

The Auk 111(1):239-240, 1994

ELLIOTT COUES AWARD, 1993:

JOEL L. CRACRAFT



The American Ornithologists' Union takes pleasure in presenting the Elliott Coues Award for 1993 to one of the most prominent ornithologists of our generation, Joel L. Cracraft. Through 48 national and international symposia, three co-edited or co-authored books, 20 major reviews, and 100 research papers, commentaries, and reviews published over two and one-half decades, Dr. Cracraft has boldly linked ornithological data to the broadest concepts of systematic and evolutionary biology. In a series of major publications (*J. Zool.* 169:455-545, 1973; *Annu. Rev. Ecol. Syst.* 5:215-261, 1974; *Syst. Zool.* 37:396-427, 1988) he exposed the indelible influence of plate tectonics on the deep history and evolution of continental avifaunas. A pioneering exponent of cladistics, Cracraft has repeatedly clarified difficult morphologic and paleontologic problems with the rigorous methodology of phylogenetic systematics (*Condor* 74:379-392, 1972; *Ibis* 116:494-521, 1974; *Auk* 98:481-494, 1981; *Paleobiology* 7:456-468, 1981; *Syst. Zool.* 31:35-56, 1982).

Landmark investigations of avian classification have resulted (*Auk* 98:681-714, 1981).

Not content with broadly significant theoretical analyses, he has probed the conceptual bases of species, awakening new interest in this central issue of evolutionary biology (*Curr. Ornithol.* 1:159-187, 1983; *Biol. & Philos.* 2:329-346, 1987; *Cladistics* 8:1-43, 1992). Reflecting both his breadth and his capacity for growth, Cracraft most recently strengthened his attack on problems in avian systematics by adding DNA sequencing to his arsenal. The social aspects of evolution have not escaped his pen; a series of influential papers published in the 1980s exposed the bankruptcy of creationism.

For his successful application of theory and methods of comparative biology to a program of ornithological research, and to recognize his capacity for unification and synthesis, we present the Elliott Coues Award to Joel L. Cracraft.

Award criteria.—The Elliott Coues Award is given

for meritorious contributions having an important influence on the study of birds in the Western Hemisphere, but which have not been recognized through a Brewster Award. Contributions to ornithology not eligible for recognition with a Brewster Award by virtue of its geographic limitations may be honored through a Coues Award, as may works including important innovative ideas that through brevity or pub-

lication outside the primarily ornithological literature may not have been selected based on Brewster Award criteria. However, the Coues Award is not necessarily limited to such works. The award consists of a certificate and an honorarium provided through the endowed Ralph W. Schreiber Fund of the American Ornithologists' Union.