

*The Auk* 117(4):1031–1032, 2000

## IN MEMORIAM: ERNST SUTTER, 1914–1999

RAFFAEL WINKLER<sup>1</sup> AND LUC SCHIFFERLI<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Natural History Museum, P.O. Box 1048, CH-4001 Basel, Switzerland; and

<sup>2</sup>Swiss Ornithological Institute, CH-6204 Sempach, Switzerland

Ernst Sutter died on 9 November 1999 after a short illness. He was born in Basel, Switzerland, on 7 August 1914 and was educated there. As a schoolboy, he was in the field well before the first morning lessons started. In the 1930s, together with the Swiss Ornithological Institute, he participated in the first pioneering field courses to band and measure birds in their migration through the Alps. He completed his Ph.D. thesis on growth and development of the avian brain in Galliformes and Passeriformes in 1943 under the supervision of Professor Adolf Portmann. Two years later, he became Curator of the Bird Collection of the Natural History Museum in Basel. Following his retirement in 1980, he continued his scientific work on an honorary basis until his death, thus serving the Basel museum for 55 years.

In 1949, Sutter organized a nine-month field expedition to Sumba in Indonesia, together with ethnologist Alfred Bühler. Among 65,000 zoological specimens were 770 birds. Based on these specimens, the races of two species of buttonquail were revised and five new subspecies described. A list of the taxa was published in White and Bruce's *The Birds of Wallacea* (BOU Checklist No. 7, 1986).

The Sumba trip was Sutter's only collecting expedition. From his excellent contacts with the Swiss Ornithological Institute, Sutter obtained specimens found dead within Switzerland. He expanded the bird collection at the Natural History Museum to become one of the important collections in Europe.

In 1954, Sutter encountered radar technology at the Zurich airport and realized that this could be a unique tool for studies of bird migration. Shortly thereafter, in 1956, Sutter conducted one of the first systematic studies of nocturnal migration by radar. The presentation of a radarfilm at the International Ornithological Congress in Helsinki in 1958 made him world renowned.

Sutter's other main interests concerned avian growth patterns. As a student of Professor Adolf Portmann, a leading zoologist and anthropologist involved in juvenile development of birds in an evolutionary context, Sutter originally worked on growth and functional development of the brain and body as well as on molt and feather growth. His major publications covered woodpeckers, the White Stork, and growth and molt in buttonquails and galliforms. Late in life, Sutter reanalyzed some of his original data, and in his last days he completed editing a final manuscript in the hospital. An enormous amount of information on molt and feather growth was incorporated in the *Handbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas* by Glutz von Blotzheim and Bauer, and Stresemann and Stresemann relied on his unpublished data on molt of megapodes in their book on molt.

Ernst Sutter was a modest and quiet person with a profound knowledge in most fields of scientific ornithology. He measured and recorded precisely, almost to perfection. His wide interests, scrutiny, and perspicacity made him eminently qualified to edit *Der Ornithologische Beobachter*, the ornithological journal of German-speaking Switzerland. With his advice, constructive criticism, and support, Sutter transformed this periodical into a scientifically valuable and highly appreciated journal for amateurs and professionals alike. His editing was not restricted to the content of the papers. He took care of the layout, revised the text for clarity and conciseness, and improved the graphs and figures. Although not a staff member of the university, he actively assisted in the supervision of many master's and doctoral theses. His contributions to scientific ornithology, nearly 100 papers, reached far beyond the national scale.

Along with Adolf Portmann, Sutter edited the Proceedings of the 11th International Ornithological Congress held in Basel in 1954. He also was engaged in the posthumous publication of Portmann's scientific material (*Vom Wunder des Vogellebens*, 1984).

Sutter's open mind and sensitive and intuitive character gained him personal contacts with colleagues throughout the world. His broad biological knowledge extended far beyond ornithology, and his scientific competence and expertise rewarded him with an international reputation. He was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the AOU in 1958 and an Honorary Fellow in 1991, and he was a Corresponding Member of the Deutsche Ornithologen-Gesellschaft, the Nederlandse Ornithologische Unie, and the Asociacion Or-

nitologica del Plata in Argentina. In Switzerland, he received the Honorary Membership of Ala, the Swiss Ornithological Society. Finally, in 1998 he was elected an Honorary Chairman of the 23rd International Ornithological Congress to be held in Beijing, China, in 2002. Sadly, he will not be able to undertake this task.

Ernst Sutter is survived by his wife Gaby, three children, and five grandchildren. A more extensive memorial, with portrait, appeared in *Der Ornithologische Beobachter* 97:1–6.

---

*The Auk* 117(4):1032–1033, 2000

## IN MEMORIAM: COLONEL JACK VINCENT, 1904–1999

JOHN VINCENT

*P.O. Box 11085, 3206 Dorspruit, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

Jack Vincent was born in London, England, on 6 March 1904. At the age of 21, he emigrated to South Africa and worked on two farms in the Richmond district of Natal before returning to England to work for the British Museum. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, he was sent on a number of bird-collecting expeditions in east, central, and southern Africa, some on his own and others in the company of Admiral Hubert Lynes of the Battle of Jutland fame. In ornithological circles, Lynes perhaps is best known for unraveling the systematics of the cisticolas, a notoriously difficult group of Old World warblers. Jack played a large part in this work, and his own monumental work was a study of the birds of northern Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique) in 1930. Several subspecies of birds bear his name.

On his return from the last expedition, in 1934, Jack met a Scottish girl, Mary Russell, in Cape Town; he proposed to and married her within a week! After a year in London, Jardine Mathieson Co. sent him to Zanzibar to start the first clove distillery in that most famous of the "clove isles." After three years there, he was transferred to a sisal plantation in Tanganyika, now known as Tanzania. In 1937, Jack bought a

farm in the Mooi River district of Natal in South Africa.

During World War II, Jack served with the then Royal Natal Carbineers in east and north Africa, where he was awarded the MBE for his service. In 1942, he was seconded to the British Army in Haifa, Palestine.

In 1949, Jack was asked to take over the fledgling Natal Parks Board. Under his guidance, the Board became one of the most famous of the world's nature conservation authorities, particularly for the role it played in saving the white rhino from extinction. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, he served as editor of *The Ostrich*, the journal of the South African Ornithological Society. He became a Corresponding Fellow of the AOU in 1949.

In 1963, Jack accepted a post with the International Council for Bird Preservation and moved to Morges in Switzerland, where he worked in international conservation for four years. During this time he was awarded the World Wildlife Fund Gold Medal and the Order of the Golden Ark by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

Jack returned to rejoin the Natal Parks Board in 1967 before finally retiring in 1974 to live