

## 9 MILE BEACH

One of the most recent sightings includes the body of a Little Penguin<sup>2</sup> *Eudyptula minor* washed up on the shore (7mar24) amongst seaweed. Their distribution map shows this species is sighted right around the southern coastline of Australia from Perth to Coffs Harbour. It breeds in the Hunter Region, on the islands off Port Stephens, with the population on Broughton Island being the northern-most breeding population of the species. Their Conservation Status in Australia is *Of Least Concern*. In New Zealand it is also commonly known as fairy penguin, little blue penguin, or blue penguin. Its Maori name is *korora* (meaning 'where the waves make a loud noise').



Little Penguin photographed in Victoria by Alwyn Simple HBOC BIL

Unfortunately this endearing species can fall victim to terrestrial and other predators' attack, as research<sup>3</sup> on their deaths off South Australia's coastline shows. But if you'd like to know something more encouraging, consider this. The NSW Government has introduced a new Seabirds to Seascapes program and has just completed a Great Big Little Penguin Count<sup>4</sup>. Annual data analyses will help show how this and other seabirds are faring. And if in your recreation or work along the coastline you encounter a Little Penguin in distress, here's what is recommended that you do.

In the Sydney area, if you are concerned about the welfare of a penguin, please [contact WIRES on 1300 094 737](tel:1300094737) or [Sydney Wildlife Rescue on 02 9413 4300](tel:0294134300). Injured or dead little penguins should be taken to Taronga Wildlife Hospital at the end of Whiting Beach Road, Mosman, between 8 am and 3 pm, all year around. Call 02 9978 4785.

If the penguin seems injured, put it in a box with a cover. Keep it cool, quiet and away from pets. Do not offer it any food or water.

If the penguin is dead, report it. Refrigerate (don't freeze) the carcass in a secure plastic bag. This helps with the collection of tissue material to find out the cause of death.

*Footnote:* With this Little Penguin carcass found at Belmont Wetlands, Rangers said they found no evidence of fishing line, hooks or net entanglement, nor broken bones nor of predator attack.

Report prepared by Grahame Feletti, Volunteer, Belmont Wetlands State Park. My thanks to Hunter Bird Observer Club committee members Mick Roderick and Rob Palazzi, and BWSP Ranger Smith for their support. Thanks also to NSW state departments and organisations for providing relevant advice.

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<sup>1</sup> Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor*. <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/birds/little-penguin-eudyptula-minor/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/birds/little-penguin-eudyptula-minor/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Little-Penguin-carcasses-found-on-Granite-Island-and-at-Emu-Bay-Kangaroo-Island-South\\_fig3\\_312946207](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Little-Penguin-carcasses-found-on-Granite-Island-and-at-Emu-Bay-Kangaroo-Island-South_fig3_312946207)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/water/coasts/seabirds-to-seascapes/the-great-big-little-penguin-count>