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RALPH W. SCHREIBER CONSERVATION AWARD, 2010

Long-term Northern Spotted Owl Demographic Research Team

The AOU Conservation Award was established in 2005 to honor that person or group of people who have made extraordinary scientific contributions to the conservation, restoration, or preservation of birds and their habitats. In 2010, the AOU honors the Long-term Northern Spotted Owl Demographic Research Team for the extensive efforts the group has made for the conservation of the Northern Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*).

Since the establishment of the first Northern Spotted Owl demography studies in 1985–1987, these avian ecologists have collaborated to collect annual demographic data from individually marked and/or radiocollared Northern Spotted Owls, including ~5,244 banded owls on 11 study areas scattered across the range of this threatened species. During this 25-year period, they have endured challenging field conditions and even more challenging social conditions at a time when the Northern Spotted Owl was as the center of the timber wars in the Pacific Northwest. Equally difficult has been the neverending struggle to obtain funding to keep these important studies going year after year.

The result of this huge collaborative temporal and spatial effort is that this group of dedicated biologists has produced the largest, most detailed avian demographic study ever undertaken. Their efforts are compiled every 5 years and published as peer-reviewed papers such as their monographs in 1996 (*Studies in Avian Biology No. 17*) and 2006 (*Wildlife Monograph 163*) and for an upcoming volume of *Studies in Avian Biology*. Individual scientists have also published numerous peer-reviewed papers, including papers on dispersal, diet, habitat selection, genetics, and hybridization. The data from the demography studies are the primary source of Northern Spotted Owl information for all federal agencies and have played an important role in helping to develop long-term management plans for Northern Spotted Owls and other species that occur in old forests in the Pacific

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Long-term Northern Spotted Owl Demographic Research Team (from left to right): Mark Higley, Chuck Meslow, Robert Anthony, and Eric Forsman. (Photograph by Susan M. Haig.)

Northwest. The data have been presented to U.S. Cabinet members, members of Congress, and several U.S. presidents.

In short, the ornithologists involved in this demographic study have worked together for decades to ensure that conservation decisions regarding the owls are made with the best possible information, and they have produced a landmark study that will not soon be duplicated anywhere in the world. In recognition of their contributions, the AOU proudly presents the 2010 Ralph W. Schreiber Award to Robert G. Anthony (U.S. Geological Survey [USGS], Oregon Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Corvallis), Lowell V. Diller (Green Diamond Timber Company, Arcata, California), Eric D. Forsman (U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Corvallis), Alan B. Franklin (USDA/APHIS National Wildlife Research Center, Fort Collins, Colorado), Ralph G. Gutierrez (Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation, University of Minnesota, St. Paul), Dale R. Herter (Raedeke Associates, Seattle, Washington), J. Mark Higley (Hoopa Tribal Forestry, Hoopa, California), Joseph B. Lint (U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Roseburg, Oregon), and Charles Meslow (USGS Oregon Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Corvallis, retired).

Award criteria.—The Ralph W. Schreiber Conservation Award recognizes extraordinary scientific contributions to the conservation, restoration, or preservation of birds and/or their habitats by an individual or small team (usually fewer than 10 people). Contributions from throughout the world and over any time course are eligible. Appropriate activities include (a) applied research, restoration, and educational actions that conserve birds or preserve significant bird habitats; (b) scientific examination of the principles of avian conservation and application of new insights into species restoration; and (c) 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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