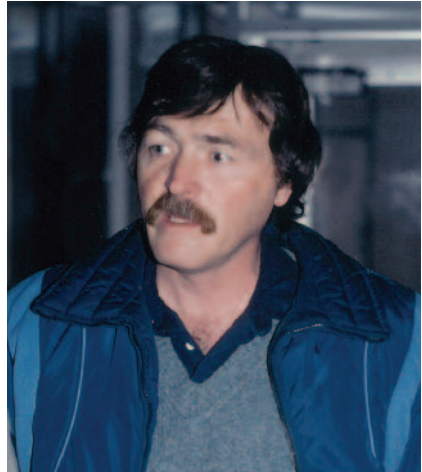


In Memoriam Ron Scovell

Glenn Coady

Terence Ronald “Ron” Scovell was born on 7 January 1933 in Toronto to Floyd Alexander Scovell and Beatrice Edna Scovell. Both he and his brother Doug developed a keen interest in the natural world from a very young age in their local rambles around High Park, Sunnyside and the marshes of the lower Humber River in west Toronto. Both soon became quite knowledgeable birders, and like a legion of other young men of the era, they soon gravitated to the open door policy of Jim Baillie, the Royal Ontario Museum’s Assistant Curator of Ornithology, to become regular “museum rats”. As they grew older, Doug and Ron were often invited to join Baillie’s inner circle of friends on birding adventures around Ontario. In addition to their shared passion for birds, Ron would go on to become an expert in ferns and flowering plants and Doug would specialize in butterflies.

Ron was a graduate of HumberSide Collegiate Institute, the University of Toronto and the Ontario College of Art. He then attended the Ontario College of



Ron Scovell at the founding annual general meeting of the Ontario Field Ornithologists at Aldershot High School in Burlington on 13 November 1982.

Photo: OFO Archives.

Education and pursued a career as a high school teacher. He taught biology and physical education, first at Bathurst Heights Collegiate Institute, and later at Etobicoke Collegiate Institute, where he spent the bulk of his career prior to his retirement in 1990. During his teaching career he coached many sports including

Ron was a man with many passions and pursued lifelong interests in a love of all aspects of nature... art, classical music, book collecting, canoeing, skiing, golf, hockey, baseball and world travel.

football, basketball and hockey. I first met Ron in birding circles in my late teens, but it wasn't until discussions years later that we realized I had played high school basketball against teams he had coached

He was a man with many passions and pursued lifelong interests in a love of all aspects of nature (with a special focus on birding and botany), art, classical music, book collecting, canoeing, skiing, golf, hockey, baseball and world travel.

In the era of the internet and the advent of Ontbirds, eBird, social media, smart phones, text messaging, e-mail and global positioning systems, it might seem quaint to some that in the 1950s and 1960s the nerve centre for Ontario birding information was the office of Jim Baillie at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Through his extensive network of contacts and the sheer volume of telephone calls and letters he received on a daily basis, he was able to keep a large group of friends connected to the latest information on interesting bird occurrences. Many other people looked forward to accessing this information by means of Baillie's weekly newspaper column in the *Toronto Telegram*. With Baillie's death in May 1970, that information network was lost and Ron was to play a pivotal role in ushering in its replacement. Combining his own network of contacts with those of other long-time

Toronto birders like Gerry Bennett, Harry Kerr and Don Perks, they started the Toronto Rare Bird Alert (TORBA) hotline, a subscription-based typical telephone tree service with a review list of rarities for which members would make mandatory telephone calls to quickly disseminate information on sightings in the Toronto area. Outreach was then made to contact and include active birders in all other regions of Ontario so that a true province-wide network for rarity notification was established. Co-founded and managed by Ron, this arrangement served birders quite admirably for more than two decades.

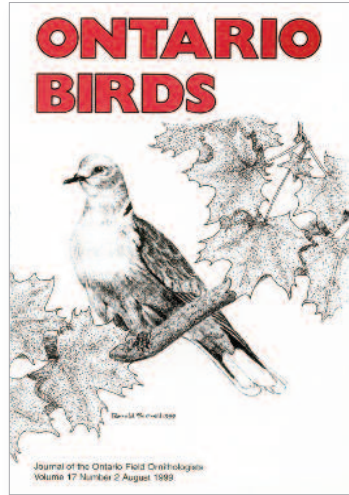
Ron combined his love of art and birds to develop an impressive expertise in the history of art in ornithology. He became a collector of a wide selection of original bird art. When the Ontario Field Ornithologists produced its first special publication, *Ornithology in Ontario*, he was chosen to select the broad spectrum of art included, obtained the necessary permissions for usage, and he wrote the appendix of biographies of Ontario's most influential bird artists.

