BioOne COMPLETE

In Memoriam: Gordon Lindsay Maclean, 1937–2008

Author: Koopman, Margaret M.

Source: The Auk, 128(4) : 800

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: https://doi.org/10.1525/auk.2011.128.4.800

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

Downloaded From: https://complete.bioone.org/journals/The-Auk on 28 Mar 2024
Terms of Use: https://complete.bioone.org/terms-of-use

The Auk 128(4):800, 2011
© The American Ornithologists' Union, 2011.
Printed in USA.

IN MEMORIAM: GORDON LINDSAY MACLEAN, 1937–2008

Margaret M. Koopman

Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa

Gordon Maclean, AOU Honorary Fellow (1985), was born in Durban, South Africa, on 20 May 1937 and died on 30 March 2008 in Howick, South Africa. He grew up in Lesotho (previously Basutoland) and left school early to help out on the family farm in the eastern Free State, South Africa, where his interest in birds was initiated. He published his first paper (1957) based on observations in the Westminster, Thaba 'Nchu, and Ladybrand area of the Free State. He completed his schooling privately and initially enrolled to study medicine at the University of Cape Town. When his funds ran out he joined De Beers and worked from 1956 to 1959 as a diamond prospector on the Skeleton Coast in what is now Namibia. There he became interested in desert bird adaptations, a field he was to develop for his Ph.D. studies, and which was to be his abiding ornithological interest, culminating in the publication of *Ecophysiology of Desert Birds* (1996). Gordon was a student at Rhodes University (1960–1968) and completed his Honours degree (1963) and Ph.D. (1968) at Rhodes University. He was awarded a D.Sc. by the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (1975), where he held an academic post from 1968 until his retirement in 1997.

Besides being a respected teacher, Gordon published over 100 scientific papers, 12 books, over 20 chapters in books, numerous popular articles, and was editor of *The Ostrich* from 1977 to 1984. He is remembered for his single-handed revisions of *Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa* editions 5 (1985) and 6 (1993), which for the first time included sonograms and references to scientific papers for many of the descriptions. His annotated copies of editions 4 and 5, which were used to produce editions 5 and 6, are archived in the Niven Library at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute and are a testimony to his meticulous attention to detail and the incredible amount of work that went into such a task. The detailed early revisions of *Roberts'* were accomplished prior to sophisticated personal computers and desktop publishing software. Both the 5th and 6th editions of *Roberts'* have comprehensive indexes to indigenous bird names (in 10 languages), and the 6th edition also includes an index to German names.

At the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the 1980s and 1990s, lectures by Professor Maclean were appreciated for his sharp intellect and wit. Dave Ward, a Ph.D. (1987) student, now a professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, remembers Gordon as an insightful, brilliant man whose command of the English language was exceptional. He taught students to be rigorous in their scientific thinking as well as getting them to think in unique ways. Adrian Craig, an early Maclean student, is now Professor in the Department of Zoology and Entomology at Rhodes University. Both Adrian and Dave remember Gordon's open-door policy—supervision was not close, but advice was always available on request. Adrian, a subsequent *Ostrich* editor, commented that he is sure that "many authors benefited from [Gordon's] editorial pen." Gordon's interest in linguistics and his being a stickler for the correct use of language, both written and spoken, served him well in all his endeavours.

In addition to his academic achievements, Gordon was awarded the Gill Memorial Medal (1975) for outstanding contributions to the ornithology of the Southern African geographic area "for his studies on desert birds, especially the social weavers." He served on the councils of the South African Ornithological Society (1977–1984), the Zoological Society of South Africa, and the Wildlife Protection Society and was a Corresponding Member of the Deutsche Ornithologen-Gesellschaft, an Honorary Member of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and an Honorary Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union.

Gordon is survived by his wife, Cherie, and their children, Anne and David.

Downloaded From: https://complete.bioone.org/journals/The-Auk on 28 Mar 2024
Terms of Use: https://complete.bioone.org/terms-of-use