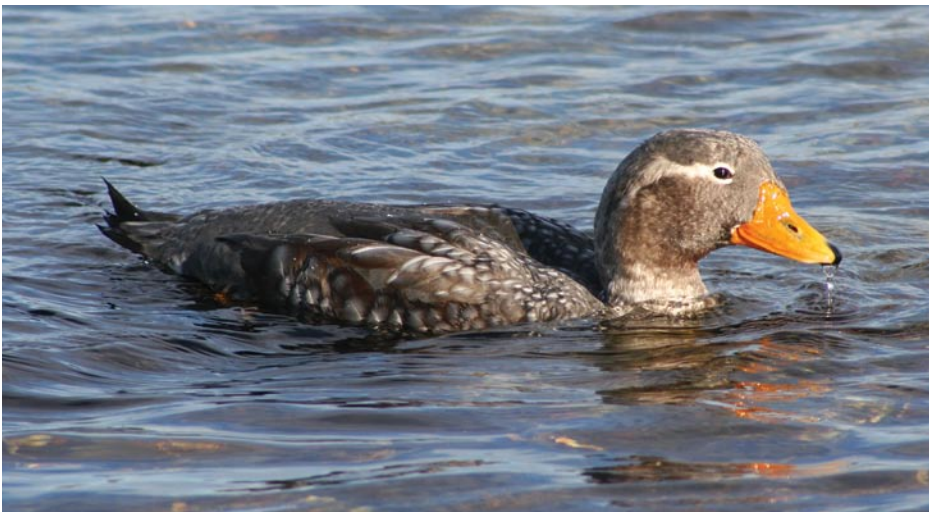
Bull Point, East Falkland

Ref number	FK18
Admin Region	Falkland Islands
Co-ordinates	52°20'S, 59°22'W
Area	1,500 ha (approx)* [* = rats present]
Altitude	0–18 m
IBA categories	A1, A2, A4ii
Status	Nature reserve owned by Falkland Land Holdings; managers I. and E. Jaffray, North Arm.