In addition, he was a talented wildlife artist in his own right. He produced the cover art for five issues of *Ontario Birds* as follows: Black-capped Chickadees and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Vol. 3, No. 2, October 1985); Broad-billed Hummingbird (Vol. 8, No. 1, April 1990);

European Starling (Vol. 8, No. 3, December 1990); Eurasian Collared-Dove (Vol. 17, No. 2, August 1999); and Townsend's Warbler (Vol. 19, No. 2, August 2001).

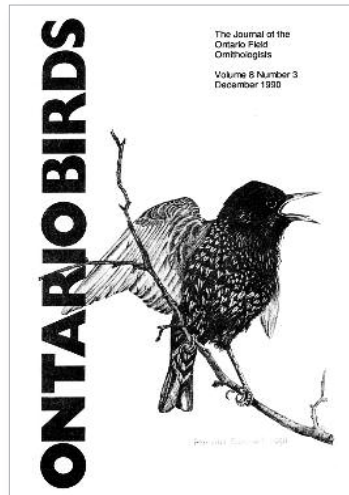
Besides his fondness for art, Ron was a true bibliophile and amassed one of the finest Ontario collections of interesting and rare ornithological monographs since that of James H. Fleming more than seventy-five years prior. A visit to his basement book fortress was always a highlight for any birder invited to his home. He was always willing to help others source hard-to-find bird books. His Herculean efforts to move an enormous weight of bird books to the various venues for the OFO convention's annual book sale benefitted countless Ontario birders. In a couple of cases in which he could not help me find a particular title, he even sold me his own copy! Many a time a quick phone call to Ron to look up something from a reference in his collection saved me a special trip to the ROM library.

Ron was a founding life member of the Ontario Field Ornithologists and contributed to the organization for much of the remainder of his life by leading outings, contributing a bird-finding guide for the Hamilton area to Ontario Birds, providing cover art, writing and fundraising for Ornithology in Ontario, organizing the ever-popular annual book sale at the OFO convention for many years, serving on its board and eventually serving as its fifth President in 1990 and 1991.



August 1999, Eurasian Collared-Dove. Ron Scovell

Ron was a talented wildlife artist in his own right. He produced the cover art for five issues of Ontario Birds.



December 1990, European Starling. Ron Scovell

Ron was a very social birder. In addition to his participation in OFO, he was an active member of the Toronto Ornithological Club, the South Peel Naturalists, the Brodie Club, Bird Studies Canada, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Field Botanists of Ontario. He was often the ringleader of a coterie of talented birders that included Lou Marsh, John Keenleyside, Luc Fazio, Dan Salisbury, Alec Dobson and Doug Scovell.

Ron passed away on 22 March 2015 at Kitchener at the age of 82. He is survived by his son Ted (and wife Emily) and his daughter Summer (and husband Robert) and his five grandchildren Holden, Paisley, Griffen, Tyler and Daniel. He is also survived by his siblings Ken, Phyllis, Murray and Dorothy and his nine

nieces and nephews, as well as by his former wife Dorothy Henley (née Duffin) and long-term partner Joan O'Donnell. He was predeceased by his brother Doug. His spirit and drive are also missed by a large contingent of the Ontario birding community who were privileged to have come to know him.

When I think of Ron, I always remember his infectious and mischievous grin and I hope somehow that he and Doug are reunited and gleefully exchanging excruciatingly bad puns with old friends Gerry Bennett and Jim Baillie.

Glenn Coady

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Corrections: December 2015, Volume 33(3)

We made a pagination error in the December 2015 issue of *Ontario Birds*: Volume 33(3), for which we greatly apologize. The issue should have started with page 113 and ended on page 160 as is shown on the enclosed corrected Table of Contents. We recommend that all members simply over-write the page numbers in 33(3) with a pen. A corrected pdf is available on the OFO website.

Also, the reference “**Tomazzoni, A.C., E. Pedro and S.M. Hartz.** 2004. Food habits of Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) in the breeding season in Lami Biological Reserve, southern Brazil. *Ornitologia Neotropical* 15:279-282” should have been inserted on old page # 57 immediately above the Tozer 2013 reference.