

## IN MEMORIAM: AUSTIN L. RAND

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In 1929 a joint expedition to Madagascar was undertaken by the three major museums in London, Paris, and New York. The Archbold family financed the American contingent and C. G. Harrold from Winnipeg, Canada, was engaged as collector of birds. Soon after Harrold arrived in New York he was stricken with meningitis and died. In this extremity, Dr. Arthur A. Allen, professor of ornithology at Cornell, suggested that Austin Loomer Rand, a graduate student at Cornell, act as Harrold's replacement.

Rand was born in Kentville, Nova Scotia on 16 December 1905. He lived most of his early life, however, in nearby Wolfville. As a boy he came under the guidance of Robie W. Tufts who influenced Rand (contrary to his father's wishes) to adopt ornithology as a career. Rand received his B.S. degree from Acadia University in Wolfville in 1927.

The Madagascar expedition was led by Jean Delacour and included James C. Greenway, Jr. and young Richard Archbold. The three museums eventually shared a splendid collection of 15,000 birds and 5,000 mammals. Rand was selected to write up the ornithological results of the expedition; his thesis for his Ph. D. (Zoology) at Cornell in 1932 was published as a volume of the *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, and is still the most important work regarding the remarkable birds of that island.

Ernst Mayr, who was just beginning work on his collection of New Guinea birds at the American Museum of Natural History, suggested that Archbold turn his attention to New Guinea. Archbold financed three major expeditions to that area (1933-34, 1936-37, 1938-39), which were facilitated by such sophisticated equipment as a transoceanic flying boat. Rand was present on all three as coleader and ornithologist. Although devoting much time to the collection and preparation of specimens, Rand still found time for many life-history ob-

servations in the field. An example is his paper on the display of the aberrant, montane bird-of-paradise, *Macgregoria pulchra*. Rand published the results of all three New Guinea expeditions, describing the extraordinarily rich bird life of the island. Reports on the mammal collections are still not complete, even though Archbold was more interested in them than in the birds.

In 1941 Archbold founded the Archbold Biological Station near Lake Placid, Florida. Rand helped establish this station and did some local research, including a report with Per Host on the mammals of Highland County. The station did not provide adequate collections or library facilities for advanced zoological research, and on 16 February 1942 Rand left to assume a post as Assistant Zoologist with the National Museum of Canada (NMC), then entering a period of wartime retrenchment. Rand soon established an excellent working rapport with ornithologist P. A. Taverner and mammalogist R. M. Anderson. He divided his time about equally between ornithology and mammalogy and throughout his 5 years at NMC maintained an impressive output of publications, with emphasis on the taxonomy and distribution of birds and mammals.

The war opened up easy access to previously unknown faunal areas in northwestern Canada. In the summer of 1943, travelling by truck, Rand explored the bird and mammal faunas along the southern half of the newly-constructed Alaska Highway and in 1944 he worked the Canol Road. His diaries reflect his tremendous enthusiasm and quiet sense of humor, although they are often difficult to decipher because the handwriting is hasty and surprisingly small for such a large man. Here and there among his well-organized notes on the birds and mammals are laconic comments on the weather, people (sometimes vividly characterized), campfire talk, the occasional good story, and well-worded accounts of daily incidents.



AUSTIN L. RAND, 1905-1982

In April 1946 he was promoted to Associate Zoologist, and 6 months later he became Acting Chief of the Biological Division of NMC.

In July 1947 Rand moved to Chicago to become Curator of Birds at the Field Museum of Natural History. His arrival was like a breath of fresh air. While he made it clear that research should have first priority, he pressed forward the growth of the collection and the exhibition program with equal energy. During his tenure as Curator from 1947 to 1955, and then as Chief Curator of Zoology from 1955 to 1970, the bird collections increased by 132,000 specimens.

By purchase and by the support of local collectors, both amateur and professional, major

collections were obtained from Andean South America, East and West Africa, Iran, India, Nepal, and the Philippines, and by exchange an almost complete set of New Guinea birds. In exhibition he completed the systematic hall, added 12 cases illustrating biological principles, and a diorama of a Nile marsh.

His main inspiration to the staff, however, came from his consuming interest in all aspects of birds. He bridged the gap between the "old" museum curator, with a passion for subspecies and faunal lists, and the "new" ornithologists, with their interests in evolution, behavior, and ecology. Of the 103 papers that were based on his research at Field Museum, 52 were systematic or faunal in content and 51 covered a di-

versity of subjects: glaciation and speciation, altitudinal variation, enemy recognition, use of right and left limbs, and whatever other problem had caught his eye. He published on taxa spread systematically from emus to crows (or sparrows, if one prefers Wetmore's order) and from all the major geographical areas.

One concern of Rand's was that the results of research should not be confined to specialists but should be shared with the public. When he moved to Chesterton, Indiana, shortly after his arrival, people commiserated with him on his daily 80-minute commute to Chicago on the train. But it gave Rand two uninterrupted hours a day for his popular writing. This included several articles a year for the *Field Museum Bulletin* and four books, including "Stray feathers from a bird man's desk" and "Ornithology: an introduction." This desire to communicate science to the public produced one of his most popular exhibits, "The flow of information," which traced research from the collector in the field to the published paper; as a "temporary" exhibit it lasted 12 years.

The Rands' home in Chesterton, the "Gateway Town of the Dunes," was his refuge from his official duties, where he could enjoy his family, tend his house and yard, and watch the local wildlife. He was particularly fond of the Indiana Dunes. He kept meticulous notes of his observations of the local fauna and flora, and these were the basis of his book, co-authored with his wife Rheua, "Birds of the summer, a midwestern almanac." He was able to indulge his love of painting, a skill of which most colleagues were unaware until they visited his home and saw his works upon the walls. His interest was in landscapes rather than bird portraiture, for, as he once said, the latter had already been done by Audubon.

During his stay in Chicago, Rand, always accompanied by Rheua, was a regular participant at AOU meetings, and he was president from 1962 to 1964. At six-feet-six and ruggedly built, he could hardly fail to be a conspicuous member at any meeting. He was always courteous and friendly, as when he presided over the

Council, but when asked to speak on more formal occasions there was an underlying layer of shyness and reserve. A regular attender of the International Congresses, he was elected to the International Ornithological Committee in 1950, a position he held until his retirement. On 9 May 1961 he received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from his old alma mater, Acadia University.

When 1970 came and Rand reached the then compulsory retirement age of 65, he demonstrated the same thoroughness with which he had planned his research. A few years earlier, after vacationing all over the state of Florida, he and Rheua had purchased a house on the shore of a small, secluded lake near the town of Lake Placid, close to the Archbold Biological Station. Almost the day after his birthday they took off for Florida and the enjoyment of a well-earned retirement.

In Florida, Rand continued to communicate his passion for birds and the natural world by writing a weekly nature column for the *Lake Placid Journal*. He shelved a partially completed report on the birds of the Philippines that had involved considerable research. He did write up observations of a group of Purple Gallinules that nested along the shores of the lake bordering his property, but he shelved that too.

Until the death of Archbold in 1976, Rand maintained regular contact with the Archbold station, serving as a research associate and trustee. But most of all, he delighted in the quiet pleasures of the evening strolls with the dogs, the company of his wife, and the thrill of seeing the Purple Gallinules return in the spring to "their spot" on the lake.

Rand died on 6 November 1982, within hours of the death of his mentor, Robie Tufts. Both of his children became professional scientists. Dr. Stanley Rand is a herpetologist with the Tropical Research Station of the Smithsonian, and Dr. William Rand a statistician with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. They, four grandchildren, and his widow Rheua survive.