

- Vaurie, C. 1974. *Pseudocolaptes* monotypique et ses variations de plumage. Oiseau 44: 145-148.—Describes two immature plumages of *Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii* (the two "species" recognized by Zimmer in 1936) and concludes that the genus is monotypic.—A.C.
- Van der Weyden, W. J. 1974. Vocal affinities of the Puerto Rican and Vermiculated Screech Owls (*Otus nudipes* and *Otus guatemalae*). Ibis 116: 369-372.—Describes songs and discusses zoogeographical significance.—R.W.S.

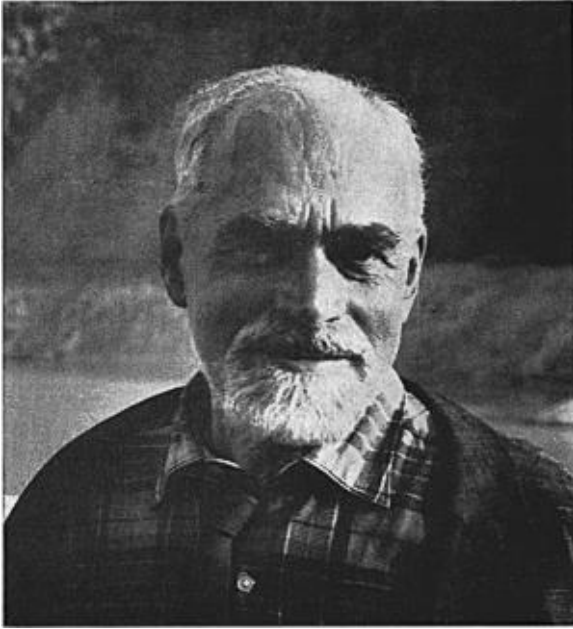
OBITUARIES

HANS CHRISTIAN JOHANSEN, elected a Corresponding Fellow of the A.O.U. in 1955, died on December 18, 1973, in Lingby, Denmark. He was born in Riga, Latvia, on December 2, 1897, the third of five children of Danish parents. His interest in natural science was evident in childhood.

Hans lived in difficult times and places—an understatement. Before he was ten years old, he had watched from a window workers shot at by Cossacks and wagonloads of dead passing by. He was uprooted, dispossessed, and changed location and occupation frequently. But he was self-sufficient to a remarkable degree and pursued his major interest, birds, in the face of adversity.

Hans worked at many tasks: as a student (of zoology, medicine, and zoogeography), teacher (notably at the university at Tomsk), as a herder of Mongolian yaks, at tending horses, as a carpenter, bookkeeper, field collector, all-around expedition man, co-founder of a museum at Bisk on the upper Ob River, overseer of fisheries investigations (his assistants did the work while Hans pursued birds), in charge of the fur company on the Commander Islands, museum worker in various capacities, and author of technical papers.

There is not room here even to outline his life, but some highlights may be mentioned. In 1928 he went to the Commander Islands and stayed three years. While there, he got the tomb of Vitus Bering (another Dane) renovated and a new cross erected. He returned to a teaching post at Tomsk in August, 1931. In 1937 he was ordered to leave the U.S.S.R. within ten days, being a foreigner. He left his bird collection in Leningrad, but it finally reached Copenhagen in 1948. He had moved to a Copenhagen suburb the previous year and was in charge of birdbanding at the University Zoological Museum. He also continued working on his interrupted serial paper on west Siberian birds. In 1949 he injured his back while on a trip to Spitzbergen. Later he was in an automobile accident. In 1956 he was a popular figure among old friends from Tomsk at the first U.S.S.R. ornithological congress. Part of 1960 was spent in New York City, part in Canada, and also at about that time he was getting settled on property he had purchased on the island of Laesø in the Kattegat, which he later gave to the university in Copenhagen. He quit zoological work at the museum in the 1960's to study waders in the Southern Hemisphere. In Chile, at age 66, he fell from a ledge and was badly hurt, yet he managed to get afield in Tierra del Fuego. He was awarded a Danish Royal medal in 1961. A notably happy event in his career was attending the U.S.S.R. ornithological congress in Alma-Ata, Kazakh S.S.R., in early September 1965. By then he had become a living legend and,



HANS CHRISTIAN JOHANSEN
Lake Issik, near Alma-Ata, Kazakh S.S.R.
September 7, 1965

wherever he went, he was surrounded by the students of those students whom he had influenced long before at Tomsk.

