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In Memoriam

The Auk 118(4):1029, 2001

IN MEMORIAM: BERNT H. O. F. LØPPENTHIN, 1904–1994

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Bernt Hartvig Ove Fabricius Løppenthin, Chief Librarian at the Copenhagen University Library, Denmark, died 19 November 1994, at the age of 90. He was born 13 May 1904 at Lekende, about 80 km south of Copenhagen.

Løppenthin—or “Løpp” as he was usually called—joined the AOU in 1928 and was elected a Corresponding Fellow in 1959. He became a member of the Danish Ornithological Society in 1923, was Editor of its journal, *Dansk Ornithologisk Forenings Tidsskrift*, from 1931 to 1937, Secretary from 1941 to 1960, and a Board Member from 1931 to 1960. In the meantime, he obtained university degrees in medicine (1929) as well as zoology (1934). He practiced as a physician from 1933 until 1938, when he was employed as a librarian at the Copenhagen University Library, where he stayed until retirement. In 1930, he spent a summer in northeast Greenland studying birds. In 1937–1938, he took part in an ichthyological expedition to the Persian Gulf. Over the years, he visited a variety of important ornithological sites all over Europe, and became acquainted with many contemporary European ornithologists. In 1938, he was elected a member of the International Ornithological Committee and attended subsequent congresses through the 1966 XIV Congress in Oxford.

For the older generation of ornithologists, Løpp was of great importance. He published more than 50 papers on ornithological subjects, mainly in *Dansk Ornithologisk Forenings Tidsskrift*, where for a generation he also frequently refereed new ornithological literature. He wrote the *List of Danish Birds* (1946) and many sections in the three-volume *Vort Lands Dyreverden* (“Our country’s wildlife,” 1949, Copenhagen). Present-day Danish ornithologists know him best as the author of *Danske ynglefugle i fortid og nutid* (“Danish Breeding Birds: Past and Present,” 1967). Although that book got a somewhat rough reception at the time because of some interpretations for which Løpp stood

quite alone, it is full of important precise information about subfossil records and about Danish birdlife before the start of modern agriculture. In 1984, he edited *Johann Friedrich von Brandt: Icones Avium Rossico-Americanarum, Tabulae VII, Ineditae, with comments on birds, expeditions and people involved*.

Until 1961, Løpp rarely missed a meeting of the Ornithological Society in Copenhagen. At the social gathering after each meeting, more than anybody else he talked to members present, remembering especially those with whom he had corresponded. His memory was exceptional and his work was unbelievably painstaking, almost to the point of pedantry. As editor of *Index Medicus Danicus*, 1957–1966, Løpp also left his fingerprints on the Danish medical literature.

On one side, Løpp had an old-fashioned opinion about who could be considered as reliable informers. On the other side, he corresponded energetically with ornithologists of any kind. Here his function as secretary was helpful, as he often wrote to new members regarding the distribution of birds.

Løpp also had an old-fashioned view of how the Danish Ornithological Society should function. It was without his approval that the aim of the society was expanded to include conservation, although that resulted in quite an increase of new members, and it was against his wishes that a new popular journal *Feltornithologen* (“The Field Ornithologist”) was distributed to the members of the society.

For the last 25 years of his life, Løpp rarely appeared. The Ornithological Society was no longer what he thought it should be, and his declining health made it difficult for him to get around. Still, by letters, he kept an impressive contact with many of his old friends because the birds and the old ornithologists still interested him deeply. A formal portrait appeared in *Dansk Ornithologisk Forenings Tidsskrift* 90:34, 1996.