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IN MEMORIAM: RALPH WARREN DEXTER, 1912–1991

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Born on 7 April 1912, Ralph Dexter grew up in the fishing port of Gloucester, on Cape Ann, Massachusetts. His early passion for molluscs, crustaceans, and tidal pools remained with him throughout his life, but at age 16 a Miss Babson of the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary, and Historical Association awakened his interest in birds. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Massachusetts in 1934 and in 1981 received the University's Distinguished Alumnus Award. His outstanding undergraduate record earned him admission to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where, in 1938, he was awarded a Ph.D. for his doctoral dissertation on the ecological interactions of marine communities in a tidal inlet on Cape Ann, Massachusetts (*Ecol. Monogr.* 17:261–294, 1944). He later served as Vice-President and President of the Malacological Union. In 1937 Ralph accepted a job at Kent State University where for 45 years he taught courses in ecology, field zoology (which included ornithology), and history of biology, and where, in 1938, he married Jean Westwater. With Kent, Ohio, having few tidal communities, Ralph began a long-term study of the Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) that nested in the vent pipes on the roof of the biology building. From 1944 until the end of his life, Ralph banded all adult and nestling swifts that used those vents. Dur-

ing this time he published many papers on swifts, as well as ecological studies of the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Common Barn-Owl (*Tyto alba*), Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*), and Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*). In 1957 Kent State recognized Ralph Dexter with its Most Distinguished Faculty Award, in 1964 the Chimney Swift was incorporated into the seal of the university, and in 1977 Ralph received the University's President's Medal. Ralph's interest in America's 19th century naturalists is reflected in several historical papers, his active membership in the Society for the History of Natural Science, and his pivotal role in founding the History of Science Committee of the Ohio Academy of Science. He was a Fellow of the AAAS and the Ohio Academy of Sciences; for the latter he served as Secretary, Historian, and President. In 1991 the Academy honored him as one of its Centennial Honorees. He joined the American Ornithologists' Union in 1942 and became an elected member in 1976. He was also a member of the Association of Field Ornithologists, the Wilson Ornithological Society (where he served on the Nominating and Resolutions committees), and the Inland Bird Banding Association (where he served as Vice-President). Ralph Dexter died in Kent, Ohio, on 29 October 1991. He is survived by two daughters.

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IN MEMORIAM: BRYAN STEVEN OBST, 1956–1991

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Bryan Steven Obst, co-chair of the joint AUCOS meeting in Los Angeles in 1990, died on 9 August 1991 soon after hospitalization for what

proved to be an intractable illness. His tragically early death at age 35 cut short what promised to be an outstanding career.

Bryan was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on 11 November 1956, received his B.S. degree from the University of Florida in 1978, and received his Ph.D. degree from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1986. In 1988 he was appointed Assistant Professor of Biology at UCLA following my retirement; he taught ornithology and other courses in vertebrate biology. He was author or coauthor of 10 papers on birds, with 2 more in press and 5 manuscripts in review. His publications dealt mainly with digestive physiology of marine birds and were

based on laboratory and field data, the latter obtained under rigorous conditions in the Antarctic and the Arctic. He made three films (*Phalarope Feeding Behavior*, *Underwater Behavior of the American Dipper*, and *The California Least Tern*) produced by the University of California Media Center. His interests and abilities covered a wide range within ornithology and biology in general. Information on his publications and films can be obtained from W. C. Hamner, Department of Biology, University of California, Los Angeles, California 90024.

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IN MEMORIAM: HANS EDMUND WOLTERS, 1915-1991

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Hans Edmund Wolters was born on 11 February 1915 in Duisburg in the German Ruhr region. He spent his childhood in Geilenkirchen near the frontier town Aachen. After World War II, he worked some years as a school teacher before becoming, in 1960, an associate member of the Alexander Koenig Zoological Research Institute and Museum, Bonn, volunteering in the Department of Ornithology. In 1966, Hans Wolters was appointed curator and later chief-curator of birds. In 1973, he became head of the Department of Ornithology after the sudden death of Professor Günther Niethammer. Between 1974 and 1979 Hans Wolters edited the Alexander Koenig Institute's journals *Bonner zoologische Beiträge* and *Bonner zoologische Monographien*. After his retirement in 1980, Hans Wolters continued to be a permanent and appreciated collaborator of the Department of Ornithology. Dr. Wolters died on 22 December 1991.

Dr. Wolters' scientific interest focused on systematics, both on the specific and supraspecific relations of bird taxa (especially the latter). He studied in detail many families in the Passeriformes, primarily the Estrildidae, Ploceidae and Nectariniidae. Hans Wolters was among the first

European ornithologists who applied cladistic principles for the reconstruction of avian phylogeny. His ideas of a "natural" system of birds are reflected in his major work *Die Vogelarten der Erde* (The Bird Taxa of the World), published between 1975 and 1982. In his opinion, however, this treatise should have been published some years later, because he could not fully take into account Sibley and Ahlquist's studies on DNA-DNA hybridization, work that he admired greatly. Although Wolters' book is not well known in North America, it is probably the most useful single-volume checklist of birds and is especially valuable as a source book for older names in avian nomenclature. Dr. Wolters used a sequence for orders and families of birds quite different from that in Peters' *Check-list*, and a cladistic approach as far as possible. He resisted, very sensibly, coining many new subgeneric names for these taxa recognized in his classification. In 1983, Wolters published "Die Vögel Europas im System der Vögel" as a checklist of European birds, in which he made a number of modifications of his earlier classification. Because of his profound taxonomic knowledge of birds and of avian nomenclature, he was an elected member of the Standing Committee on