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## IN MEMORIAM: WARREN MARK PULICH, 1919–2010

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Warren M. Pulich, AOU member since 1949 and Elective Member (1984), died in Irving, Texas, on 27 November 2010, four days short of his 91st birthday. Warren was the foremost authority on the distribution and occurrence of birds in north-central Texas and the first to conduct a systematic study of the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler. He was a legendary and charming figure who inspired devotion and awe among all who knew him. I first met Warren when I was 14, and I remember thinking that I was in the presence of a deity as he proceeded, on one of his semiannual trips to Lake Texoma, where I regularly birded, to locate and show me the first Long-tailed Duck ever recorded there! No one was better at finding birds in the field, compiling and evaluating birders' sight records, or widely salvaging specimens to better understand avian distribution.

Warren was born in Stockton, California, on 1 December 1919. He developed an interest in nature, especially birds, at an early age, in part under the tutelage of Ralph Samson, an oologist in Stockton who paid him to collect bird eggs. This mentoring relationship, so important in his early development, contributed to Warren's lifelong encouragement of young people (myself included). Many of these individuals subsequently become professional or lifelong amateur ornithologists. After he enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, Warren's undergraduate years were interrupted for service in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II as a technical aviation-mechanics instructor. He met Anne Marie Doles while stationed in Phoenix. They were married for almost 60 years, until she died in 2003. After the war, Warren enrolled at the University of Arizona, where he graduated in 1948. He then worked for the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and, later, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), primarily in Arizona and Nevada. While in Arizona, he became acquainted with Allan R. Phillips. Warren was perhaps one of the very few who truly got along with the mercurial Phillips throughout the latter's life. This relationship culminated in Phillips naming a subspecies of the Bewick's Wren after Warren, and Anne, who was an accomplished bird artist, contributed color illustrations to Phillips's 1986 book on Middle and North American birds.

Warren's transfer to the Fort Worth, Texas, USFWS office (1951) soon led to his departure from government service, which continually frustrated him by demanding adherence to a "9-to-5 bureaucratic mentality" even when doing field work in remote places. In Texas, Warren began teaching at Our Lady of Victory College in Fort Worth before joining the newly established University of Dallas (1956) as a founding faculty member in biology. Of the 25–30 original faculty members of this private university, Warren outlived all but three. He completed his M.S. degree at Southern Methodist University (1958) and later undertook Ph.D. work under George M. Sutton at the University of Oklahoma. He spent the remainder of his professional career at the University of

Dallas, where he taught a variety of biology courses, ranging from comparative anatomy and microbiology to ornithology and ecology, to hundreds of (largely premedical) students, before retiring after 50 years of service to the institution.

Warren's most important scientific contributions were his pioneering studies on the ecology and distribution of Golden-cheeked Warblers in central and north Texas. Little was known about this endangered bird in the early 1960s, as no comprehensive study of its biology had been conducted. Only spotty information existed on the habitat requirements and breeding biology, and the description of its winter range was incorrect. From 1962 to 1974, Warren conducted detailed population surveys in over 90 Texas counties and made intensive observations on breeding biology at select sites. He described, for the first time, the type of Ashe Juniper woodlands the warbler preferred and produced the first comprehensive population survey for the species. In an era before big money was available for endangered-species work, Warren did almost all of his research on his own dime, often assisted only by his son, Warren, Jr. His Golden-cheeked Warbler work culminated in his 172-page book *The Golden-cheeked Warbler* (1976, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department), which remains a definitive source on the species (and was also the ornithological bargain of the century, originally selling for 50¢ a copy!).

Throughout his time in Texas, Warren was immersed in documenting the status and distribution of birds in the north-central part of the state. This area has always been something of a stepchild to the more glamorous and bird-rich areas of the Texas coast, Rio Grande valley, Edwards Plateau, and Big Bend. Yet north-central Texas contains extremely varied habitat and an interesting mix of eastern, western, northern, and southern bird species. Warren was tireless in doing field work, which led to his deep understanding of where and when particular species occurred and how ranges were changing. He amassed considerable data over 30 years on sight records, in part by preparing the Dallas County Audubon Society's bird notes section in their monthly newsletter, *Woods Wings Water*. Warren salvaged birds brought to him by the public, monitored local TV towers for large kills of migrating birds, and occasionally collected rare specimens. He published *The Birds of Tarrant County* (1961, Allen and Co.), which was updated in 1979. Warren was probably proudest of his 439-page opus, *The Birds of North Central Texas* (1988, Texas A&M Press), which presented detailed accounts of the seasonal occurrence of all birds known (or formerly occurring) in a 32-county region, centered roughly on Dallas-Fort Worth. The book is a treasure trove for anyone interested in bird distributions in the late 20th century in the southern Great Plains, documenting, for example, the invasion of north Texas by Great-tailed Grackles beginning in the 1950s and the extirpation of the Black-capped Vireo by the late 1980s.

Warren was unfailingly kind and respectful to everyone he met. Although birders may have privately frustrated him with undocumented reports of rare species, this seldom came across in his personal interactions. He was a charming and natural leader, and bird enthusiasts gravitated toward him. In addition to his university teaching, Warren taught natural history in many venues, including as a science instructor for youth classes at the Fort Worth Science Museum (1950s) and in evening bird-identification classes for the public at the University of Dallas (1980s–1990s). For over 20 years he led his famous trips to the Texas coast in midwinter to see Whooping Cranes and other coastal species. Warren chartered a bus, charged the 45 or so participants only enough to cover the bus rental and his own lodging, and usually had a waiting list. The Friday-to-Sunday trips typically resulted in over 150 species tallied, successful sightings of cranes and other coastal specialties, and, in the land of White-tailed, Harris's, and, of course, Red-tailed hawks of different plumage types, invariably included Warren's fatherly admonishments to the group that "you can't always put a name to

every *Buteo*." The schoolboy admiration and affection for Warren that I felt when I went on my first crane trip with him in 1976, when I was still in high school, were as strong as ever when I went on my last trip with him almost 25 years later, in 2000.

Having no use for computers, the Internet, or cell phones, Warren was among the last of a generation of consummate field ornithologists who believed there was no substitute for careful field work and who exhibited boundless enthusiasm for studying birds of all species. His deep knowledge of Texas birds and willingness to share that expertise deeply touched all who knew him. He will be sorely missed, but his legacy lives on in anyone who asks questions about Golden-cheeked Warblers or the birds of north-central Texas. Warren is survived by his four children, Marcia Pulich of Irving, Texas, Warren Pulich, Jr., of Austin, Therese LeRoy of Duncanville, and Nancy Bednarz of Parker, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

I thank Marcia, Warren, Jr., Therese, and Nancy for providing information for this memorial.