He made later trips, by air, to east Africa, southwest Asia, and Mexico. His health was failing gradually and he had to give up going to Laesø. He paid a farewell visit to Leningrad in 1972.

Hans was a charming and interesting person. He could—and did—handle his vodka well until his physician forbade it. As much as humanly possible, he went his own way, often opposed to the prevailing mood. He spoke a half dozen languages and wrote well in several. After long years in Siberia and beyond, Hans returned as a stranger to his homeland, with a foreign accent and habituated to modes of thinking quite alien to those of the Danes. His real love was western Siberia.

In spite of near starvation and other distressing hardships, and knowing of various calamities that had befallen practically all of his relatives, Hans still maintained that he was neither a disappointed nor a bitter man. He said (late in life) that marriage was not for him, yet he had married twice in the U.S.S.R. and then once in Denmark. The first was to a woman of the Altai; they had a daughter who was educated in Estonia, later married a Dane, and she took care of Hans in his final years. The second was dissolved by Stalin's decree that voided all marriages between Russians and foreigners. A daughter was born of this union and, although Hans knew of her life and circumstances, he never saw her. The third marriage was ended with restrictions against remarrying in Denmark.

As a zoologist, Hans wanted to understand the ecological requirements of each bird species; he also wanted his birds in hand, and as museum skins, and in the pot. He wasted nothing. Taxonomically he was a splitter. Probably he is most widely known for his serial paper on west Siberian birds (1943–61, *J. Ornithol.*). Most useful to American students are "Revision und Entstehung der Arktischen Vögelfauna" (1956, *Acta Arctica* fasc. 8; 1958, *Acta Arctica* fasc. 9) and "Revised list of birds of the Commander Islands" (1961, *Auk* 78: 44). There is a list of his published papers, 1922–69, at the end of an account of his life by Bernt Løppenthin (1974, *Dansk Ornithol. Foren. Tids.* 68: 71). Thanks to Anders Joensen, a dictated (on tape) English translation of Løppenthin's very useful paper was made available to the undersigned.—RALPH S. PALMER.

RUTH HARRIS THOMAS, a Member of the A.O.U. since 1935 and an Elective Member since 1950, died at Morrilton, Arkansas, February 8, 1973, at the age of 72. Mrs. Thomas was born in Kentucky on August 25, 1900, and spent her childhood in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi. In the fall of 1923, after graduating from Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge where she edited the weekly student newspaper, Mrs. Thomas became a reporter for the "Arkansas Gazette" in Little Rock. In 1927 she married the late Rowland Thomas, Associate Editor of the "Gazette" until his death in 1945.

In 1933 Mrs. Thomas began her column "The Country Diarist" in the "Arkansas Gazette." It started as a monthly nature column, but from 1935 until her death it appeared weekly, with much emphasis on birds. She started banding actively in 1937, and many of her column articles discussed her banded birds. She also wrote constantly on conservation matters and was largely instrumental in the passage of a State law protecting all raptors. A founder of the Arkansas Audubon Society, she was active in building its membership to more than 1000 members. The Society honored her by establishing Ruth Thomas Scholarships, which have provided training at National Audubon Society study camps for many natural science teachers and youth leaders.

