

BODY DIMENSIONS OF WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus pacificus* FLEDGLINGS AT HERON ISLAND, GREAT BARRIER REEF, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMING TO BREEDING

J. L. CARTER,¹ P. K. DYER² and G. J. E. HILL¹

¹Faculty of Science, Northern Territory University, Darwin, Northern Territory 0909

²Sunshine Coast University College, Sippy Downs, Queensland 4556

Received 16 June, 1995

Body weights and dimensions were recorded for 70 fledglings at Heron Island, on the southern Great Barrier Reef. Results show that the length of the longest primary feather and tarsus were significantly different between habitats, with the Fringe showing highest and Buildings area showing lowest means. This outcome probably resulted from most nestlings measured in the Buildings area being the progeny of early breeders. Variability in the breeding cycle may have confounded the analyses of body weight and of dimensions. When data were grouped according to the timing of laying, early breeders showed significantly lower hatching and breeding success. Both these results are useful for detecting inter-annual differences at this locality or for comparisons with colonies located elsewhere.