



Peter Longe and Keith Morris inspect a mutton bird nesting site on Serrurier Island.

BIRDS MONITORED

By KEITH MORRIS

SEVERAL Island Nature Reserves off the NW coast near Onslow are important breeding sites for the Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*).

A portion of one of these islands, Airlie Island, has recently been used for the construction of an oil base by Westminco.

Oil from an offshore oilfield 60km to the north is pumped to the island and stored in large (250,000 b7 rel) tanks, prior to shipping to refineries.

Construction of the oil base destroyed about 200 of the 2000 shearwater burrows on the island, however it was undertaken at a time when the burrows were not occupied by birds.

To determine the response of the shearwater population on Airlie Island to this disturbance, an intensive monitoring programme was undertaken by consultants Peter and Vicki Longe of Astron Engineering.

This work, which was performed in close liaison with CALM officers from Karratha involved assessing the numbers of burrows prior to the after the construction phase, and the banding of birds from the disturbed area.

In addition control quadrats were established on the relatively undisturbed Serrurier Island.