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Kevin McDonough

Northern Michigan University, kmcdonou@nmu.edu

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Internet Resource

Longevity Records: Life Spans of Mammals, Birds, Amphibians, Reptiles, and Fish.
<http://www.demogr.mpg.de/longevityrecords/> (reviewed in CHOICE June 2008).

[Visited Mar'08] This Web site documents the highest age for more than 3,000 species, including 890 mammals, 817 birds, 120 amphibians, 777 reptiles, and 450 fish. The Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research hosts the site, which is authored by James R. Carey and Debra S. Judge (both, Univ. of California, Davis) and was originally published in 2000 as a book. Although the majority of the life span data for each animal class originated from 4-6 key resources per animal class, more than 700 published sources were consulted. Access to life span data is fairly easy from the main page. Options include browsing longevity tables for each of the four animal classes (amphibians and reptiles are lumped together) or by scientific or common name indexes. Hyphenated names appear after nonhyphenated names in the common name index. Thus, "black-capped chickadee" comes after "black tegu." Keyword searching is permitted but is not very accommodating. For example, excluding the hyphen in "white-tailed deer" returns no results. Data tables are well displayed and include life spans recorded for species in the wild or captivity. A convenient hyperlink provides access to the data source for individual species. Somewhat frustratingly, one must peruse the Data Collection Methods section to determine the "x" symbol in the male/female column represents an unspecified sex. Navigation from within the site is simplistic: return to previous page, or home. The home button takes the user to the Max Planck Institute's main page, not to the Longevity Records site. These concerns aside, there is no other place one can get such a comprehensive source of life span data for all animal classes. Even though there have not been any updates since the original publication, it is still a one-of-a-kind resource. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All users/libraries.

--K.P. McDonough, Northern Michigan University

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Full review available online: <http://www.cro3.org/lookup/doi/10.5860/CHOICE.45-5582>