

MILLER RESEARCH AWARD

At its 1994 annual meeting, the Cooper Ornithological Society announced the recipient of the Loye and Alden Miller Research Award, which is presented for lifetime achievement in ornithological research. The Miller Award Committee, with the approval of the Board of Directors, honored Storrs Olson with the citation as given below.



STORRS OLSON

CITATION FOR STORRS OLSON

One of the world's foremost avian paleontologists, Storrs Olson is widely known for his outstanding scientific productivity. His contributions have been wide ranging. They have dealt with paleofaunas encompassing nearly the entire span of the avian record, from the Cretaceous to the Recent. Geographically, they have virtually covered the globe; intellectually, they have included subjects from descriptions of new species and faunas, to analyses of systematic problems, to clarification of the role of ontogeny in the evolution of flightlessness, especially in rails.

Olson is perhaps best known for his work on the fossil and subfossil birds of oceanic islands, including the West Indies, St. Helena, Fernando do Noronha, Ascension, and the Hawaiian Islands. This research has documented many previously unknown radiations of birds and shown that extant species comprise only a small remnant of the original avifauna in the Hawaiian Islands and elsewhere. It has further demon-

strated the important influence of humans on insular avifaunas: some distribution "anomalies" are not natural but stem from extinctions caused by the activities of prehistoric societies prior to the arrival of European colonists. These findings have required ecologists to reexamine some of their beliefs, because his analyses of paleofaunas demonstrate that species/curves, which have figured prominently in conservation applications of the theory of island biogeography, are unreliable and irrelevant for making predictions about the size of avifaunas on islands.

Olson, often in collaboration with Helen James, has communicated his ideas through a large series of publications, with a clarity of writing style that is the envy of his peers. He is the most active practitioner of avian paleontology in North America, continuing the rich tradition of this field established by Loye and Alden Miller. The Cooper Ornithological Society is pleased to recognize these accomplishments with the 1994 Miller Award to Storrs L. Olson.