

2008

## Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) Longevity Record

Daniel M. Small

Jared Parks

James Gruber

Douglas E. Gill

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb>

---

### Recommended Citation

Small, Daniel M.; Parks, Jared; Gruber, James; and Gill, Douglas E. (2008) "Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) Longevity Record," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 33 : Iss. 4 , Article 6. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol33/iss4/6>

This News Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in North American Bird Bander by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usf.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usf.edu).

few holes for ventilation in the closed end of the tube. Holes were punched outward, so there were no rough protrusions left inside to harm the bird.

To determine the correct tube size, I made sure the bird slid easily into the tube but closely enough so that the bird could not reach down the inside of the tube to bite or to escape. Once I found the correct size for a given bird species, I wrote the bird names on the tube for future reference. In hot weather, this method must be used with caution, due to the possibility of the bird overheating.

Special thanks to W. Sakai for editing and suggestions.

**Susan Craig**  
1530 Robidoux Circle  
Colorado Springs, CO 80915  
scraig10@juno.com

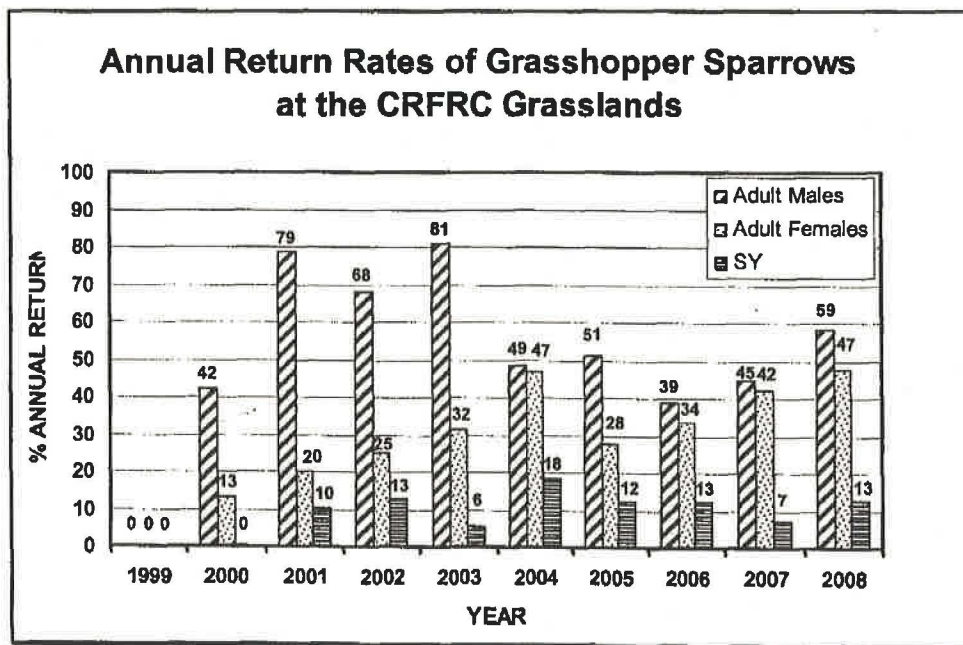
## Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus* *savannarum*) Longevity Record

At the Chester River Field Research Center (39.23°N, 79.00°W) we have been studying grassland obligate birds and their response to native grassland restoration since 1999. CRFRC is located on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake

Bay, approximately three miles east of Chestertown in Queen Anne's County, MD. In 1998, 92.4 ha of row crops were taken out of production, enrolled in the USDA's Conservation Practice 2 (CP2) program and converted into 12 contiguous experimental fields of restored native grasslands (Gill et al. 2006).

During ten years of research, CRFRC has banded 2,763 Grasshopper Sparrows (GRSP) with an average of 276 birds each year. The fewest number of birds banded was in 1999, the first year of the study, with only 94 individuals, and a high of 534 GRSPs in 2004. Annual return rates (see Fig.1) have been high during ten years of banding. Since the 2000 breeding season, an average of 57% of the previously banded males, 32% of females, and 11% of the hatch years have returned.

