



AWARDS COMMITTEE REPORT

Helen Hays, Chairman

For their excellent work in 2009/2010 I would like to thank and congratulate members of the Society's Awards Committee: John Cairns, Irving Cantor, Wolfgang Demisch, Joseph DiCostanzo, Mary LeCroy, Geoffrey Nulle, Starr Saphir, and Gil Schrank. All worked hard and did a good job. In the following paragraphs I report the awards proposed by the committee to the Council and voted by the membership at the annual meeting March 9, 2010. I have included the definition of the awards given either as it appears in the Society's constitution or as it has been defined by the committee, so that in future, if you think of someone you would like to propose for consideration for an award you will not hesitate to write/email me.

Article 3 of the constitution states "Honorary Members shall not exceed 10 in number, and shall be persons eminent for their attainments in one or more of the natural sciences." Prior to March of 2010 the Society's current membership included two Honorary Members: Dominique Homberger and Ozaki Kiyooki. On March 9, 2010 the following Honorary members were elected by the membership: Orlando Garrido, Cuba, Arturo Kirkconnell, Cuba, Yossi Lesham, Israel, and James Rising, Canada.

Following his studies at Miami University Orlando Garrido returned to Cuba and is a leading ornithologist and curator at the Museo

Nacional de Historia Natural in Havana. He will be the lead author on a forthcoming book on the coral reef fish found of Cuba. He is also an enthusiastic tennis player. He played in the Wimbledon championship matches in 1956 – 1961 and with his brother Rey for ten years in Davis Cup matches. In 1959 he was the finalist against his brother in singles in the Canadian Open. Also in 1959 he and his brother played the final doubles match, losing to Australia. In 2006 Orlando received a plaque in Miami naming him to the hall of fame of Cuban tennis. He looks forward to playing in the World's Senior Tournament in Turkey in September 2011

Through his identification of Cuba's birds, fish, amphibians and insects, Garrido has produced an impressive documentation of its fauna. His prodigious output (274 publications) on the birds of Cuba as well as the West Indies, and his forthcoming book on coral reef fish provide an important foundation for future work in this region's fields of ornithology and ichthyology. His publications document 45 bird species new for Cuba and one for Puerto Rico. Writing for Cornell University Press, Davis Finch called the *Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba*: "The first book entirely devoted to Cuba's birds to appear in eighty years, *Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba* is a serious work in the tradition of Don Ramon de la Sagra, Johannes Gundlach and Thomas

Barbour. With vast amounts of new information, range maps, and admirable illustrations, it is at once a summation of Cuban ornithology and an excellent field guide.” Garrido has described 21 subspecies in the Antilles which occur on the islands of Puerto Rico, Navassa, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. In the process of making revisions of *Birds of the West Indies* he found new endemics in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, Jamaica and St. Kitts.

Garrido is an experienced diver, an asset in his over thirty year study of coral reef fish on a transect on the northern coast of Havana City. Here he has found 146 species, of which 26 were new records for Cuba. The book will include 105 color photos of coral fish the author collected alive and photographed in an aquarium in his house. There will be text material giving the size of the fish and a little about the courtship of some species. Habitat descriptions will include depths at which the fish are found. The book will also include a new record of coral fish for Puerto Rico and a rediscovery of a brackish water fish, originally described by Felipe Poey in 1876. During his field work he has collected data on reptiles and insects, enabling him to describe 91 forms of reptile (44 species) and 31 species of insects. Other researchers have dedicated taxa to Garrido (27 species).

Orlando Garrido’s books include: *Las Palomas de Cuba*; *Los Patos de Cuba*; *Conozca las rapaces*; *Cataloga de las Aves de Cuba (1975)* coauthored with Florentino Garcia Montana and later coauthored with Arturo Kirkconnell (in press); *Birds of Cuba* with Arturo Kirkconnell, a Spanish version in press; *A Guide to the Birds of the West Indies* coauthored with Herbert Raffaele, James Wiley, Allan Keith and Jeanette Raffaele; *Les Oiseaux des Antilles* (with the same coauthors; *Mariposas de Puerto Rico* with Antonio Pérez Asso and Julio Antonio Genaro. Finally, Garrido has done a translation of *Never Cry Wolf* by Farley Mowatt which he expects to be published soon.

