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Photo: Frantz Delcroix

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Cover Page: Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) on 30 May 2015 at Petit Marais de Port-Louis, Guadeloupe. Photograph by Frantz Delcroix.

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Abstract

We report a new longevity record for the Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*). A female presumed hatched during, or before, the 2009 breeding season was banded on 12 October 2010 at Pointe des Châteaux, Guadeloupe, French West Indies, and was last observed on 5 April 2023 at the same location it was banded. This observation establishes a new longevity record of at least 13 years and 7 months, which exceeds the previously known record of 10 years. Two other individuals, aged at least 11 years and close to 11 years, were also last observed in 2022. These three individuals still bred in Guadeloupe in 2022 and possibly two of them in 2023, and longevity is likely to exceed this current record as observations continue on the island.

Keywords

banding, Charadriidae, Guadeloupe, longevity, plover

Resumen

Récords de longevidad de *Charadrius wilsonia* en Guadalupe (Antillas francesas)

• Reportamos un nuevo récord de longevidad para *Charadrius wilsonia*. Una hembra, presuntamente nacida durante o antes de la temporada de reproducción de 2009, y anillada el 12 de octubre de 2010 en Pointe des Châteaux, Guadalupe, Antillas francesas, fue observada por última vez el 5 de abril de 2023 en el mismo lugar. Esta observación establece un nuevo récord de longevidad de al menos 13 años y 7 meses, que supera el registro previamente reconocido de 10 años. Otros dos individuos, de al menos 11 años y cerca de 11 años, también fueron observados por última vez en 2022. Los tres individuos todavía se reproducían en Guadalupe en 2022, y posiblemente dos de ellos continúan haciéndolo en 2023. Es probable que la longevidad exceda este récord actual a medida que continúen las observaciones en la isla.

Palabras clave

anillado, Charadriidae, *Charadrius*, Guadalupe, longevidad

Résumé

Records de longévité pour le Gravelot de Wilson (*Charadrius wilsonia*) en Guadeloupe (Antilles françaises)

• Nous présentons un nouveau record de longévité pour le Gravelot de Wilson (*Charadrius wilsonia*). Une femelle née pendant ou avant la saison de reproduction de 2009 et baguée le 12 octobre 2010 à la Pointe des Châteaux, en Guadeloupe, a été vue pour la dernière fois le 05 avril 2023, au même endroit. Cette observation établit un nouveau record de longévité d'au moins 13 ans et 7 mois, ce qui dépasse l'actuel record connu de 10 ans. Deux autres individus, âgés de plus de 11 ans et de presque 11 ans ont également été observés en 2022. Ces trois individus se sont reproduits en 2022 en Guadeloupe, et possiblement en 2023 pour deux d'entre eux. Ces records sont susceptibles d'évoluer car les observations continuent sur l'archipel.

Mots clés

baguage, Charadriidae, Guadeloupe, gravelot, longévité

Banding accompanied by long-term monitoring provides information on the dynamics of bird populations and their demography. Tracking of individual birds also provides information on the life expectancy of a species. The Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) is a shorebird (Charadriidae) only found in the Americas. Little is known about its demographic parameters due to limited long-term monitoring.

The Wilson's Plover breeds annually in Guadeloupe, and was first recorded in 1998 (Levesque *et al.*, 2005), after which a growth in the local population was recorded from 5 pairs in 1998 to at least 21 pairs in 2022. Individuals found in Guadeloupe are year-round residents with banded individuals seen throughout the year. Despite the increasing population, this species is considered locally threatened and Endangered as per the IUCN Red List (IUCN Comité français *et al.*, 2021). This is due to its small population size and the numerous threats affecting breeding success, especially predation by feral dogs and cats, as well as human disturbance, including eggs being crushed by walking.

A banding program was developed with the first captures taking place in 2005. Since then, 71 individuals have been banded, with the latest birds banded in June 2023. During the 2022 breeding season, 13 of the 40 monitored individuals were wearing a metal band. Chicks were banded if possible, with a total of 14 individuals banded during the last two breeding seasons.

