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AWARD

Ralph W. Schreiber Conservation Award 2016, to John Fitzpatrick

Published January 11, 2017

The American Ornithologists' Union is deeply honored to present the 2016 Ralph W. Schreiber Conservation Award to Dr. John Fitzpatrick, executive director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at Cornell University. Under his leadership, the Cornell Lab has grown into a powerhouse for conservation that brings bird science to the public through enormously influential education and outreach programs.

As head of the Cornell Lab since 1995, Dr. Fitzpatrick has made possible many programs with important conservation applications, such as the Avian Knowledge Network and eBird, which supports an ever-growing army of projects harnessing its open data and species distribution models. For example, the Nature Conservancy is using eBird data in real time to manage water levels in flooded fields in the Central Valley of California in order to optimize these habitats for shorebirds. He has played a key role in creating the Lab's extensive web resources for deepening public understanding of conservation. He has also been a staunch supporter of many collaborative programs with conservation outcomes, including production of the annual *State of the Birds* report. Fitzpatrick has worked with federal officials at many levels, from engaging with the secretary of the interior to serving on federal endangered-species recovery panels.

Fitzpatrick served as AOU president (2000–2002) and has been actively involved in the AOU and in an array of other scientific and conservation organizations for many years. He has also cultivated a vibrant future of bird conservation through his teaching and mentorship of undergraduate and graduate students. His former students have moved into leadership positions in prominent conservation organizations, including the American Bird Conservancy and the National Audubon Society.

Fitzpatrick received his B.A. in biology from Harvard University in 1974 and his Ph.D. in biology from Princeton University in 1978. His subsequent posts included executive director and senior research biologist at the Archbold Biological Station in Florida, and bird curator at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. His work on the ecology of Florida Scrub-Jays has helped slow the decline of this threatened species. The AOU has previously (1985) recognized Fitzpatrick and his longtime collaborator Glen E. Woolfenden for their work on Florida Scrub-Jays. It is exceptional for an ornithologist to be twice honored by the AOU with a senior award, as these rare cases recognize two disparate contributions to ornithology.

In recognition of the depth and breadth of his accomplishments in conserving birds and their habitats, the American Ornithologists' Union is proud to name Dr. John Fitzpatrick as the recipient of the 2016 Ralph W. Schreiber Conservation Award.

Award criteria. The Ralph W. Schreiber Conservation Award, established in 2005, recognizes extraordinary



John Fitzpatrick

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scientific contributions to the conservation, restoration, or preservation of birds and/or their habitats by an individual or small team. The award honors Ralph Schreiber, a prominent figure in the AOU known for his enthusiasm, energy, and dedication to research and conservation. The award comprises a framed certificate and an honorarium provided by the AOU's endowed Ralph W. Schreiber Fund.

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