

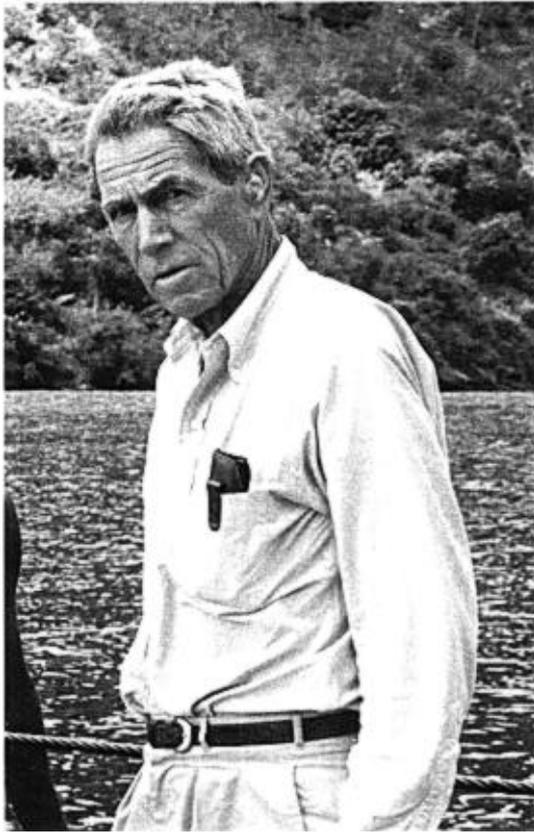


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IN MEMORIAM: JAMES C. GREENWAY, JR., 1903–1989

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JAMES C. GREENWAY, JR., 1903–1989

(Photograph taken in New Caledonia in 1978 by F. Vuilleumier)

James C. Greenway, Jr., became a member of the AOU in 1930, an Elective Member in 1933, and a Fellow in 1948. He was associated with the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) at Harvard from 1932 to 1960 and, from then on until his death at age 86, with the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New

York City. In 1958 he published *Extinct and Vanishing Birds of the World*, a remarkable book that stimulated much conservation work. In 1960 and 1962 he co-edited with Ernst Mayr volumes 9 and 15 of *Peters' Check-list of Birds of the World*, in which he wrote the accounts of *Hypositta*, *Sittidae*, *Certhiidae*, *Rhabdornithidae*, *Climac-*

teridae, Ploceidae (with Reginald E. Moreau), and Oriolidae. He also wrote the account on Drepanididae in Peters' volume 14. To many, perhaps most, ornithologists, these few facts would be all they knew of Jim Greenway's accomplishments. Furthermore, since Greenway probably never attended a single professional meeting or congress in his life because, as Dean Amadon put it, "he avoided large gatherings like the plague," relatively few ornithologists had seen him in person. Shy and retiring he was, but his life and career, or at least what can be traced of them, were at times quite adventuresome. Jim Greenway was so reluctant to leave tracks behind him that, after his death, even his sons did not know important details of their father's academic career. Thus, I could not have pieced this memorial together without the help of my colleagues Mary LeCroy, Dean Amadon, and John Farrand, Jr., at the AMNH, and Ernst Mayr at the MCZ, who provided me with invaluable bits of information that supplemented my personal knowledge, based on my acquaintance with Jim since 1974 and on field work with him in 1978.

James Cowan Greenway, Jr., was born 7 April 1903 in New York City. The son of a Yale physician, he lived as a young boy on the family estate in Greenwich, Connecticut. He attended Phillips Exeter Academy, from which he graduated in 1922, and Yale University, where he received an A.B. degree in 1926. In the next few years he apparently worked as a reporter for the Brooklyn Eagle newspaper.

Before joining the MCZ, Jim had become a partner in the unique Mission Zoologique Franco-anglo-américaine à Madagascar, which was in the field from April to August 1929. Organized and led by Jean Delacour, who represented the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, the expedition was attended by W. Percy Lowe from the British Museum (Natural History), and Richard Archbold, Austin Rand, and Jim Greenway, representing the AMNH. Funding came from all three museums. Archbold funded the AMNH share, but it is unclear whether Greenway also contributed funds or not, although he probably did. At the end of August 1929, Delacour and Greenway left Madagascar for the 5th Delacour Expedition to Indo-China, where they collected in Tonkin and Annam. These expeditions brought back thousands of important specimens, which helped form the basis of our understanding of the distribution and systematics of Malagasy

and southeastern Asian birds. These trips also started a friendship between Delacour and Greenway that was to last for the rest of their lives; in later years, these two men were to share an office at the AMNH.

