

In Memoriam



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IN MEMORIAM: THEODORE A. PARKER III, 1953–1993

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Ted Parker, a member of the AOU since 1982, and an Elective Member since 1987, died after the small plane in which he was flying crashed northwest of Guayaquil, Ecuador, on 3 August 1993. Three others died in this tragic accident, including the indefatigable botanist Alwyn H. Gentry. In this brief space, we can do little more than to summarize the highlights of Ted's short but remarkable career. A more complete memorial by M. B. Robbins, G. R. Graves, and J. V. Remsen, Jr., and a paper, with full bibliography, by Remsen and T. S. Schulenberg ("The pervasive influence of Ted Parker on Neotropical field ornithology") are in press in "Studies in Neotropical ornithology honoring Ted Parker" (*Ornithological Monographs* No. 48).

Ted was born on 1 April 1953 and raised in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in a family that encouraged his childhood interest in natural history. Ted soon demonstrated remarkable abilities in bird identification and observation. He used these skills to achieve fame as a "birder" in North America while still in his teens, as a bird tour leader (principally for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours), and, especially following his association with Louisiana State University, as a field researcher. Ted was not the first ornithologist to travel widely in South America, but he possessed an uncanny ability to fully assimilate what he was seeing, to identify common pat-

terns in behavior or vocalizations or community structure across the continent, and to demonstrate that indeed someone could master an avifauna whose size and complexity intimidated everyone else.

Ted generously provided information, advice, and encouragement to all who shared his interests. Although he studied many aspects of bird biology, one of his principal interests was bird vocalizations. Far more important than the fame Ted achieved for his skills at learning the voices of tropical birds was the example he provided as a field recordist; he was instrumental in propelling the Library of Natural Sounds at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology into one of the world's premier archives of bird sounds. Despite his often hectic travel schedule, Ted published extensively on his field work. At the time of his death his field ability was achieving its greatest impact through the innovative Rapid Assessment Program (RAP), which he founded and directed for Conservation International.

We are only two among the many who mourn, not just the loss of a spirited and productive colleague, but also the loss of a friend. Ted was charismatic, playful, strong-willed, and above all, one of a kind. We miss not only the knowledge Ted had to share, but the companionship and joy he brought to so many.