Orlando and his wife have two sons and two grandchildren.

Arturo Kirkconnell, also a curator at the Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Havana, majored in the biology at Havana University

with an emphasis in invertebrates. After college he worked as the Empresa Nacional para la Proteccion de la Flora y la Fauna. He found no one in his office was interested in what he knew about invertebrates and he decided to learn about birds, because birds were a popular topic. One day he observed an American Redstart and a Northern Parula near the office and was stunned by their beauty. At 24 he began his studies of birds and at first could identify only three – Turkey Vulture, chicken, and flamingo! For his first two years of apprenticeship in ornithology he had no binoculars, but then acquired a pair of old Russian ones. In retrospect he feels the two years without binoculars were useful because he developed ways of identifying birds based on their behavior. He became increasingly interested in bird behavior and communications. One of his favorite bird calls is that of the Carolina Wren. He considers its call “the nicest natural alarm clock”.

Orlando Garrido took Kirkconnell to the Botanical Garden in 1984 to look at birds. Nine years later, in 1993 they began working on *The Birds of Cuba*.

As part of his research Kirkconnell continues studies of a number of endemic species at Bermejas, an 800 hectare area in Zapata where sixteen endemic species nest. Here he studies the Bee Hummingbird, Fernandina’s Flicker, and the Cuban Tody and leads expeditions to search for “Cuban Kite” (an endangered race of the Hook-billed Kite considered by some to be a separate species), Zapata Rail and Ivory-Billed Woodpecker. He also studies the distribution of other species in these areas and has 65 publications to his credit. In addition he is working in Bermejas with Jim Wiley on the feeding and breeding ecology of the Cuban Pygmy-Owl, Gundlach’s Hawk and Bare-legged Owl. At Bermejas, he also runs an educational program teaching school children about the birds that nest there, explaining the importance of the area for the birds and the importance of its conservation for Cuba.

Kirkconnell’s work in the Zapata Swamp focused conservationists on the status of the Zapata Rail. In the 1970’s the voice of what

was thought to be the Zapata Rail had been recorded and published. Subsequently, for over twenty years, birds responding to tapes of this call provided data on new localities for the species in the Zapata Swamp. In 2001 Kirkconnell discovered that the call originally was, in fact, the Spotted Rail, thus rendering useless all previous records of the Zapata Rail based on calls alone. Subsequently, he found the status of the Zapata Rail was more serious than previously thought. In 2001 the African Catfish invaded the Zapata Swamp after Hurricane Michelle damaged a facility in which the catfish were being raised. In the following years young gallinules have been found in the stomachs of the catfish. Kirkconnell reports that in the 100 trips he has made to the Zapata Swamp in the last twenty years the number of rails has dropped precipitously. The Zapata Rail is now considered critically endangered and is on the IUCN Red List.

Kirkconnell is actively involved with the birding community world wide, having begun leading birding tours in 1988. He has three “grail” species: Zapata Rail, Ivory-billed Woodpecker and “Cuban Kite”.

Yoshi Lesham worked in various capacities for the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) from 1980 to 1991, then became its Executive Director from 1991 to 1995. He is a senior researcher on the faculty of Life Sciences at Tel Aviv University. He is the founder and director of the International Center for the Study of Bird Migration at Latrun, Israel, and his cooperative efforts there with other countries underline the importance of cooperation in conservation efforts concerning species that do not recognize country boundaries. His research on bird collisions with planes in Israel resulted in a 76% decrease in these collisions. In 2005 Lesham won the Mike Kuhring Prize for improving flight safety and linking this safety with Nature Conservation through education. His use of birds of prey instead of chemicals to limit populations of mice, rats and voles which harm crops has been very successful. He is an energetic and innovative investigator, and his work in Israel

provides models for other countries with similar conservation problems.

