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George B. Saunders, holder of the AOU's third oldest membership (since 1925), and Elective Member since 1947, died at age 93 on 15 February 2001, in Vero Beach, Florida, following a long illness. Saunders was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on 8 June 1907. Following undergraduate work there, he attended Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, receiving a Ph.D. in 1932 for his dissertation on a taxonomic revision of the meadowlarks, genus *Sturnella*.

Saunders participated as an assistant ornithologist on a Philadelphia Academy of Sciences expedition to south Africa in 1930, as a research fellow for the National Research Council, and as a staff ornithologist at the Michigan Department of Conservation. In 1937, he joined the Bureau of Biological Survey (now U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) as that agency's first Central Flyway biologist. His varied assignments required numerous field trips to Canada, Mexico, and Central America over the following 32 years. In 1937, when the prairie pothole region was in the throes of drought and waterfowl populations were seriously depressed, Saunders and fellow flyway biologists were broadly instructed to "go up there [Canada] and find what you can" about the situation. During the summers of 1937–1939, he and U.S. and Canadian colleagues gathered baseline information and developed methodologies for monitoring breeding waterfowl populations and production. Additionally, he commenced field studies of wintering waterfowl in Mexico. George literally migrated with the waterfowl. After 1939 his summer assignments involved studies of breeding White-winged Doves (*Zenaidia asiatica*) in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas. Also, he conducted biological investigations of many proposed national wildlife areas, including the future Aransas, Laguna Atascosa, and Santa Ana national wildlife refuges in Texas. George was among the first to use low-flying aircraft to monitor breeding and wintering waterfowl in

North America, and in 1947 he and pilot-biologist Dave Spencer initiated the first midwinter waterfowl surveys of Mexico and Central America.

During 1947–1948, Saunders led a Fish and Wildlife Service–State Department mission to Guatemala to initially inventory that nation's wildlife resources (1950, "A Fish and Wildlife Survey of Guatemala," Special Scientific Report–Wildlife no. 5). His taxonomic study, "Seven New Subspecies of White-winged Doves from Mexico, Central America and the Southwestern United States" appeared as North American Fauna no. 65 (1968). That same year, *Whitewings: the Life History, Status, and Management of the White-winged Dove* (C. Cottam and J. B. Trefethen, Eds.) was published. Saunders supplied much basic data and major segments of text as a co-author. George and his wife, Dorothy, who survives him, coauthored *Waterfowl and their Wintering Grounds in Mexico* (Resource Publication 138, 1981).

Indeed, any evaluation of George's scientific contributions must include Dorothy, his unsalaried field companion and colleague, a pioneering aviatrix, a scientist in her own right (Ph.D. in biology, University of Michigan), and wife of 53 years. Together they traveled throughout Mexico, beginning in 1947, usually camping in the field, and naming their camp sites for prominent local birds. Dorothy's fascinating 320 page manuscript, *Two Go to See*, describes their impressions of Mexican wildlife and ecological conditions just after World War II. A copy is filed in the Smithsonian Archives along with George's many field reports.

George Saunders amply possessed the essential qualities of dedication, competence, perseverance, innovation, and communication skills required for accomplishment and sometimes survival under frequently arduous and occasionally hazardous conditions. George's fascinating story of the early flyway biologists and his own experiences are richly told in "The U.S.

Team," in *Flyways: Pioneering Waterfowl Management in North America* (1984, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). In closing (p. 129), he fittingly states, "judging from my own career, I believe that wildlife biologists are among the happiest people to be found, especially if they have a wife who is also a biologist and shares their adventures in the field."