

GENERAL NOTES

Bermuda Recovery of a Common Barn-Owl Banded in New Jersey.—On 11 July 1981 I banded a 7-week-old nestling Common Barn-Owl (*Tyto alba*), 816-45010, in South Branch, Somerset Co., New Jersey. This bird was found dead on 30 March 1983 on McGall's Hill, Smith's Parish, Bermuda. Although cause of death is unknown, it was in well-fed condition when it died, having a weight of 505 g. This is the first record of a Common Barn-Owl banded in the United States being recovered on Bermuda. The straight-line distance from the banding location to the recovery site on Bermuda is approximately 1250 km, almost all of which is over water.

Common Barn-Owls are known to have wide dispersal tendencies and are capable of traveling great distances. Banding records show many flights of over 800 km, and some of over 1600 km (Stewart 1952). Other Common Barn-Owls banded in New Jersey have been recovered in Florida and Alabama (Soucy 1980).

Whether or not Common Barn-Owls often make long over water flights is still a matter of conjecture. Bolen (1978) reported a Common Barn-Owl banded near Sinton, Texas and recovered 983 km away near Veracruz, Mexico. Bolen assumed this bird did not travel a direct line between those locations because most of the straight line distance is over water. Mueller and Berger (1979) however, reported another banded in Wisconsin and captured on a ship 360 km east of Savannah, Georgia; this was an adult bird, and thus presumably not on its first migration. Bent (1938) reported an account of a Common Barn-Owl coming aboard a vessel approximately 24 km off the coast of North Carolina.

A resident population of Common Barn-Owls on Bermuda (David Wingate, pers. comm.) is of recent origin, having first been recorded by William Beebe who found a nest on Nonsuch Island, Castle Harbour in 1931. Since then Common Barn-Owls have been reported commonly from Bermuda and are known to breed in sink-hole caves and coastal cliff holes.

Wingate further noted that pre-colonial Bermuda had no native mammals, so that the island was unfavorable for Common Barn-Owl colonization until after the introduction of *Rattus rattus* in 1614. There are no records of deliberate introduction of the owls to Bermuda, so it may have been the early 1900's before chance arrivals from the continent—via ship or direct flight—resulted in a pair of birds to start a colony.

The Common Barn-Owl's breeding range includes islands throughout the world. They seem fully capable of flying vast distances over water. The owl recovered on Bermuda could have flown there on its own without the aid of shipboard travel, but the latter possibility cannot be discounted.

I thank David B. Wingate of the Bermuda Aquarium, Natural History Museum and Zoo for supplying recovery data and the historic background information about the Common Barn-Owl on Bermuda.

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