

# News and Comment

## Upcoming Meetings and Workshops

### International Society for Behavioral Ecology (ISBE) Conference 2014

The 15<sup>th</sup> International Behavioral Ecology Congress to be held 31 July – 1 August 2014 by Hunter College of the City University of New York (CUNY) and the behavioral ecology research community based at var-

ious CUNY campuses and New York University. Registration is currently open. More information is available at <http://www.isbe2014.com>.

### Conservation and Biology of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Annual Symposium

The 12<sup>th</sup> annual symposium on the Conservation and Biology of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles to be held 4–7 August 2014 in Orlando, Florida. The meeting, sponsored by Zoo Med Laboratories, Inc., is co-hosted by the Turtle Survival Alliance and the IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG).

The meeting represents the largest gathering of non-marine turtle biologists in the world and provides an unmatched opportunity for networking and strategizing turtle conservation. More information is available at <http://www.turtlesurvival.org/get-involved/conference#.U16FgldB870>.

### Ecological Society of America Meeting 2014

The 99<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Ecological Society of America to be held 10–15 August 2014 at the Sacramento Convention Center in Sacramento, California. The theme of the meeting is “From Oceans to Moun-

tains: It’s All Ecology” and registration is currently open. More information is available at <http://esa.org/am/>.

### Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Meeting 2014

The 15<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (NEPARC) to be held 13–15 August 2014 Allegany State Park, Salamanca, NY. NEPARC is an active, diverse, and inclusive partnership dedicated to the conservation of

amphibians and reptiles and their habitats throughout northeastern North America. Poster abstract deadline is 11 July 2014. More information is available at <http://www.northeast.parc.org/meetings/index.htm>.

### International Ornithological Congress 2014

The 26<sup>th</sup> International Ornithological Congress (IOC) to be held 18–24 August 2014 at Rykkio University in

Tokyo, Japan. More information is available at <http://ioc26.jp>.

### American Ornithologists’ Union/Cooper Ornithological Society/Society of Canadian Ornithologist Meeting 2014

Annual meeting of the American Ornithologists’ Union (132<sup>nd</sup> Stated Meeting), the Cooper Ornithological Society (84<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting), and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists (32<sup>nd</sup> Stated Meeting) to be held 23–27 September 2014 at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, CO. The meeting will feature 5 days

of workshops, contributed scientific papers, posters, and invited speakers, including symposia that look at exciting new approaches and results in ornithology. More information is available at <https://www.bird-meetings.org/aoucossco2014/default.asp>.

## Raptor Research Foundation Conference 2014

Raptor Research Foundation 2014 Conference to be held 24-28 September 2014 at the Emerald Beach Hotel in Corpus Christi, Texas. Co-Hosts are the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M

University, Kingsville and HawkWatch International. More information is available at <http://www.raptor-researchfoundation.org/conferences/current-conference>.

## Raptor Workshop: *Introduction to Raptor Field Techniques*

Raptor Services, LLC presents 5-day workshops to be held in Stevens Point, Wisconsin by Gene Jacobs of the Linwood Springs Research Station. This introductory level field course is designed to instruct students in a full-range of field techniques used in the study of raptors. The workshop is offered every June with an emphasis on learning breeding season field techniques and again in August, September, and October, with an emphasis on migration and winter research techniques. Receive first-hand experience working

with: live raptors, capturing, handling, banding techniques, broadcast call surveys, tree climbing, rappelling, blood sampling and more. Summer Sessions: 2-6 June and 23-27 June; Fall sessions: 25-29 August and 13-17 October 2013, and two weekend sessions 5,6,7,13,14, September. Cost is \$450 and space is limited (6-8 students per workshop). More information is available at <http://www.raptorresearch.com/workshop.htm>.

## Retirement of Associate Editor C. D. Bird

After serving *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* as Associate Editor for almost 40 years, longer than any of his contemporaries except for ornithologist Tony Erskine, Dr. Charles Durham Bird has stepped down in early 2014. He primarily reviewed botanical submissions but also some in entomology and general natural history. First appointed in 1975 when Lorraine Smith was journal editor, he has continued without interruption through the subsequent editorial terms of Francis Cook and Carolyn Callaghan. In recognition of his contributions he was made an Honorary Member of The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club in 2005 (see *Canadian Field-Naturalist* 119(4): 614), and has received numerous Alberta awards for his contributions. Charley was born in 1932, a son of Ralph Durham Bird (1901-1972, see tribute in 1972 *Canadian Field-Naturalist* 86(4): 393-399). The senior Bird was a prairie entomologist with Agriculture Canada, widely known for his classic monograph *Ecology of the Aspen Parkland*, (1961).

Although born in Oklahoma when his father was teaching at The University of Oklahoma, Charley was raised in Manitoba, where he developed early interests in botany from his mother (Lois Gould, 1905-1959), and entomology from his father. He obtained a BSc from University of Manitoba in 1956, MSc from Oklahoma University, Stillwater, in 1958, and PhD from Oklahoma State University in 1960. His thesis for the latter was on vegetational and waterfowl changes

in P.F.R.A. reservoirs in west-central Canada based on surveys for Canadian Wildlife Service in the summers of 1956-1959. In 1960-1962 he held a National Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Alberta, became an Assistant Professor of Botany in 1962, Associate Professor in 1967, and Full Professor in 1974. He and his wife Ann purchased a farm near Mirror, Alberta, in 1975 and he took early retirement from the university in 1979. In 1992 they sold the farm and retired in Erskine, Alberta.

