



In Memoriam

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IN MEMORIAM: DENNIS G. RAVELING, 1939-1991

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DENNIS G. RAVELING, 1939-1991

His many friends, colleagues and students were saddened at the death of Dennis G. Raveling ("Rav" to his students and friends) on 12 August 1991 after a long, courageous battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife Olga of Davis, California, and his mother and sister, both of Arlington Heights, Illinois.

At the time of his death, Rav had been a faculty member of the University of California at Davis for 20 years, three of which were served as Department Chair. He played a key role in the development and administration of the nationally respected Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Biology. Throughout his academic career, he maintained an outstanding level of scientific productivity and active involvement in teaching and research.

Rav was born on 28 February 1939 at Devil's Lake, North Dakota. His interest in wildlife and waterfowl, especially Canada Geese, stemmed from early hunting experiences, and he devoted his adult life to understanding and conserving geese. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology at Southern Illinois University (SIU) followed by a Master of Science degree at the University of Minnesota. He then returned to SIU, where he carried out one of the first radio-telemetry projects on Canada Geese for his Ph.D. in Zoology, which was awarded in 1967. During his final year at SIU, Dennis headed to Canada where he helped lead a project funded by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to study the nesting ecology of Canada Geese in the Hudson Bay Lowlands. He was employed as a

Research Scientist with the Canadian Wildlife Service from 1967 through 1970.

Rav's most recent research involved various populations of Arctic-nesting geese in the Pacific Flyway. His ability to integrate research results into management actions contributed to the continued health and stability of several goose populations. An influential and positive force in waterfowl management, he reviewed and helped write management plans for many goose species.

Rav's powerful intellect and scientific endeavors resulted in the publication of 62 scientific papers and one book (to be finalized by a coauthor). His expertise in avian biology was recognized worldwide and brought him many honors. He was elected to full membership of the Society of Sigma Xi in 1967 while still a graduate student at Southern Illinois University. Subsequent honors and awards included elections as an Elective Member in 1978 and then Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1991, and as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1981. He was chosen as a Biological Sciences Nelson Memorial Lecturer at the University of Missouri in 1984, a Distinguished Ecologist and Barkalow Memorial Lecturer at North Carolina State University in 1986, a participant in the Visiting Professor Seminar Program at the University of Alberta in 1987, and a guest speaker at the 1988 Spring Conference of The Wildfowl Trust in England.

Rav's contributions to wetlands and waterfowl conservation were honored by his election as President of the California Wetlands Foundation, an Honorary Life Membership in the California Waterfowl Association in 1984, a Special Recognition Service Award for leadership in education and research from the Wildlife Society in 1990, the Wildlife Society's Publication Award for the outstanding publication in wildlife ecology and management in 1991, and a Special Recognition Award from the California Department of Fish and Game the same year.

Rav was known among his graduate students as a tough and critical professional, who was unrelenting in his demands for excellence. A student's recitation of problems and complaints was met with understanding, but was frequent-

ly followed by the comment, "if it was easy, it would have been done." He expected a lot from his students, but gave a lot in return and left a bit of himself in each of them. One former student wrote, "Your part in my development has made you a part of who I am, and that's a part of me that I'm very proud of." Over the years, he accompanied hundreds of students and fellow professionals in the field—an enriching experience for the most seasoned biologist, and a dazzling one for a student. There, in the wetland ecosystem he loved, he shared his mastery of what was known about wetland and waterfowl ecology, and his curiosity and ideas about what was not known. He mixed them with a contagious delight that infected everyone.

One of Rav's greatest accomplishments was his training of students. He planted the seeds of curiosity, challenge, knowledge and excellence that took root and grew. His dedication and expertise have guided students and professionals alike in the quest for enlightened approaches to waterfowl-management challenges. These provided the stimulus for lively discussion and interaction at professional conferences, where Rav became the focal point and guided discussions during many late-night sessions, sharing his mastery of research and its resource-management implications with students and peers alike.

Rav's intensity for teaching and research was contrasted by his warm personable disposition and upbeat sense of humor. He never missed an opportunity to play practical jokes on his students and coinstructors. His pranks were very subtle; the longer it took the victim to realize he'd been had, the more Rav enjoyed it.

As a permanent reminder of his dedication and commitment to the scientific management of our waterfowl resource, the California Waterfowl Association has established the Dennis Raveling Scholarship Fund for Waterfowl Research. The fund will provide an annual award to a student pursuing a career in waterfowl or wetlands ecology.

Rav will be missed and remembered with admiration as an inspiring mentor and stimulating friend. He will live on in his students and colleagues in the enhanced knowledge of waterfowl biology and management that he imparted.