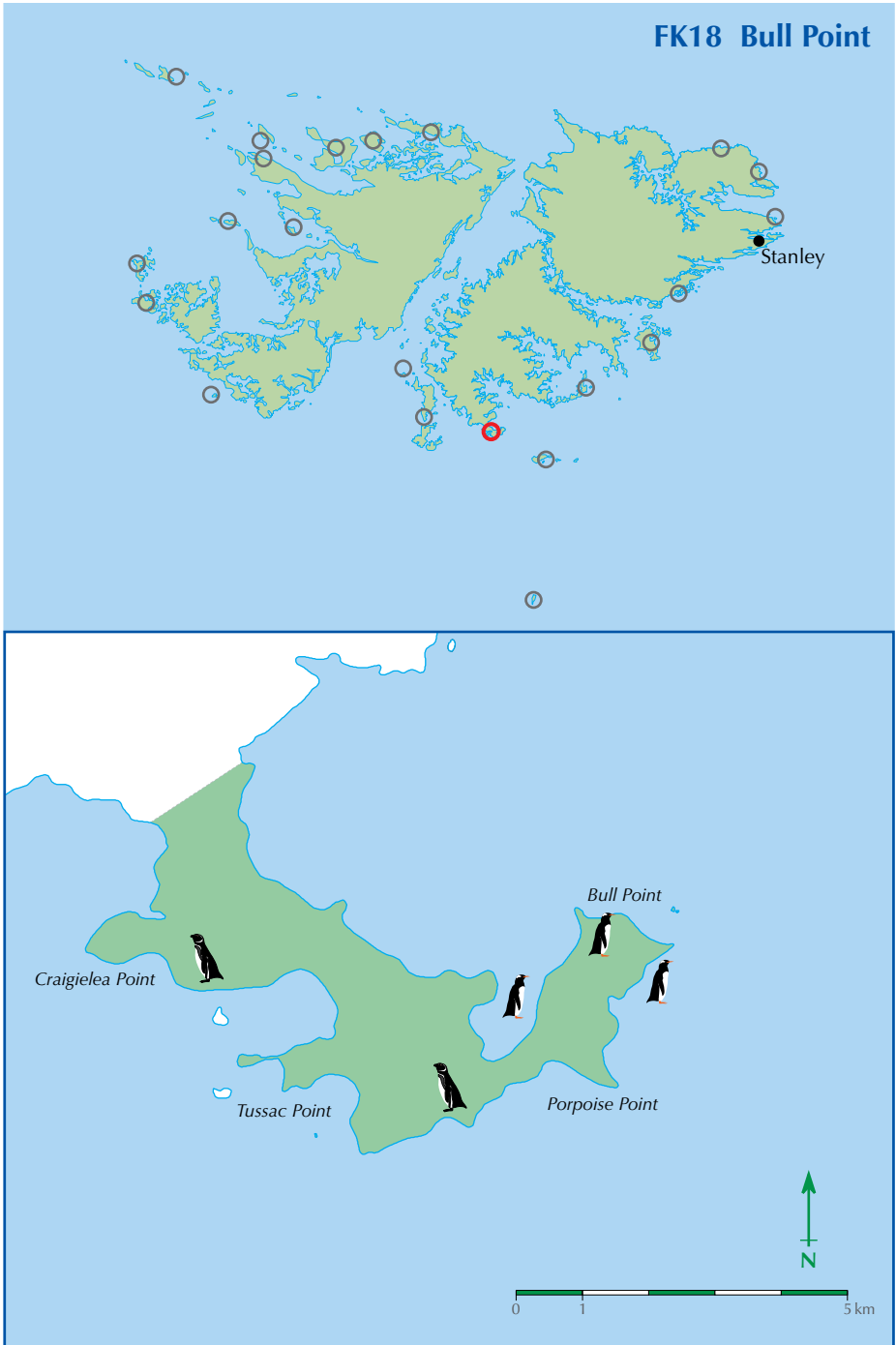
Site description

Bull Point, at the southernmost tip of East Falkland, is low-lying. The habitat is varied, comprising maritime heath in the higher areas, with a variety of rocky and sandy beaches on the coast. There are extensive dune systems covering much of the southern point. Wide areas of coastal greens interspersed with permanent and seasonal pools provide habitat for wading birds and waterfowl. There is scattered Tussac at Porpoise Point and also on small islands immediately offshore.

The site is managed as part of a working farm and it has been grazed for many years. The tip of the point has recently been completely cleared of stock and fencing improved to prevent accidental access. This has undoubtedly led to an improvement in the quality and diversity of the flora.



FK18 Bull Point



FK18 Bull Point, East Falkland		Breeding (pairs)	Notes
Criteria	Key species		
A1, A4ii	Gentoo Penguin <i>Pygoscelis papua</i>	4,784	2000/01, increase of 1,990 from 1995 figures
A1	Magellanic Penguin <i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>		Widespread and numerous, no counts
A2	Ruddy-headed Goose <i>Chloephaga rubidiceps</i>	65	Widespread and numerous around greens, no counts
A2	Canary-winged/Black-throated Finch <i>Melanodera melanodera</i>		Breeding, numbers unknown
A2	Falkland Steamer Duck <i>Tachyeres brachypterus</i>		Widespread and numerous around coasts, no counts

Birds

See table above for details of key species.

The pool areas are particular favourites with birdwatchers, who have recorded many rare and visiting species, such as Coscoroba Swan, Ashy-headed Goose, Cinnamon Teal and breeding Black-necked Swan. Chiloe Wigeon and all resident duck species are frequently seen. At the southernmost tip, where a ring of dunes surrounds the central green areas, the density of penguins and geese during the summer months is extremely high. This is also a good place to see juvenile Striated Caracaras. The Tussacbird is present but probably not breeding due to rats and cats. Bull Point has extensive beach and dune areas where White-rumped Sandpipers congregate in large numbers with local Two-banded Plover, Rufous-chested Dotterel and the two species of oystercatchers. Magellanic Snipe and Brown-hooded Gull probably breed. Endemic subspecies recorded here include White-tufted/Rolland's Grebe, Upland Goose, Short-eared Owl, Falkland Grass Wren, Dark-faced Ground-tyrant, Falkland Pipit, Falkland Thrush and Long-tailed Meadowlark. This is also a site of special interest for watching seabirds passing by the point.

Other species of interest

There is a small breeding colony of Southern Sea Lions on the far eastern point, which produces fewer than five pups each year. The area is also a major haul-out site for Southern Sea Lions and Southern Elephant Seals. The plants have been fairly well surveyed: 101 species were recorded, including Dusen's Moonwort *Botrychium dusenii*, a **VULNERABLE** and legally protected native fern that is only known to occur in two other localities in the Falklands.

Another interesting plant is Southern Dock *Rumex magellanicus* and there are four endemics: Clubmoss Cudweed *Chevreulia lycopodioides*, Lady's Slipper *Calceolaria fobergillii*, Coastal Nassauvia *Nassauvia gaudichaudii*, and Vanilla Daisy *Leucheria suarveolens*.

Conservation issues

There are biannual visits by Falklands Conservation to conduct seabird monitoring. The two-hour overland journey from the nearest settlement at North Arm protects the site from large numbers of visitors. However, the development of roads through East Falkland has made the area more accessible and with an increasing move towards restoring 'outside' houses as holiday homes, there is a risk that there may be increasing numbers of tourists to Bull Point. Particularly in the lower point area, it is extremely easy to cause disturbance, simply due to the volume of birds passing from one side of the point to the other and the open nature of the terrain. It is very important that the Falkland Islands Countryside Code (see Appendix 1) is followed, particularly to guard against the risk of fire. The traditional sheep farming practice of burning rank Whitegrass is still used in the southern half of East Falkland. As strict guidelines are in place to control this and the season is limited by legislation, accidental burning at Bull Point is unlikely.

As with all sites on mainland East Falkland, feral cats and rats are present and undoubtedly affect the bird populations. It may be possible to put some controls in place to reduce these predators but this is not a long-term solution. All visitors should be informed about the dangers of accidentally introducing alien species to the Falklands.

References

Bourne (1988), Broughton and McAdam (2002a), Clausen (2001), Poncet (1996), Thompson (2003).



Dark-faced Ground-tyrant ALAN HENRY