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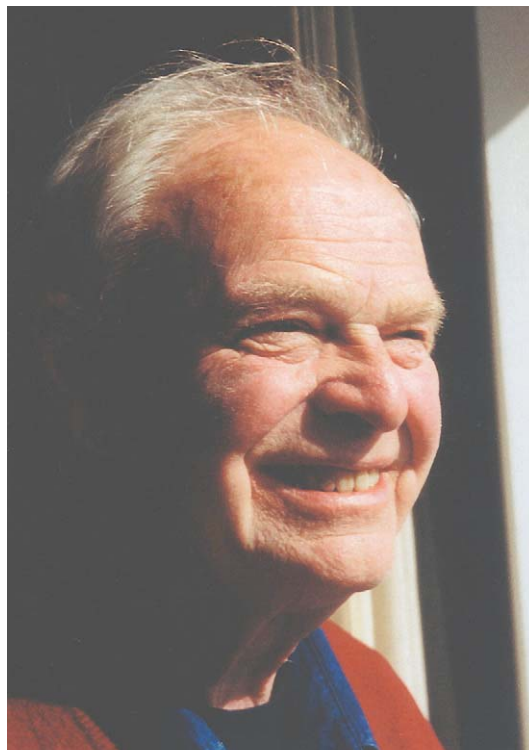
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Jo Rampen (1915–2006)

Johannes (Jo) Rampen passed away on 11 October 2006 at 90 years of age. He was an exponent of the amateur ornithologists who have given such strong support to the *Nederlandse Ornithologische Unie* (NOU) and her predecessor, the *Nederlandse Ornithologische Vereniging* (NOV). For many years he served in official capacities, as secretary of the *Club van Nederlandse Vogelkundigen* (CNV, 1971–1982), and was for many years on the board of the NOU (1971–1995), of which fully 20 years as treasurer.

Born 19 November 1915 in Bergen (Noord-Holland), the village of painters and poets close to the dunes and the North Sea, Jo was the son of Jacob Rampen and Geertruida Cornelia Rampen-Zander. His father was carpenter specialized in the construction and repair of windmills, carrying on the family business. Jo grew up in that wooded village with rural surroundings at a time that Stone Curlew, Nightjar, Golden Oriole and Kingfisher were local breeders. As with so many of his generation, he became inspired by the *Verkade-albums*, books by the great popularizer of nature, Jac. P. Thijsse and he learned bird recognition from the bird guides *Wat vliegt daar?* [What is flying there?] (W.H. Dobben 1937) and *Zien is kennen!* [Seeing is knowing!] (Binsbergen, Mooij & Stuurman 1937). At that time these were the only illustrated and affordable bird guides and served many birders until the publication of *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe* (Peterson, Mountfort & Hollom 1954). In his youth Jo was also a sportsman, goalkeeper of the club *Alcmaria Victrix* for which team he played against the famous *Blauw-Wit* in the Amsterdam Olympic Stadion, firstly as reserve, but at the return he was allowed to defend the goal at the club's grounds in the *Alkmaarse Hout*. A heavy injury put an end to his activities as football player.

Jo started his career as official at the municipal office of his native Bergen (1932–1940). In July



1940 he married Truus Mooij and together they departed for Zuidhorn (Province of Groningen) where he had obtained promotion, again with the municipal government. To those who knew them in later life it may come as a surprise to hear that they excelled in the tango at their dancing school in Alkmaar in 1938, rather daring at that time and in that place. In his Groningen years, Jo took an active part in the national inventory and ringing project of the White Stork (under the guidance of François Haverschmidt, best known abroad as author of *Birds of Surinam*, 1968). This meant that chimneys, poles and trees had to be climbed to ring the young storks. It is hard to imagine Jo, who in his later years conveyed the impression of a sedate and cautious person, in his younger years undertaking such hazardous climbs without hesitation. In any case these feats afforded beautiful

views of the open Groningen landscape, which he recalled with pleasure a long time afterwards. Again achieving promotion, in 1947 Jo and Truus exchanged Zuidhorn for Katwijk, happily a place on the coast, where Jo worked as head of the department of finance and controller at the municipality, retiring in 1979.

His ornithological interest grew during the years which is evident from his memberships of the NOV (1945) and the CNV (elected in 1953). After the war the couple set out to explore Europe, and in particular the Farne Islands, Northeast-England, made a deep impression. The sound of the Kittiwakes circling at the colony there inspired them to name their newly built house, close to the sea, after that mew. Jo discovered a new species for The Netherlands on 15 March 1959, the Ring-necked Duck, an observation he recorded together with K.W.L. Bezemer in *Limosa* (33: 1–6 (1960)). Jo and Truus travelled through Europe intensively and from 1977 also to other continents with journeys to Israel (1977), Surinam (1979), Madagascar (1980) and the Netherlands Antilles (1981).

