

Cahows



The **Bermuda Petrel** or Cahow, *Pterodroma cahow*, provided a super-abundant food resource that helped save Bermuda's first settlers from starvation, but it was almost wiped out in the process. Presumed extinct for three centuries, it was rediscovered in 1951. Intensive conservation measures have enabled it to recover from 18 breeding pairs to 85 pairs in 2008. Unlike our conspicuous Longtail, this ocean-roaming seabird visits its isolated breeding islets only at night and few have seen it.

Threats to Cahows

- Predation by man, pigs, dogs, cats and rats in early settlement time, with rats continuing as a threat
- Displacement by these predators from its optimum habitat of soil nesting-burrows under the forest throughout Bermuda to less than three acres of small, soil-less off-shore islets
- Lack of soil on the small islets where it is presently confined prevents Cahows from digging their own nesting burrows
- Competition with Longtails for the few natural cliff holes available was resulting in breeding failure for most pairs

Conservation Measures

- Size specific wooden entrances called 'baffles' fitted to all burrows allow access to the Cahows while excluding the larger Longtails
- Man-made concrete burrows are constructed for all new pairs enabling the population to increase on the small islets
- Fifteen acre Nonsuch Island has been restored as a predator free nature reserve and its deep soil and forest cover will eventually enable Cahows to dig their own burrows free from Longtail competition
- Sophisticated translocation and sound attraction techniques are now being successfully used to encourage Cahows to establish a nesting colony on Nonsuch Island



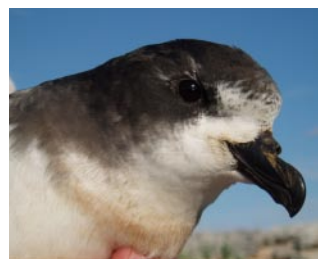
Cahow Egg



Downy Chick



Fledgling



Adult



Artificial burrow



Translocation