Greenway joined the MCZ in 1932 as Assistant Curator of birds. At the death of Outram Bangs, who was Curator at the MCZ when Greenway first started to work there, Jim wrote "I cannot express the value of his influence and his help to this little paper [Birds of north-west Yunnan, published as Bulletin of the MCZ in 1933; Greenway's first scientific paper] but also to my education." Greenway remained as Assistant Curator until 1952, when he succeeded his friend James Lee Peters, who had died. He was Curator until 1960.

During his early years at MCZ, Greenway participated in several expeditions to the West Indies, especially the Bahamas. Some of these trips were cruises on the research yacht *Uto-wana*, owned by Allison V. Armour. Thomas Barbour, Director of the MCZ, was also present on some of these cruises. In 1933 Greenway was a member of the 10th Armour Expedition and collected birds on several islands in the Bahamas. Another cruise followed in 1934. The birds he collected are in the MCZ (Buden, B.B.O.C. 110:14-20, 1990). Other trips were made, including one in 1936, when Jim and one of his three brothers flew over the Bahamas from north to south. They were the first to land a plane at East Caicos, Turks; the school children were let out for this special occasion. From November 1938 to March 1939, Greenway joined the 7th Delacour Expedition to Indo-China, which was terminated when Delacour heard that his château in Clères, Normandy, had been destroyed by fire. The specimens from this expedition went to Paris and the MCZ.

Besides these collecting expeditions (the Indo-Chinese ones are recounted in detail in Delacour's autobiography, *The Living Air*), Greenway spent the pre-war period at the MCZ, publishing papers on birds from different parts of the world, including New Guinea, the Bahamas, Indo-China, and China. Greenway continued writing papers on birds from around the world throughout his career. His combined field and museum experience of birds of the world was astonishing, but Jim himself once admitted that Delacour had an even better grasp of the world's birds, in part because, as he put it, "Delacour has been everywhere."

Greenway was commissioned in the Navy in

1941, was a Lieutenant in 1943, and later became Lt. Commander while serving aboard aircraft carriers in the southwestern Pacific. He watched convoys of Japanese ships from some hideout in the Solomons, and also spent some time at the huge American base outside Nouméa in New Caledonia, an island that he came to love. After the war he resumed his position at the MCZ, continued to publish ornithological papers, and started a deep involvement with conservation. His paper "Remarks on the preservation of birds," was published in 1950 in the Proceedings of the Conference on the Protection of Nature held at Lake Success in August 1949. Without a doubt, the culmination of his work on extinct and rare bird species was his book, *Extinct and Vanishing Birds of the World* (1958), a work that has become a classic in the literature of rare and endangered species, and has been revised for a second edition (Dover, 1967). The breadth of coverage, the depth of scholarship, and of course the intrinsic interest of these "vanishing" birds all contributed to the great value of Greenway's book. This work reflects Jim's meticulous approach to tracing obscure references in a variety of languages, and to checking specimens in many museums. Only someone like Jim Greenway, combining this sort of skill with an extensive knowledge of birds of the world, and of islands, could have produced such a fine work.

But Greenway's interest in conservation also took a behind-the-scenes form, more in line with his desire for anonymity. Thus, he was active in The American Committee for International Wildlife Protection, and later, in the nascent International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP). In these early days, these organizations made grants to help research on endangered birds, and it is likely that Greenway used personal funds for such purposes. The ICBP has grown tremendously since the pioneer days, but the crucial role played by Jim Greenway and his friends at the beginning must never be forgotten. Whereas most early conservationists are now well-known, because their work was duly publicized, others, like Jim Greenway, run the risk of historical neglect, because they did not wish their contributions to be advertised.

Personal reasons, rather than professional ones, apparently made Jim decide to leave Cambridge in 1960 and return to the family estate in Connecticut. It is next to impossible to know what happened in Jim's life to make him move back to Greenwich, but some of us heard rumors

that, today, would make the gossip columns of social papers. In any case, Jim seems never to have returned to the MCZ. When I was a graduate student at Harvard in the early sixties, I looked at some of Jim's books and journals, the latter beautifully bound, left in the Bird Room never to be recovered, and started wondering about this mysterious man.