He has contributed over 300 articles, notes, book reviews, and reports, notes in print and electronic media, primarily on mosses, lichens, liverworts and Lepidoptera but also including tributes, conservation, and extended family history items. He has collected over 37,000 insects for eventual deposit in collections of the University of Alberta and 36,000 plants largely already deposited there or in various other herbaria. Presently, Charley is continuing his work on the Lepidoptera of natural areas in south-central Alberta as well as his research on family genealogy. In addition, he is conducting inventory work of the biota of the J.J. Collett Natural Area and contributing regularly to their website. Like Tony Erskine, he has agreed to review occasional future papers submitted to *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* whenever his expertise and perspective are particularly needed.

FRANCIS R. COOK

## Obituary – Farley Mowat 1921–2014

An ardent, outspoken conservationist, fervent Canadian, and world acknowledged northern literary success, Farley Mowat, has died at his home at Port Hope, Ontario, 8 April 2014. He is survived by his wife Claire.

Mowat showed an affinity for natural history, writing, and controversy early (see Cook 2003), starting as a teenager with a bird column in the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* in the mid 1930s as he recounted in *Born Naked* (1993). After some initial success, this was terminated when he submitted an enthusiastic account of the sexual activities of some of his subjects that was considered too lurid for newspaper public of the time.

Mowat seemed destined to a career as a scientist when he went to the University of Toronto and took his first collecting expedition with fellow zoology students Frank Banfield and H. Hord to Saskatchewan in the summer of 1939 (as recalled in *Otherwise*, 2008). Banfield covered mammals and Mowat and Hord birds, and sold their collections to the Royal Ontario Museum to finance the trip. Both Mowat and Banfield subsequently enlisted in Canadian army and served overseas in World War II but wrote up their field results and published in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*. Characteristically, Banfield submitted his account before going overseas and Mowat only after his return.

The latter was apparently the first and last formal scientific paper Mowat wrote, but far from his last expedition or literary publication. After the war he was field assistant in the Northwest Territories to the legendary and irascible North American mammalogist and naturalist, Francis Harper. A clash of personalities soon led Farley to undertake his own explorations separately (Harper later extracted a reciprocal promise that neither would mention the other in their respective future writing, a promise also extracted from Mowat by later field companions for their lifetimes).

A research proposal led to his hiring by the Canadian Wildlife Service for the four-researcher Caribou survey which Banfield headed. Later, however, Banfield was ordered to fire Mowat by the chief of the Wildlife Service due to local complaints and lack of advance formal approval for some activities.

Cut loose, Mowat turned to writing – notably *People of the Deer* (1952) and *Never Cry Wolf* (1963), on Mowat's conclusions on the plight of some native northern people and on the life and human persecution of wolves, respectively. Although early reviewers of both were captivated by the writing style and subjects, later in depth reviews by researchers familiar with areas, animals, and people, were generally harsh due to frequent wanderings from fact in both. Pre-eminent among the critics were the prominent botanist Erling Porsild (see Duthan 2012) and mammalogist Frank

Banfield (see Morris 1990) whose reviews appeared in 1952 (*The Beaver* June: 47) and 1964 (*The Canadian Field-Naturalist* 78: 52–54), respectively. The reaction to the former is extensively covered by Dathan 1997: 569–594; the latter drew a response to the CFN Editor, reportedly from the wolf “Uncle Albert”, defending Mowat's account (*The Canadian Field-Naturalist* 78: 206).

Urged on initially by the resourceful promoter and publisher of Canadian writers, Jack McClland (see King 1998), Mowat produced over 40 books which were widely translated worldwide with sales of more than fourteen million copies on topics ranging from his experiences in WWII (particularly in *And No Birds Sing* 1979 – perhaps his finest writing), pets, boats, whales, overharvest of ocean resources (*Sea of Slaughter* 1984), a biography of Dian Fossey (1987), and serial portions of autobiography.

Mowat never finished his degree and was lost to formal science but his writings gained and entertained a huge audience of readers as he was above all else a really good story-teller with an appealing message. Although he often admitted a tendency not to let the facts get in the way of a good story, his writings made an impact by focusing on basic truths as he saw them and his delight in goring beurocracy. By adding to a growing public focus on wildlife and conservation they helped promote pressure for increased governmental protection at all levels and influenced young scientists to research careers on the problems faced by the creatures with which we share the earth. His appreciation of northern fauna and his defense of wolves gained a large appreciative audience far beyond North America particularly in the country which also has vast arctic and boreal areas, the Soviet Union, which he later also was invited to visit, thus providing material for some subsequent books.

### See also:

- Banfield, Frank A.** 1942. Notes on Saskatchewan mammals. *Canadian Field-Naturalist* 55(8): 117–123.
- Cook, F. R.** 2003. [Book review] Farley: The Life of Farley Mowat By James King. *Canadian Field-Naturalist* 117(3): 509–510;
- Dathan, Wendy.** 2012. *The Reindeer Biologist: Alf Erling Porsild, 1901–1997*. University of Calgary Press, Calgary, Alberta.
- Morris, R. D.** 1998. Obituary Alexander William Francis Banfield: 1918–1996. *Journal of Mammalogy* 79(1): 364–369.
- Mowat, F. M.** 1947. Notes on the birds of Emma Lake, Saskatchewan. *Canadian Field-Naturalist* 61(3): 105–115.
- King, R.** 1998. *Jack: A Life with Writers*. McClland and Stewart, Toronto, Ontario.

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