Grasshopper Sparrow (Ammodramus savannarum)

Longevity Record

At the Chester River Field Research Center (39.23N, 79.00W) 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 only differ by six days in age. All three of these birds extend the previous

![Annual Return Rates of Grasshopper Sparrows at the CRFRC Grasslands](image)

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.

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Recent Literature

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>11 Jun, 1 Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>6 Jun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>14 May</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>23 May, 21 Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4 Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>13 Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>30 Apr</td>
</tr>
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**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**


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**BANDING HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHIES**


**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/natura-list/politician, who has banded over 28,000 birds, notably 11,000 Tree Swallows and 8000 Mountain Bluebirds.) MKM