

## From the Editor

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Source: Ornithological Monographs No. 63

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: <https://doi.org/10.2307/40166893>

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## *From the Editor*

As ornithological societies go, the AOU is large, and it holds large meetings. I started to attend these as often as possible about 30 years ago, when I got a regular job and decided I wanted to be a practicing ornithologist (and I will keep practicing until I get it right). I don't know exactly when I learned who Ned Johnson was, but it seems like it must have been a long time ago. Ned was large and loud and really distinctive, with a silver head of hair (I assume that at one time his hair was a different color, but I recall only that brilliant silver). Ned seemed involved in everything going on at a meeting, probably because he was. Although I never "hung out" with the taxonomy folks, Ned was outgoing enough that I, like most AOU members, considered him a friend.

*Ornithological Monograph No. 63* is dedicated to this friend of the AOU. It is the 10th of what we are calling the "new" *Ornithological Monographs*—generally smaller than the old ones and issued on a regular basis—and the second of these dedicated to a recently deceased member of the AOU. Are we setting some sort of precedent that we will have to follow every time a distinguished member and former president of the AOU dies? I don't think so. Our first memorial volume was dedicated to Ernst Mayr, whose impressive career and 100-year life span necessitated such an honor. Mayr's accomplishments included many years of service to the AOU, including a term as president. Among other things, the Mayr monograph with accompanying DVD provides an incredible look at the history of ornithology in the United States over more than half of the past century.

This tribute to Ned Johnson is different. Ned, who unfortunately didn't live as long as Ernst Mayr, was an incredible mixture of high-powered scientist and dedicated servant of scientific societies. He provided much insight into the ecology and evolution of birds, particularly those of the western United States, by adapting to new methodologies when they came along. He combined scientific collecting with molecular biology, and museum work with amazing field knowledge and experience. The following chapters include a review of Ned's major contributions, some of his last collaborative work, and an array of state-of-the-art papers on biogeography and systematics that highlight some of his interests. I am not a systematist, but I found this set of papers both interesting and a great way to update my knowledge of some contentious issues.

Ned and I got to know each other by socializing at AOU meetings, but he wasn't there just to party. Ned was president of two of the major ornithological societies (including the AOU, in 1996–1998) and contributed nearly 70 person-years of service on AOU committees, particularly the one dealing with classification. Ned's outstanding service to science, including an exemplary research career and legacy, have earned this *Festschrift* in his honor.

*John Faaborg*