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## News, Notes, Comments

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## Longevity Record for Ashy Storm-Petrel

Southeast Farallon Island in central California is home to the largest breeding colony of Ashy Storm-Petrels. Storm-petrels have been mist-netted on the island, at night using playback calls, as part of long term demographic research by PRBO Conservation Science. On 12 Jun 2002 we recaptured an Ashy Storm Petrel with an unfamiliar band style and prefix (#1111-11673). The bird was originally banded 29 years earlier on 29 May 1973 by David Ainley at the same location. As the bird was initially captured with a fully developed brood patch, it was likely a minimum of three years old in 1973, based on age of first breeding data from the Leach's Storm-Petrel. Therefore, we conservatively estimate that this bird was  $\geq 32$  years in 2002, a longevity record for the species. The current published longevity record for a North American storm-petrel is Leach's Storm-Petrel, at  $\geq 36$  years.

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## Bird Recaptures after Scrub Restoration

Recent years, 2001-2002, have seen dramatic changes for much of the scrub in Wekiwa Springs State Park, located a few miles north of Orlando, FL. Park staff capitalized on the presence of logging crews for southern pine beetle control to remove large mature sand pine trees (*Pinus clausa*) for the restoration of a scrub habitat in the Sand Lake area. Fire had been restricted in this area, as a prescribed burn could not be conducted safely within mature sand pines. Once the pines were removed, a prescribed fire was conducted in the spring of 2002. In less than two years, the area went from a habitat with sand pines as high as 15 m to an area where most vegetation scarcely reached 2 m. Comments made by some when first seeing the area after the logging and burning described it as "resembling a war zone," a blackened, smoking sight of devastation. The removal of the dense

sand pine canopy provided light and space for the regeneration of smaller scrub plant species. Currently, the scrub is in good condition with much growth of pine and oak. The recent restoration activities have made future management easier and the scrub is expected to improve in quality.

Banding was conducted in this area during fall migration 1994-2000. Summer banding was started in 1995. There was no banding from Dec 2000 to Aug 2002 because of habitat restoration, however, banding resumed Sep 2002.

We recaptured several resident birds that we initially banded before restoration. We found that White-eyed Vireo, Eastern Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Northern Cardinal, and Eastern Towhee stayed in and/or returned to the banding area despite the heavy logging and drastic change of the landscape (Table 1). One Eastern Towhee was banded on 26 Sep 1996 and subsequently recaptured six additional times prior to the restoration. This same bird was recaptured subsequently 13 Jul 2003, indicating a life span greater than seven years! A non-resident Ovenbird banded 6 Sep 1997 also returned to the area. It was also captured seven times prior to restoration, the last time 29 Oct 2000. It was caught again on 10 Oct 2002. The shortest distance between captures of the same bird was an Eastern Towhee at 34 m, while the longest was an Ovenbird at 183 m.

These birds have shown an ability to cope with an altered landscape that is markedly different from the habitat in which they were first captured. If sufficient vegetation remains to provide food and shelter, these species can persist despite extensive man-made disturbance. For some species, such as the Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren and Eastern Towhee that are commonly found in brushy habitats, removal of the dense canopy may enhance the quality of the habitat and expand the area for future foraging and nesting. Resident species in Wekiwa Springs State Park may not need a canopy and habitat alterations may not influence them negatively.

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(Table follows on next page.)