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Marion Jenkinson AOU Service Award, 2007

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and educational actions that conserve birds or preserve significant habitats; (2) scientific examination of the principles of avian conservation and application of new insights into species restoration; and (3) scientific evaluation, guidance, creation, and oversight of avian recovery programs or habitat-reserve restoration programs. The award consists of a framed certificate and an honorarium.

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MARION JENKINSON AOU SERVICE AWARD, 2007:

JAY M. SHEPPARD



Jay M. Sheppard, July 2007. (Photograph by Sharon L. Sheppard.)

Jay Sheppard has served as Managing Editor for Recent Ornithological Literature/Ornithological Worldwide Literature (OWL—www.birdlit.org) since replacing Peter Stettenheim in 2000. From 1995 until then, he served as the Nearctic Editor for five years. Jay has been a driving force behind this joint project of the AOU, British Ornithologists' Union, and BirdsAustralia. During his tenure, he has overseen, and in many cases performed with his own hands, the myriad tasks involved in creating a fully searchable and indexed database that now contains more than 75,000 citations. OWL is available free of charge to anyone in the world with internet access.

Jay has devoted an enormous amount of thought and hard work to this project for more than a decade and a half. The tasks he has performed have been diverse and labor-intensive. He developed data-entry protocols so that abstracts from a large group of volunteers spread across the world could be submitted electronically in a straightforward, standardized format. Software was developed to perform a number of checks and edits on

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the submitted records, including a unique and vitally important verification that all scientific names (including trinomials) appear in an acceptable combination that has been used in the literature over the past several decades. In addition to coordinating the input from a stable of regional editors worldwide and a large number of individual abstractors in North America, Jay single-handedly accomplished the conversion and entry into the online database of all of the citations in the print version of Recent Ornithological Literature going back to 1983. This was an enormous and demanding task, because a large amount of critical editing was necessary to convert the scanned printed citation into a format that was compatible with and useable in an online system. Jay has written, and just recently revised for the fourth time since 1995, an extensive and detailed manual of guidelines for use by abstractors submitting material to OWL, including a subject-indexing system to reduce search time by users.

The above covers most of the important facts regarding Jay's work on OWL. He has put in a huge amount of time on this project—on the order of 1000–2000 man hours per year. When he was getting the old Recent Ornithological Literature records into the database, he was processing something on the order of 500–1,000 records per week. It is definitely a labor of love for him. Recent analysis of website use has shown an average of 440 actual database searches monthly, showing the value of this service to the ornithological community. Jay continues to recruit dozens of volunteers to help cover the world's literature of interest to ornithologists. Any project like this requires at least one individual who is the "sparkplug" that keeps the operation running. Jay has been and is that person. For his outstanding service to the American Ornithologists' Union, we are pleased to award Jay M. Sheppard the 2007 Marion Jenkinson AOU Service Award for 2007.

Award criteria.—The Marion Jenkinson AOU Service Award was created by the Council in 1996 in honor of Marion Jenkinson Mengel, who served the AOU as Treasurer and in other capacities for many years. It is awarded to an individual who has performed continued, extensive service to the AOU, including holding elected offices but emphasizing volunteered contributions and committee participation. Recipients are selected by the AOU Executive Committee. The award consists of a framed certificate.

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