James D. Rising is professor emeritus, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto at Mississauga. His research interests have included hybrid zones in the Great Plains and geographic variation and evolution. His study species have been New World orioles and sparrows. In addition to intensive studies, particularly of sparrows he has co-authored with David Beadle: *A Guide to the Identification and Natural History of the Sparrows of the United States and Canada*, *Sparrows of the United States and Canada: The Photographic Guide*, and *Tanagers, Cardinals, and Finches of the United States and Canada: The Photographic Guide*.

Rising served on the American Ornithologists' Union's Committee on Classification and Nomenclature – North and Middle America, which produced the Fiftieth Supplement to the AOU's *Check-List of North American Birds*. He also served as Chairman of the AOU Committee on Scientific Awards.

A distinguished member of the AOU and a past-president of the Wilson Society, Rising has mentored a number of students for higher degrees, among them the next Linnaean Society of New York Eisenmann Medalist, Alvaro Jaramillo, who will be presented with the medal on March 8, 2011.

The Society's Eisenmann Medal is awarded to individuals who have achieved recognition in ornithology as evidenced by publications and who have made a special personal effort to encourage and interest amateurs in ornithology. Alvaro Jaramillo, author of numerous papers, the *Birds of Chile* and coauthor with Peter Burke of *New World Blackbirds: the Icterids*, is well qualified to receive the Eisenmann Medal. He is outstanding in his commitment to the amateur, helping and corresponding promptly with all who send or ask him questions and enlisting amateurs to help with surveys and field projects in all areas where he has worked.

Article 5 of the Society's constitution states: “Any member may be elected a Fellow in recognition of distinguished service to the Society.” Richard Lieberman's contributions

to the Society include serving as Recording Secretary 2001-2003, accepting the responsibility of serving on and sometimes chairing the committee to nominate Council members. For the last ten years he has led walks twice a week in Central Park for Society members as well as others who were interested. Richard's walks in Central Park are free, popular and have been a source of new members for the Linnaean Society.

The Natural History Service Award is given to individuals who work with others to interest them in any aspect of natural history. Don Riepe was for many years Senior Naturalist and Chief of Resource Management at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. In 2004, after his retirement from the National Park Service, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation appointed him Jamaica Bay Guardian. Unofficially, he was, on and off the job, the heart and soul of the place. A tireless, hands-on environmental activist, he has given devoted service to organizations that celebrate nature and work to preserve it. He has been the Director of the Northeast Chapter of the American Littoral Society since he founded the chapter twenty-five years ago; he is a long time member of the Board of New York City Audubon and is at present its Corresponding Secretary. He served on the board of the Sierra Club of New York and was Secretary-Treasurer of the New York City Butterfly Club.

With the panache and flair manifested in his flamenco dancing Don Riepe delivers his knowledge and enthusiasm for nature to countless numbers who follow him into the field, both in the New York area and to hot spots around the world, sparking their interest and enlisting them for global conservation of the natural world. It is likely that no one in the tri-state area has introduced more people to knowledge of and love for the natural world and concern for its preservation than Don.

Peregrines for fifty year membership were presented in 2010 to Lillian Rudner and Grace Tilger.



FIELD TRIP ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following trips have been added to the field trip schedule:

Jones Beach & Point Lookout, Saturday, January 29, 2011. Leader: Richard ZainEldeen. Registrar: Anne Lazarus (212-673-9059). Registration opens Mon., January 17, 2011. Ride: \$25.

Brooklyn/Queens Gull Workshop, Saturday, March 5, 2011. Leader: Shane Blodgett. Registrar: Lenore Swenson (212-533-9567) Registration opens Mon., February 21, 2011. Ride: \$15.

Also please note the following change from the field trip schedule in the Society's printed Schedule of Events:

Lakes and Mountains of Western Maine: The dates of the trip have been changed to Friday, June 24, 2011 to Tuesday, June 28, 2011. The cost of the trip will be somewhat higher than stated in the schedule because the Lodge is raising its rates.



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