

OLDEST KNOWN SHOREBIRD IN NORTH AMERICA
By LeRoy Wilcox



Little did I know when I placed band 42-152942 on the left leg of a young Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) on July 7, 1947 at Shinnecock Bay, Long Island, N. Y., that it would live to be the oldest known shorebird in North America. It was one of four young hatched from four eggs that were weighed and measured on June 9.

It was next caught on its nest on May 20, 1950 and proved to be a male. The nest was 1755 feet east of the spot where it was hatched. It was mated to a banded female, 48-105292, who nested in 1949 364 feet from its 1950 nest.

On May 5, 1951 it was caught again with the same female as a mate. The nest was 18 feet west of the 1950 nest. Four young were hatched from this nest and were banded.

On May 17, 1952 it was caught again nesting 26 feet west of its 1951 nest. It was mated to an unbanded female. Two young were hatched and banded.

On June 9, 1954 it was caught on its nest 7 feet west of the 1952 nest. It was again mated to an unbanded female; one young hatched in this nest and was banded.

On May 30, 1957 it was caught on its nest 2044 feet west of its 1954 nest. It was mated to an unbanded female which was given band 52-107891. Four young hatched in this nest and were banded; one of them returned to nest on June 21, 1958, 8360 feet west of where it was hatched. It was a male and its mate was also a one year old bird.

On June 2, 1960 it (the original bird) was caught on its nest 3376 feet east of its 1957 nest. It was mated to a banded female which had been caught on its nest on May 26, 1955 and June 7, 1956. Two young from this pair were banded.

On June 5, 1961, this bird was caught on its nest 711 feet east of its 1960 nest and 3747 feet east of where it was hatched in 1947. It was now 14 years old. It was mated to an unbanded female; four young were hatched in this nest and banded.

It is of interest to note that this longevity record would not have been obtained had I not placed three bands on this bird. The second band was put on its right leg in May, 1951, and the third band was put on its left leg in May, 1957. Some bands wear off in five or six years because of excessive wear due to sand.

In 25 years work with these plovers (see Auk, Vol. 76, April 1959) I have banded 1,153 young, 888 adults, have 562 returns and have trapped 1,447 adults on their nests. Sixteen of these plovers range from 9 to 14 years of age and are the oldest known shorebirds - known probably only because they have been rebanded two or three times. The nearest to them is an eight year old Woodcock. I look forward with great anticipation that this 14 year old plover will return in 1962 to nest again in its old territory.

Speonk, L. I., N. Y.

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