In 2008, three of the oldest known GRSPs returned to the grasslands. One bird was banded as a local in 2000 and two others were banded as after-hatching-year (AHY) adults in 2001. We have to assume a hatch date of 1 Jun 2000 (Kennard 1975) for the two birds banded in 2001 as AHYs, but we were able to determine the exact hatch date of the 2000 bird through our nest monitoring program. Based on hatch dates and dates of last observations, these birds differ by only six days in age. All three of these birds extend the previous



**Fig. 1.** Return rates of Grasshopper Sparrows in the CRFRC grasslands. SY refers to birds that were banded the year before as free-flying HYs or as Locals from a nest, returning to the grasslands in their second year of life.

longevity record, but GRSP 1691-19793 was observed at a later date, making it the oldest of the three birds by only two days.

Grasshopper Sparrow (1691-19793, color combination YF:YX) was originally banded as an AHY male on 9 Jul 2001. The last observation date was 2 Jul 2008, making it at least 8 yr 1 mo old, assuming a hatch date of 1 Jun (Kennard 1975). This new longevity record surpasses the old record by one year (Klimkiewicz 2008), which was also held by a Grasshopper Sparrow in these same CRFRC grasslands. Since its initial capture in 2001, GRSP 1691-19793 has returned to breed every summer and has been observed 69 times over eight years, with an average of nine sightings each summer, not including the recaptures.

**Table 1. Recapture History of Grasshopper Sparrow # 1691-19793**

2002	11 Jun, 1 Jul
2003	6 Jun
2004	14 May
2005	23 May, 21 Jul
2006	4 Jul
2007	13 Jul
2008	30 Apr

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank all the seasonal personnel who have worked in the CRFRC grasslands over the years, especially Brian J. Byrnes who originally banded this GRSP. In addition, we thank the staff of Chino and Bluestem Farms, Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory, and especially Henry Sears for his ongoing support and enthusiasm.

## LITERATURE CITED

Gill, E.D., P. Blank, J. Parks, J.B. Guerard, B. Lohr, E. Schwartzman, J.G. Gruber, G. Dodge, C.A. Rewa, and H.F. Sears. 2006. Plants and breeding bird response on a managed conservation reserve program grassland in Maryland. *Wildl. Soc. Bull.* 34:944-956.

Kennard, J.H. 1975. Longevity records of North American birds. *Bird-Banding* 46:56-73.

Klimkiewicz, M.K. 2008. Longevity records of North American birds. Version 2008.1 Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD.

**Daniel Small \*, Jared Parks, James Gruber, Douglas E. Gill**

\*Daniel\_M\_Small@yahoo.com  
Chester River Field Research Center  
P.O. Box 421  
Chestertown, MD 21620

## Recent Literature

### BANDING HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHIES

**2002 Conservation Award [:] Barb & Jim Beck.** Anonymous. 2002. *Edmonton Nat.* 30(1):7. Edmonton Nat. Hist. Club, Box 1582, Edmonton, AB T5J 2N9 (Brief biography of two prominent naturalists who participate in banding at Beaverhill Bird Observatory, and with Edgar T. Jones.) MKM

**Lorne Scott named a member of the Order of Canada.** Anonymous. 2008. *Nature Views* 155:3. No address indicated (Brief biography to date of Saskatchewan farmer/naturalist/politician, who has banded over 28,000 birds, notably 11,000 Tree Swallows and 8000 Mountain Bluebirds.) MKM  
Oct. - Dec. 2008

**A lifetime of birding.** E.T. Jones. 2002. *Edmonton Nat.* 30(1):18-22. Edmonton Nat. Hist. Club, Box 1582, Edmonton, AB T5J 2N9 (Autobiographical reminiscences, with emphasis on banding activities of bander of 104,486 birds of 310 species in 1940 and from 1955 to 2001, with lists of 2202 diurnal raptors of 12 species, 583 owls of 13 species, accumulative total by year of birds banded and year of first banding by jurisdiction [mostly AB, but also BC, PQ, and TX] of each species banded. The text includes notes on some extralimital records, some recoveries, some population trends and banding activities of former sub-permittee Erhard Pletz.) MKM