

SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus tenuirostris* ON MUTTONBIRD ISLAND, COFFS HARBOUR, NEW SOUTH WALES

While banding Wedge-tailed Shearwaters *P. pacificus*, caught on the surface at night, on Muttonbird Island on 31 October 1988, I captured a Short-tailed Shearwater *P. tenuirostris*, also on the surface. It was banded with band number 162-10663.

On 2 November 1988, again at night, two Short-tailed Shearwaters were captured together in a burrow (banded with Nos. 162-10700 and 162-08179). No further captures of this species were made during that season.

On 29 October 1990, three burrows were each found to contain Short-tailed Shearwaters (banded 162-20012/13, 162-20021/22 and 162-20052/53). A fourth burrow contained another Short-tailed Shearwater (banded 162-20014). These birds were heard calling from the burrows at night.

On 10 December 1990, at about 0930 hours two Short-tailed Shearwaters (162-20012 and 162-20052) were recaptured, each in a separate burrow, each incubating an egg. Again, a week later, at about 0900 hours, two birds (162-20013 and 162-20052) were recaptured, each in a separate burrow brooding an egg.

Subsequent visits during that season failed to reveal any Short-tailed Shearwaters or any eggs.

On 7 October 1992, at night, two more Short-tailed Shearwaters were captured on the surface (banded 162-17201 and 162-17202). These two birds were recaptured together in a burrow at night on 1 February 1993 but no egg was present.

Since that date, I have made 37 visits to the island (to December 1996) but no Short-tailed Shearwaters have been found or heard. It would appear that attempts to colonize Muttonbird Island by this species were unsuccessful.

Muttonbird Island is the most northern island on which Short-tailed Shearwaters have been recorded nesting. Broughton Island and Little Broughton Island (Lane 1979), some 260 kilometres to the south, are the most northern regular breeding islands for the species. Delicate Nobby, near Crescent Head, is the only island between Broughton Island and Muttonbird Island which may be a possible breeding island. I visited Delicate Nobby on 30 November 1969 with H. Battam and B. Jones. We spent 1.5 hours on the island in relays, rotating one of us at a time looking after the boat as no anchorage was available (Lane 1976). There were an estimated 500 burrows of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. Most burrows examined contained an adult and an egg. A few burrows contained Little Penguins *Eudyptula minor*. The island could be a suitable island for Short-tailed Shearwaters and a few pairs may possibly breed there. Delicate Nobby is about 100 km south of Muttonbird Island.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bands used were provided by the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes. Thanks also is due to those who have assisted me on Muttonbird Island.

REFERENCES

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