She was also a member of the Wilson Ornithological Society and the Northeastern Bird Banding Association, and published several articles in *Wilson Bulletin* and *Bird-Banding* as well as in *Auk*. Probably her most significant contribution to ornithology was a 40-page "Study of Eastern Bluebirds in Arkansas" in the 1946 *Wilson Bulletin*, a detailed life history regarded as one of the most definitive studies of the species. Equally important was her popularly written "Crip come home," published the same year by Harper Bros., an account of her color-banded Brown Thrashers that she studied many years—with a long-lived, broken-winged thrasher as the central character. The book received laudatory reviews for its solid contribution to ornithology.

I thank Mrs. Thomas Foster and Dr. Douglas James for giving me information about Mrs. Thomas' activities and writings.—HENRY N. HALBERG.

EARLE ROSENBURY GREENE died March 12, 1975 in Brunswick, Georgia after a short illness. Born in Atlanta on August 21, 1886, Earle lived most of his life in Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, and California, and spent his last four years on St. Simons Island, Georgia.

Earle was a serious bird student for at least 76 of his 88-plus years. Earle's father, Allison Lawson Greene, died rather young in June 1893; but his mother, Susan Caryl

Greene, remained an important influence in Earle's life and continually encouraged his outdoor interests. In his autobiography Earle credits "a stranger from the north," a Mrs. Van Wyck, with awakening his interest in birds. Shortly after arriving in Atlanta in 1899, this lady started "a class of twelve or fifteen pupils who met at her house once a week for study and made field trips generally on Saturdays." Their textbook was Frank M. Chapman's "Handbook of birds of eastern North America," and Earle's mother gave him a copy of it for Christmas that year. From then on he used every opportunity to watch birds in the woods and field, he read about them in libraries, and he visited museums to study mounted specimens.

After attending the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee, Earle began a career in business—but his heart wasn't in it. In 1934 he took a position with the U.S. Biological Survey (now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). For the next eight years he was manager of several refuges, including Lake Mattamuskeet in North Carolina, Okefenokee in Georgia, and the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge in the Florida Keys. When funds for such activities began to dry up during World War II, Earle was persuaded to take a position as a civilian employee with the U.S. Navy in 1942. He continued in this work until he retired from government service in 1956. In May 1952 Earle married Ruth Watkins of Los Angeles. They had no children, and Mrs. Greene died in January 1958.

Earle was a lifelong member of the National Audubon Society and a founding member of a number of bird clubs and societies, such as the Atlanta Bird Club, the Georgia Society of Naturalists, the Georgia Ornithological Society, and the Louisiana Ornithological Society. He joined the A.O.U. in 1921 and became an Elective Member in 1942. His valuable service on the A.O.U. Archives Committee stemmed from his important interest not only in birds, but also in people. He was one of the founders of the "600 Club," and served as its Executive Secretary until a month before his death, when his own life list was 664 species.

Earle's "Redpoll in Georgia" in the 1922 *Bird-Lore* was the first of a series of more than 100 short notes he contributed to the literature in the next half century, 27 of them in *Auk*. A major work was his 111-page "Birds of Georgia" compiled in 1945 in collaboration with William Griffin, Eugene Odum, Herbert Stoddard, and Ivan Tomkins, which laid the groundwork for Burleigh's 1958 "Georgia birds." Further details of his productive career are available in his 404-page, amply illustrated autobiography, "A lifetime with the birds," published in 1966.

Earle loved birds and he loved people. He provided a prime example of how an intense and undying interest can lead to a long and full life.—JOSEPH E. KING.

NOTES AND NEWS

The National Photographic Index of Australian Birds, a project founded in 1969 by The Australian Museum in Sydney to establish a comprehensive photographic record of the 700 or so species of Australian birds, invites all photographers who could offer photographs of the Australian species—particularly of the seabirds included in the official checklist—to write for literature about the project and details of the procedures for submitting work to THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER, *National Photographic Index of Australian Birds*, The Australian Museum, 6-8 College Street, Sydney, 2000, Australia.