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IN MEMORIAM: EDWARD MAX NICHOLSON, 1904–2003

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Max Nicholson was born in Dublin on 12 July 1904, when Ireland was still a part of the United Kingdom, but moved to England when young. His father was unable to finance his university education, but in 1926 he won a scholarship to Oxford where he read history, in between periods of intensive ornithology.

At Oxford, he began to organize people to count birds. He started censuses on the University's farm at Sandford, the first constant-effort ringing program, and the first national surveys—of the Gray Heron and the Rook. In the case of the Rook, he showed that the total amount of food eaten by the birds was trivial as compared with crop production, thus making the first British economic study of a bird species. His organization was later to spawn both the Edward Grey Institute and the British Trust for Ornithology.

Max played a major part in many ornithological productions as Senior Editor of *British Birds*, 1951–1960. He was the driving force in both the concept and the business arrangements for production of *Birds of the Western Palearctic*, 1977–1994. The only author to remain with that project from start to finish, he wrote the habitat sections for every species in all nine volumes.

He played a part in setting up The Nature Conservancy, took charge after the first Director General resigned, and stayed 14 years. There was much political infighting at the time; it is widely felt that only Max's forceful advocacy enabled the fledgling organization to survive. During his directorship, more than 100 National Nature Reserves and more than 2,000 Sites of Special Scientific Interest were established. He set up the Monks Wood Experimental Station, perhaps the first in the world to look at the effects of toxic chemicals on wildlife.

Through his Nature Conservancy position, he had a hand in the setting up of the National Parks. He was a major player in setting up the World Wildlife Fund, the IUCN, the Wildfowl Trust, Earthwatch Europe, the S'Albufera reserve on Mallorca, and the International Biological Programme, 1963–1974. In 1966, he set up Land Use Consultants, perhaps the first environmental consultancy. He was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the AOU in 1953 and an Honorary Fellow in 1991.

That he achieved so much is the more amazing considering that, after a brief visit to Baluchistan in 1952, on a study of resource development for the U.N., he contracted polio and was told by a specialist that he would always be a "cripple." With his usual drive, he ignored that information and, notwithstanding the limp and a stiff arm, carried on as forcefully and energetically as before.

Less well known are Max's contributions outside ornithology and conservation. During World War II, he had important roles in Government; for much of the war, he was in charge of organizing the Atlantic convoys and played a key part in the shipping planning for "Operation Overlord," the invasion of Europe. He was involved in high-level strategic conferences in Cairo, Québec, Yalta, and Potsdam and was awarded the CVO and the CB. A longer obituary with a portrait was published in *Ibis* 146, July 2004.

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