NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION™

EXTRA-ordinary wildlife

Super Sprinter!

Learn all about wildlife RECORD BREAKERS

Oldest Living!

Power Lifter!

Longest Migration!

National Wildlife Week

March 19-25, 2012

www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek

North American Pronghorn ©Nate A. / Shutterstock.com; Bristleconepine ©Dean Pennala / Shutterstock.com; Rhinoceros Beetle ©Allen Bredgman, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources; Arctic Tern ©Arto Hakola / Shutterstock.com.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK
March 19-25, 2012

EXTRA-ORDINARY WILDLIFE · NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK 2012 · March 19-25 · Keeping the Wild Alive · NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION™

RECORD BREAKERS

©Mark Bridger / Shutterstock.com

PEREGRINE FALCON
Record Breaking Wildlife

Scientific Name: *Falco peregrinus*

Description: There are many different subspecies of peregrine falcon that vary in appearance based on where they are found. In North America, peregrine falcons are about the same size as crows. Newborn peregrine falcons learn to fly four to six weeks after they hatch, and are considered independent soon after. Peregrine falcons hold the record for fastest animal on Earth. When in a dive (called a stoop), their streamlined body can plummet at over 170 mph. That's more than twice as fast as a cheetah!

U.S. Habitat and Range: Peregrines are found in the west year round and on the east coast in winter. Cliffs are their natural nesting place, but recently some individuals have taken up nesting on skyscrapers.

Fun Fact: The name "peregrine" means "wanderer."

Conservation Status: Decline in the use of certain pesticides has helped take several subspecies off the endangered species list.

National Wildlife Week • March 19-25, 2012

National Wildlife Federation • www.nwf.org

© Merlin D. Tuttle, Bat Conservation International, www.batcon.org

MEXICAN FREE-TAILED BAT
Record Breaking Wildlife

Scientific Name:
Tadarida brasiliensis

Description: The term "free-tailed" refers to the fact that their tail protrudes from the membrane between their legs called the "uropatagium." This species is well known for its largest colony in Bracken Cave in Texas. Millions of bats congregate in this cave each summer and are an amazing sight when they fly out together at dusk to hunt for insects. Although they live in such large numbers, mothers can identify their pups by calls and odor.

U.S. Habitat and Range: Found in the southern half of the continental U.S. Large roosts such as caves and bridges are preferred, but some will utilize hollow trees.

Fun Fact: In addition to representing the largest colony of bats in the world, Mexican free-tailed bats break the record of highest mammalian fliers at 3300 meters.

Conservation Status: Stable, but pesticide use and roost disturbance may cause local declines.

National Wildlife Week • March 19-25, 2012

National Wildlife Federation • www.nwf.org

©Fanny Reno / Shutterstock.com

LEATHERBACK TURTLE
Record Breaking Wildlife

Scientific Name:
Dermochelys coriacea

Description: Leatherbacks are the largest of the extant (living) turtle species. They grow to over two meters in length and weigh up to 2000 pounds! Unlike other sea turtles, their bony shell is not visible. Instead, it is covered by a leathery layer of skin. Female leatherbacks always return to the same nesting beach to lay their eggs. Temperature determines the gender of the offspring—if it's warm in the nest, females will be born, but if temperatures are cooler, males develop.

U.S. Habitat and Range: Found along the east and west U.S. coasts and also in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Hawaii. Females come ashore to lay eggs.

Fun Fact: The Pacific leatherback is the fastest aquatic reptile and can reach speeds of 22 miles per hour.

Conservation Status: Federally listed as Endangered. Their biggest threats all stem from mankind—poaching, habitat encroachment, and fishing gear entanglement. Sea turtle eggs and hatchlings are eaten by mammals, seabirds, crabs, and ants.

National Wildlife Week • March 19-25, 2012

National Wildlife Federation • www.nwf.org

©Barbara LaCorte

BLUE WHALE
Record Breaking Wildlife

Scientific Name: *Balaenoptera musculus*

Description: Blue whales get their name from their gray to blue coloration. Females are bigger than males, and the lengthiest blue whales are 110 feet. This makes them the largest animals to ever live! Despite their huge size, blue whales feed on relatively small prey, primarily tiny shrimp-like animals called krill. Like some other whales, blue whales possess baleen—stiff plates made of hair-like structures—in place of teeth. When they feed, they can expel seawater out of their mouths through the baleen, and the krill stay trapped inside.

U.S. Habitat and Range: Both U.S. coasts. Some populations stay in the same place year round, but most migrate to the poles in the summer to feed and move back toward the equator in the fall.

Fun Fact: In addition to being the biggest, blue whales are also one of the loudest animals on Earth! Their songs can reach nearly 200 dB (louder than a jet engine!), and travel for hundreds of miles across the ocean.

Conservation Status: Federally listed as Endangered.

