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## News, Notes, Comments

Richard Poole

Christine Brown

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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.

**Russell Bradley and Pete Warzybok**  
PRBO Conservation Science  
4990 Shoreline Highway  
Stinson Beach CA 94970  
rbradley@prbo.org

## 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.

**Richard Poole and Christine Brown**  
150 Essex Drive  
Longwood, FL 32779

(Table follows on next page.)

**Table 1. Bird Survival After Reforestation**

SPECIES	BAND NO.	BANDED	LAST RECAPTURE	DISTANCE (m)* BETWEEN CAPTURES
CARW	154199262	15 JUL 1999	20 APR 2003	85
CARW	157143363	7 SEP 1997	23 MAR 2003	46
EATO	86145259	26 SEP 1996	13 JUL 2003	34
EATO	163157588	14 JUN 2000	22 JUN 2003	146
ETTI	154199237	18 OCT 1998	22 JUN 2003	113
NOCA	163157306	8 JUL 1998	15 OCT 2002	183
OVEN	156104240	30 AUG 2000	24 OCT 2002	43
OVEN	312144024	6 SEP 1997	10 OCT 2002	143
OVEN	156104248	3 SEP 2000	18 SEP 2003	183
WEVI	216089514	22 JUN 2000	8 OCT 2002	70
WEVI	216089528	2 SEP 2000	15 SEP 2002	168

\* Center to center of net.

## **Anecdotes**

Anecdotes make interesting stories to tell and are not always a unique, one-of-a-kind observation. When published, these observations about bird biology and behavior enter the scientific literature and become available as a resource for others. Here are three sets of anecdotal observations, two from my own banding experiences, presented in hopes of inspiring readers to share their experiences with bird biology.

**Peter Lowther**, *IBBA Editor*

In the fall of 1980 at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, I banded 15 LeConte's Sparrows. These sparrows were actually rather easy to catch—we would slowly herd birds towards nets set low (about half height) in drainage depressions of grassy field of the university's West Campus. Between 1955 and 2002, on average only about 32 LeConte's Sparrows have been banded each year (see Bird Banding Laboratory's Web page), and it was rather ego boosting to learn that I had caught more than half of all LeConte's Sparrows caught in 1980. I have caught individuals in other years, but only singly and only a few times. Does this 1980 banding anomaly really mean anything? For all that is known about LeConte's Sparrows, this week in October provided a rather good sample size for measurements, and the captures indicated that

this species must migrate (in fall) in small, loose flocks. Also, since two individuals were recaptured—one two days later and another five days later—these migrants remained a few days at this stop-over site. Eight of these birds were identified as skull not completely ossified, three as skull completely ossified, only one was noted in molt, and the banding site provides information on habitat preference. All of these indications give hints about LeConte's Sparrow biology, and I was able to use these hints in preparing the *BNA* account for this little-studied species.

**Peter Lowther**

### **Letter from Katherine Kelly to Thomas Bartlett, 8 Feb 2003:**

I believe I am a life member although I can't find a card to prove it. I am no longer banding birds as I am 93 years old, although I am volunteering as a "local historian" at the Baldwin City Public Library every afternoon.

I'm not up to writing a bird article for *NABB*, but I did have a funny visitation from a Tufted Titmouse this spring as I was reading the newspaper on a front porch swing. As I rocked back and forth holding the newspaper, my elbow on the arm of the swing, a