Observations

On 12 November 2010, we banded a Wilson's Plover at Pointe des Châteaux, on the main island of the Guadeloupe archipelago in the French West Indies (Fig. 1). The bird currently wears a metal ring (unique band code: M38594) and a yellow flag "FI" (previously yellow flag over a green flag "FN"), allowing its identification with binoculars (Fig. 2). The bird was considered to be an adult at the time of banding. Reproductive data for this species in Guadeloupe suggest that the latest hatchings take place in August. In this paper, we consider all individuals to have hatched in August in order to avoid overestimating age. This specific in-



Fig. 2. The banded Wilson's Plover M38594 "FN" then "FI" in June 2018. Photo by Jérémy Delolme.

dividual was seen more than 30 times since it was banded, with the latest sighting recorded on 5 April 2023 at Pointe des Châteaux. It has further been observed at the Petite Terre Islands (Fig. 1). This Wilson's Plover has a minimum age of 13 years and 7 months, which exceeds the previously reported record of 10 years (United States Geological Survey, 2023). The individual bred successfully in 2022, ultimately fledging two offspring, and was sighted again in 2023 at its usual nesting site.

In addition, two other individuals, banded on 11 November 2011 at Pointe des Châteaux, also exceed the current longevity record. One of the two was marked and identified as M60001 (yellow flag "AS") in November 2011, and was considered an adult at the time. It thus hatched during the 2010 breeding season or earlier and was subsequently reported at least 13 times since then; the last time on 17 February 2022 at Pointe des Châteaux, which brings its age to 11 years and 5 months minimum.

The third one, identified as M60003 (lost yellow flag "AZ"), was thought to have hatched during the 2011 breeding season. It was observed at least 16 times since then, the last time on 27 July 2022 at Pointe des Châteaux. Its age was at a minimum of 10 years and 10 months and was suspected to be breeding in both 2022 and 2023, however, this could not be verified due to its missing flag, complicating identification.

Discussion

This longevity record for the Wilson's Plover demonstrates the importance of long-term banding programs and monitoring efforts for resident species. The three age records observed in Guadeloupe add to longevity data on this species, as current information is sparse. These new records bring information on the species closer to the average maximum longevity among plovers of the genus *Charadrius* (12–17 years; Colwell and Haig 2019). However, in some species longevity approaches or exceeds 20 years, such as the Kentish Plover (*C. alexandrinus*) at 19 years (Fransson *et al.* 2017), the Common Ringed Plover (*C. hiaticula*) at 20 years and 10 months (Fransson *et al.* 2017), and the Red-breasted Dotterel (*C. obscurus*) which may hold the longevity

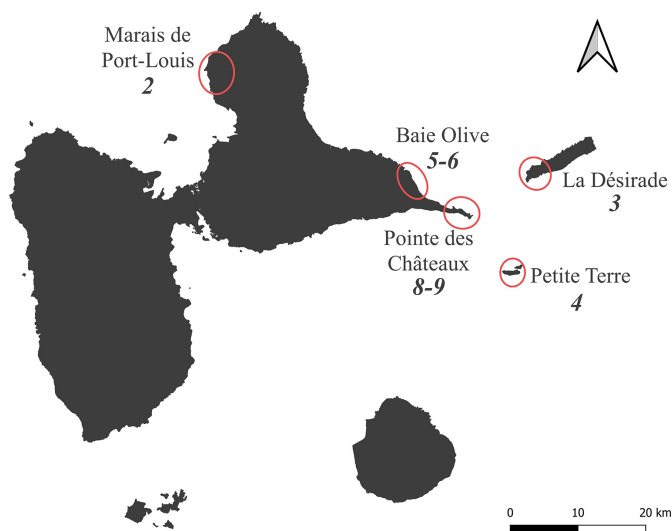


Fig. 1. Map of the Wilson's Plover's known breeding sites in Guadeloupe. Numbers in italics indicate the number of pairs reported during the 2022 season. Map source: BD TOPO 2022 - IGN.

record for Charadriiformes at 41 years and 1 month (Goodwin 1991, McKenzie 1978).

Among closely related species in a clade consisting of 5 Neartic and Neotropical species (dos Remedios et al., 2015), this new record for the Wilson's Plover is similar to that of the Mountain Plover (*C. montanus*) at 12 years and 1 month (Colwell and Haig 2019). The other three species in this clade (Collared Plover *C. collaris*, Puna Plover *C. alticola*, and Two-banded Plover *C. falklandicus*) do not, to our knowledge, have documented longevity estimates.

The Wilson's Plover population in Guadeloupe will continue to be monitored, and it is expected that this long-term study will yield new data on longevity, population dynamics, and habitat use in the archipelago of Guadeloupe.

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