National Wildlife Week • March 19-25, 2012

National Wildlife Federation • www.nwf.org

©Allen Bredgman, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

RHINOCEROS BEETLE
Record Breaking Wildlife

Scientific Name: Subfamily Dynastinae

Description: Rhinoceros beetles are herbivorous insects named for the horn-like projections on and around the heads of males. Most are black, gray, or greenish in color, and may be covered in soft hairs. Another name given to some of these insects is Hercules beetle, because they possess strength of a herculean proportion. Adults of some species can lift objects 850 times their weight. That would be equivalent to a human lifting 9 fully grown male elephants! Having horns and extreme strength allows the beetles to dig themselves into leaf litter and soil to escape danger.

U.S. Habitat and Range: Rhinoceros beetles are found in the southern U.S. from Arizona northeast to Nebraska and eastward. They feed on plant matter and may burrow into tree stumps or woodpiles.

Fun Fact: The horns of the male rhinoceros beetle are also used to drive other males away from a female beetle during mating rituals.

Conservation Status: Varies among species.

National Wildlife Week • March 19-25, 2012

National Wildlife Federation • www.nwf.org

©Dean Pennala / Shutterstock.com

GREAT BASIN BRISTLECONE PINE
Record Breaking Wildlife

Scientific Name: *Pinus longaeva*

Description: The Great Basin Bristlecone pine is a conifer that can have one or many trunks. At low elevations, the tree grows straight, but at high elevations, the trunks become twisted. The bristlecone pine is the longest lived species in the world—a few are known to have lived for over 5,000 years! Growth is extremely slow. A 40 year old bristlecone pine may not reach 6 inches.

U.S. Habitat and Range: Found in California, Nevada, and Utah across a range of altitudes, usually in rocky soil. At higher elevations, it can be found in pure stands.

Fun Fact: This species is highly drought tolerant. One tree was found with 35 year old pine needles that were still functional and photosynthesizing, despite periods of drought. Compare that to how quickly a house plant dies if you forget to water it for a week!

Conservation Status: Because of its small distribution, this species is considered to be vulnerable. It is susceptible to disease and severe fires.

National Wildlife Week • March 19-25, 2012

National Wildlife Federation • www.nwf.org

EXTRA-ORDINARY WILDLIFE

©Arto Hakola / Shutterstock.com

ARCTIC TERN
Record Breaking Wildlife

Scientific Name: *Sterna paradisaea*

Description: The Arctic tern is a small bird, grey in color, with a black patch on the head and red beak and legs. Arctic terns have the longest yearly migration of any animal in terms of distance between the start and end points. They travel from their Arctic breeding grounds to Antarctica and back—a distance of 25,000 miles—every year!

U.S. Habitat and Range: During the summer breeding season, Arctic terns will nest by the shore as far south as New England and Washington State. Their migration route follows the west coast.

Fun Fact: When feeding, Arctic terns may hover in midair before plunging into the water to catch fish or crustaceans. Occasionally the Arctic tern will steal food from other birds by flying at them and startling them into dropping their catch.

Conservation Status: Appears to be stable, but population trends are difficult to observe because of the birds' remote range.

National Wildlife Week • March 19-25, 2012

National Wildlife Federation • www.nwf.org

©Ryan M. Bolton / Shutterstock.com

SOUTHERN CRICKET FROG
Record Breaking Wildlife

Scientific Name: *Acris gryllus*

Description: The southern cricket frog is a tree frog that comes in a variety of colors. Some are black, brown, red, green, or gray, but all have a bright stripe of color running from the tip of the snout and down their backs, broken by a triangle pattern between the eyes. This frog is one of the best jumpers in the amphibian world. It can reach a height of over 60 times its body length when jumping upward—that's like a person jumping up a 38 story building!

U.S. Habitat and Range: Found from Virginia to Florida and east to Louisiana. Although it is a member of the tree frog family, the southern cricket frog is a ground dwelling species that can be found in areas with shallow bodies of freshwater.

Fun Fact: You might think that cricket frogs are named for their cricket-like jumping abilities. Actually, they take their name from the cricket-like call they use to attract mates.

Conservation Status: Stable

National Wildlife Week • March 19-25, 2012

National Wildlife Federation • www.nwf.org

©Nate A. / Shutterstock.com

PRONGHORN
Record Breaking Wildlife

Scientific Name:
Antilocapra americana

Description: Pronghorns are hoofed mammals that are named for the characteristic shape of their horns. Females have very small horns, but the horns of males can reach 12 inches long. The horns point upward and then branch into two prongs—one pointed toward the rear and one toward the front of the animal. After cheetahs, pronghorns are the fastest animals on land, reaching speeds of almost 60 miles per hour!

U.S. Habitat and Range: Pronghorns live in open areas like grasslands which allow them to use their keen vision to spot predators. They are found in the interior parts of the western United States.

Fun Fact: Pronghorns have the longest land migration in the United States. Some herds travel up to 300 miles roundtrip!

Conservation Status: Two subspecies are Federally listed as Endangered. Threats include habitat loss, hunting, and conflict with humans.

National Wildlife Week • March 19-25, 2012

National Wildlife Federation • www.nwf.org