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## IN MEMORIAM: RALPH WARREN DEXTER, 1912–1991

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Born on 7 April 1912, Ralph Dexter grew up in the fishing port of Gloucester, on Cape Ann, Massachusetts. His early passion for molluscs, crustaceans, and tidal pools remained with him throughout his life, but at age 16 a Miss Babson of the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary, and Historical Association awakened his interest in birds. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Massachusetts in 1934 and in 1981 received the University's Distinguished Alumnus Award. His outstanding undergraduate record earned him admission to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where, in 1938, he was awarded a Ph.D. for his doctoral dissertation on the ecological interactions of marine communities in a tidal inlet on Cape Ann, Massachusetts (*Ecol. Monogr.* 17:261–294, 1944). He later served as Vice-President and President of the Malacological Union. In 1937 Ralph accepted a job at Kent State University where for 45 years he taught courses in ecology, field zoology (which included ornithology), and history of biology, and where, in 1938, he married Jean Westwater. With Kent, Ohio, having few tidal communities, Ralph began a long-term study of the Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) that nested in the vent pipes on the roof of the biology building. From 1944 until the end of his life, Ralph banded all adult and nestling swifts that used those vents. Dur-

ing this time he published many papers on swifts, as well as ecological studies of the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Common Barn-Owl (*Tyto alba*), Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*), and Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*). In 1957 Kent State recognized Ralph Dexter with its Most Distinguished Faculty Award, in 1964 the Chimney Swift was incorporated into the seal of the university, and in 1977 Ralph received the University's President's Medal. Ralph's interest in America's 19th century naturalists is reflected in several historical papers, his active membership in the Society for the History of Natural Science, and his pivotal role in founding the History of Science Committee of the Ohio Academy of Science. He was a Fellow of the AAAS and the Ohio Academy of Sciences; for the latter he served as Secretary, Historian, and President. In 1991 the Academy honored him as one of its Centennial Honorees. He joined the American Ornithologists' Union in 1942 and became an elected member in 1976. He was also a member of the Association of Field Ornithologists, the Wilson Ornithological Society (where he served on the Nominating and Resolutions committees), and the Inland Bird Banding Association (where he served as Vice-President). Ralph Dexter died in Kent, Ohio, on 29 October 1991. He is survived by two daughters.

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## IN MEMORIAM: BRYAN STEVEN OBST, 1956–1991

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Bryan Steven Obst, co-chair of the joint AUCOS meeting in Los Angeles in 1990, died on 9 August 1991 soon after hospitalization for what

proved to be an intractable illness. His tragically early death at age 35 cut short what promised to be an outstanding career.