From 1960 on, Greenway had become associated with the AMNH. He was a trustee from 1960-1961 to 1970-1971. He became a Research Associate in the Department of Ornithology in 1962, a position he retained until his death in 1989. Jim also started work on a huge and difficult project, a critical list of the type specimens of birds in the vast collections of the Department of Birds. Three installments have appeared to date, Part 1 in 1973, Part 2 in 1978, and Part 4 in 1987, the first two as Bulletins, and the third as a Novitates of the AMNH. Unfortunately, Jim became ill and deteriorating health prevented further work on the project, except in a casual fashion, for the last few years before his death. The task that remains is daunting, for few ornithologists with Jim's skill and the necessary time can be found who could finish such a job. Other than the type list, Jim helped the Department of Ornithology in many ways, including generous but always somewhat secretive grants where funds were needed, help with various inquiries, and constructive work as a member of the important Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund Committee. Perhaps because of his interests in fishing, Jim also helped the Department of Ichthyology, especially Donn E. Rosen's research on fishes from Guatemala (which Jim visited in 1962) and Australia.

In the seventies, Greenway and John Farrand, who was then on the staff, were the pillars of an almost daily lunch ritual at the "Dominican place." This tiny restaurant, at the corner of Amsterdam and 77th Street, owned by a family from the Dominican Republic, saw hundreds of ornithologists, including many notable personalities, trek along with Jim for a usual fare of *huevos rancheros* and *flan casero*. Other than good clean fun, these lunch-time meetings were the opportunity for animated discussions. The tradition died when the Dominican restaurant moved and was replaced by a bland Chinese restaurant.

In 1974, after I returned from a trip to New Caledonia, Jim asked me how I found the island. When I replied, "wonderful," his face lit up with pleasure. "Let's go there together," he

suggested in a conspiratorial tone. I soon realized that Jim wanted badly to go back to New Caledonia, perhaps to relive some of his war experiences, and also to take part in one more expedition to a tropical area, probably to recreate what he had done during his Madagascar or Indo-China trips in the twenties and thirties.

Jim and his friend Gardner Stout (former President of AMNH) financed and I organized an expedition to New Caledonia. We went there in 1978, when Jim was 75 years old. During several weeks I had many opportunities to work closely with Jim Greenway. We collected breeding petrels and landbirds, and migrant shorebirds. He was a fascinating man, full of extraordinary anecdotes from his rich and varied life, from his Navy days, his Indo-Chinese expeditions with Delacour, and his winter cruises to the Bahamas. Every evening, he and his wife M. F. (Mary Frances, née Oakes, who died at about the same time Jim did) would settle for an evening of gin-tonics. In spite of this extended encounter, many facts of Jim's life have remained hidden from me. I now realize that they have remained hidden from other colleagues as well.

I did learn that Jim could be a difficult man to work with. For years he wore a hearing-aid, and one of his habits was to turn the machine off surreptitiously, so that he would not have to hear what others were saying. This behavior occasionally produced awkward situations for those who did not know him well. Although

we got along quite well in the field, for some reason that will remain forever unknown to me and others at AMNH (just as Jim would have wanted, no doubt), he started to dislike me intensely a few months after we had returned from New Caledonia. He and I could no longer sit down and talk things over, which made carrying out business-as-usual a bit more time consuming.

Jim Greenway was a profoundly eccentric man who was probably unable to tolerate others with a lesser streak of eccentricity than he had. He should be remembered especially as the person who was in charge of the very rich MCZ bird collection for many years, who helped avian conservation get a solid start, who wrote the classic *Extinct and Vanishing Birds of the World*, who helped publish Peters' *Check-list* after Peters' death, and who assisted the Department of Ornithology at AMNH in many unrecorded but important ways. For myself, I will miss the good old days at AMNH, when both Jean Delacour and Jim Greenway were sharing an office, and when many of us would have lunch with Jim at the Dominican place and listen to his entertaining tales of nautical or ornithological feats. Jim Greenway was as private as Jean Delacour was gregarious. They must have made quite a team on their Indo-Chinese expeditions of the twenties and thirties. My life, and that of others as well, has been enriched through contact with Jim Greenway.

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IN MEMORIAM: HENRY M. STEVENSON, 1914-1991

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Henry M. Stevenson, a member of the AOU since 1940 and an Elective Member since 1954, died suddenly on 4 November 1991 at the age of 77. The senior authority on the birds of Florida, he suffered a heart attack at the Tall Timbers Research Station near Tallahassee, Florida, where he had been a Research Fellow in his retirement years.

Henry was born in Birmingham, Alabama, on 25 February 1914, the son of a Methodist preacher. After graduating from Birmingham-Southern College in 1935 and obtaining a Master's degree from the University of Alabama in 1939, he went to Cornell University to study with Arthur A. Allen. In 1943 he was awarded a Ph.D. from Cornell for his investigation of