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## BIRD ISLAND, NEW SOUTH WALES REVISTED

Bird Island, off Norah Head, on the central coast of New South Wales, was first described in the Seabird Island Series (Seabird Islands No. 1) in *Aust. Bird Bander* Vol. 11(1), pp. 14–15, March 1973. Included in the description were the findings of the last visit by ornithologists to the island, that on 27 December 1971 by S. G. Lane, H. Battam, M. Clayton and J. Heppenstall. The present visit was from 1500 hours on 22 January to 0900 hours on 23 January 1990. Transport was by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW) helicopter.

The major change in the conditions on the island was in the vegetation growth. In the intervening 18 years Coast Wattle *Acacia longifolia* var. *sophorae* had spread considerably and covered probably about half of the vegetated surface. Grasses and other low vegetation had also extended their areas and there were very few bare patches of soil anywhere. Unfortunately, some Prickly Pear *Opuntia stricta* and numerous Bitou Bush plants *Chrysanthemoides monilifera rotundata* were present. The following is a list of other common plant species present: *Monotoca elliptica*, *Sesuvium portulacastrum*, *Carpobrotus glaucescens*, *Tylophora barbata*, *Crepis capillaris*, *Senecio* sp., *Paspalum* sp., *Enchylaena tomentosa* and *Lomandra longifolia*. A dominant tussock grass has yet to be identified.

Shearwater burrows were everywhere and White-faced Storm-Petrel *Pelagodroma marina* burrows were common. While time restrictions prevented a detailed survey, there appeared to be little change in numbers or distribution of the burrows since the 1971 visit. Numerous eggs of *Puffinus* spp. were found on the surface, in the tussock and grassed areas, probably indicating competition for burrows. Some were those of the Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus* but the majority were larger eggs, most likely belonging to the Short-tailed Shearwater *P. tenuirostris* as the only Sooty Shearwater *P. griseus* burrows located on the island were on the highest part under thick scrub growth. Thirty-eight Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and seven Short-tailed Shearwaters were banded. Of those burrows where the

contents could be determined, 12 *P. pacificus* were incubating their eggs and 15 were guarding a small chick. One *P. tenuirostris* was with a chick and three were on an egg. *P. tenuirostris* was previously found on 12 December 1963 when five were banded together with 14 *P. pacificus*. Clearly *P. tenuirostris* is still well established.

Numerous small dragon lizards were seen; one was captured and photographed. It was identified as a Jacky Lizard *Amphibolurus muricatus*. A small skink, similar to a common garden skink, was seen but could not be captured for identification.

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### DATA EXCHANGE

#### Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*

Weights of nestling *P. pacificus* on Muttonbird Island, Coffs Harbour, New South Wales.

Date:	Range:	Mean:	S.D.:	n:
23 March 86	200–550 g	395.2 g	103.0	21
18 April 86	440–580 g	480.0 g	43.2	10
29 April 86	260–550 g	431.8 g	78.3	49

There is considerable variation in the weights of nestlings on any day. Apart from individual size characteristics, the weights of nestlings are affected by the stage of development of each, and by the time elapsed since each received its last meal.

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