

IN MEMORIAM: CHARLES RUSSELL MASON,
1895-1983

HERBERT W. KALE II

*Florida Audubon Society, 1101 Audubon Way, Maitland,
Florida 32751 USA*

Charles Russell Mason of Kissimmee, Florida, a member of the American Ornithologists' Union since 1936 and Elective Member since 1947, died on 17 August 1983. Trained as a horticulturist at Pennsylvania State and Purdue universities, Russ's interests in ornithology and conservation dominated his life from his mid-thirties onward. He served as president of Florida Audubon Society from 1936 to 1940, then as executive director of Massachusetts Audubon until 1957, when he returned to the Florida Audubon Society as its executive director, a position he served until 1971. Under his leadership both organizations increased their membership manifold.

Russ published numerous field notes, chiefly in *The Auk* and the *Florida Naturalist*, which he edited for many years. He initiated the Sooty and Noddy tern banding expeditions in the Dry Tortugas in the late 1930's, and in the early 1960's developed a system of cooperative Bald

Eagle sanctuaries with ranchers and other landowners covering 3 million acres of eagle nesting habitat in Florida. Through his interest in Central American birds and their conservation, Russ was instrumental in the establishment of the Asa Wright Nature Center in Trinidad and the Cerro Punta Sanctuary in Panama, in founding Audubon Societies in Mexico, Belize, and Panama, and in forming "Amigos de la Naturaleza," a coalition of conservationists from Central and South American countries.

From 1972 until shortly before his death he operated, in partnership with Nina Steffee, Russ Mason's Natural History Tours. His interests in travel and conservation are memorialized in his establishment of Miami International Airport as a Florida Audubon Sanctuary for Burrowing Owls, which still thrive in the grassy areas between the runways, and in the gift of his extensive library to Tall Timbers Research Station, which he helped found.