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BREEDING OF THE SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER ON MUTTONBIRD ISLAND, NEW SOUTH WALES

The recorded northern breeding limit of the Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* in Australia is Broughton Island (32°37'S, 152°19'E), New South Wales (Hindwood and D'Ombraïn 1960). The species was first recorded on Muttonbird Island (30°18'S, 153°09'E) off Coffs Harbour, New South Wales (Lane 1970) in December 1969 and there have been subsequent occurrences. M. Swanson (1976) stated that 'No positive breeding record has been established but birds have been caught on the surface at night'.

During a visit to Muttonbird Island on the night of 31 October 1988 to band shearwaters, a Short-tailed Shearwater was caught on the surface and banded. A further visit on 2 November 1988 resulted in two of these birds being found in a burrow. However, subsequent checks during that season failed to reveal evidence of breeding.

On the night of 29 October 1990, prior to darkness, some burrows were checked while awaiting the arrival of the shearwaters. Each of the first two adjacent burrows searched contained two Short-tailed Shearwaters. A nearby burrow contained a single bird. About an hour later, well after darkness had fallen, I returned to the area

where these birds had been found. Two Short-tailed Shearwaters were heard calling from a burrow and on checking, both were found to be unbanded. In all, three 'pairs' and a single bird had been located in burrows.

No visits were made to the island during November, as I was absent from Coffs Harbour from 10 November until 6 December. In December, two of the 'pairs' were recaptured; one bird, each on an egg, on 10 December and the other of each pair on 17 December.

However, both of these nests were empty when examined on 5 January 1991, and on two subsequent visits no *P. tenuirostris* chicks were found.

Muttonbird Island is some 270 kilometres north of Broughton Island.

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