His wife Truus died much too early (1984) and in memory of her Jo sponsored the insertion of a colour photograph of shorebirds wintering on the Banc d'Arguin, Mauretania, in an issue of *Ardea* (1990) summarizing the Dutch expeditionary research in that area. It must have given Jo much satisfaction that he could place that photograph in *Ardea*, the journal that he, although purely an amateur, strangely enough loved dearly and for which he invariably was the great champion during many discussions in the board of the NOU. He considered *Ardea* the flagship of the Netherlands contribution to ornithology.

Jo recovered after the decease of his wife by undertaking even more ambitious but also fatiguing journeys which he achieved depending largely on his will power: Caucasus, Middle Asia and Siberia (1985), where he (at 69 years of age) was able to climb at night the steep mountain slope near the village Kazbeghi (Caucasus, Georgia) to watch early in the morning the song of the Caucasian Snowcock. There were also journeys to

Costa Rica (1987), Ethiopia (1989), and Trinidad (1996) and to South Africa (1999), because he, as typical seabird watcher, wanted to see albatrosses himself.

Jo was also a fervent collector of shells and his extensive collection has been donated to *Muzee Scheveningen* (a fusion between the *Zeemuseum* and *Museum Scheveningen*). His impressive collection of books and journals has been put partly in the libraries of the NOU and the *Heimans en Thijssse Stichting*, partly donated to friends and acquaintance, which thankfully cherish the acquired books as a memory of a good friend.

At home in Katwijk, Jo became a fanatic telescope addict, reading off the colour codes of ringed Herring Gulls. He thus contributed to the success of a scheme started by the Research Institute for Nature Management under the guidance of Arie Spaans, many years his colleague on the board of the NOU like undersigned. In later years, an old friend of the family, Mrs Fuus de Ronde-Verloop, looked after Jo and accompanied him on excursions in The Netherlands and journeys abroad. Jo was thankful to rely on her, because on his own he was rather unhandy (boiling an egg stretched his culinary abilities). However, he made a virtue of necessity by establishing a friendly relationship with the owner of restaurant *Triton* where he used to take dinner. His predilection for his native village Bergen became tangible by his collection of work of representatives of the so-called Bergen school of painting, artists such as Mathieu Wiegman and Jaap Weyand. And he never refrained to mention to his visitors the names of the artists of all those paintings on his walls!

But his major contribution to Dutch ornithology has been achieved during his membership of the boards of the CNV (1971–1982, Honorary Member 1998) and the NOU (1971–1995). On 11 February 1995 as his 80th birthday approached he reluctantly resigned as treasurer after an unbroken service of twenty years. As the financial conscience of the NOU he has been of incalculable value in ensuring the continuity of the journals *Ardea* and *Limosa* by providing professional scrutiny of the

accounts and repeatedly taking initiatives to strengthen the financial basis. In his years on the board, there have been difficult discussions to build bridges between SOVON, the journal *Watervogels* and the NOU, which resulted finally in these organizations pooling their efforts in Limosa. Around that time, the Dutch Birding Association (DBA) came into being, which competed to some extent with the NOU in attracting new members. However, these were developments with their own momentum as the field of ornithological interests turned from a global to a more specialised attitude. Although for Jo it was difficult to accept that not all serious bird watchers wished to perform their hobby under the umbrella of the NOU, this did not prevent him from maintaining friendly relations with young birdwatchers in Katwijk, active within the DBA, like Gijsbert van der Bent en René van Rossum.

His financial management has guided the NOU through difficult years and eventually he was able to build up some reserves. To further ornithology and to support *Ardea* the board of the NOU founded the *Stichting Huib Kluijver Fonds* (named after the well-known Dutch population ecologist) with the help of the Kluijver family. Jo administered that fund, together with the holdings of *Stichting Vogeltrekstation* in his own personal and impeccable style, optimizing the interest by moving sums of money to and from different bank accounts. Jo did not make use of the latest administrative expedients like the Personal Computer.

He remained faithful to the familiar card file, and his meticulously hand-written folio sheets for the administration. Jo also retained the custom to send any defaulters a personal letter rather than a printed reminder. For all these enduring services to the Union Jo was made an Honorary Member of the NOU in 1995 when he stepped down. Upon his retirement in 1979 from the municipality of Katwijk Jo had already been honoured by the appointment to *Ridder in de Orde van Oranje Nassau* [Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau].

Jo did not withdraw into himself in his last years, but continued to enjoy watching birds and the social connections resulting from that hobby as witnessed from the text inserted in the *Katwijkse Post* (19 October 2006) by his friends from Katwijk: "On Wednesday 11 October 2006 Mister Jo Rampen has passed on. In his love for nature and his passion for birds he was an example for us all. The bird watchers from Katwijk and Noordwijk will miss him as their doyen and as an especially friendly person".

Jo was a highly trustworthy person of the old school, and Joost Tinbergen, President of the NOU, summed him up at his cremation as: "a man of stature and highly cultivated, warmly interested in others, and above all likeable".

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