



## **ELLIOTT COUES AWARD, 2001: RAYMOND A. PAYNTER, JR., AND MELVIN A. TRAYLOR, JR.**

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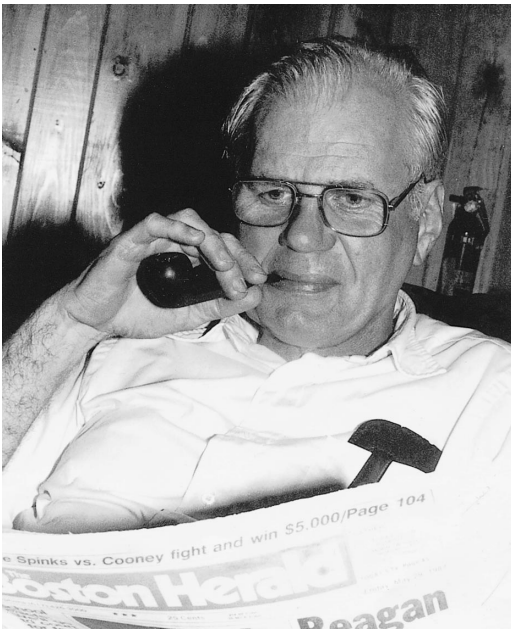
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**ELLIOTT COUES AWARD, 2001:**

**RAYMOND A. PAYNTER, JR., AND MELVIN A. TRAYLOR, JR.**



Raymond A. Paynter, Jr.

The Coues Award for 2001 is presented jointly to Raymond A. Paynter, Jr., and Melvin A. Traylor, Jr., whose contributions to systematic ornithology and biogeography span half a century and whose painstaking work helped create two genuine landmarks for ornithology that will be primary resources for generations to come.

From 1970 through the mid 1990s, Paynter and Traylor collaborated to produce a series of ornithological gazetteers that form a backbone for primary research on South American zoogeography. The gazetteer series totals more than 3,000 pages and addresses every one of the South American countries. Each volume compiles all geographic localities appearing in the ornithological literature, together with hundreds of unpublished localities represented in the world's major ornithological collections. Each entry lists latitude, longitude, elevation, political subdivision, habitat notes, and dates visited by every ornithological collector. Paynter and Traylor compiled these unique gazetteers "by hand" through painstaking study and double-checking of thousands of original publications, mostly before the arrival of internet and computer-aided bibliographic

technology. Their scholarly historical research permits the mapping of species' ranges so precisely that ornithologists can accomplish biogeographic analyses in detail still impossible to contemplate for any other group of animals or plants.

From 1964 through 1987, Paynter and Traylor also edited and served as principal authors of the final six volumes of the *Checklist of Birds of the World*, plus its comprehensive index. This so-called "Peters' Checklist" series, begun decades earlier by James Peters, presents the most authoritative taxonomic compendium of the world's bird species and subspecies ever assembled. Its completion required both the expertise and the thankless perseverance of these two gentlemen.

Paynter's numerous other scientific contributions deal with subjects as diverse as gull behavior on Kent Island, Maine; ornithogeography of the Yucatan Peninsula; and systematics of South American brushfinches; and he served for 30 years as editor of the important series, *Publications of the Nuttall Ornithological Club*. Traylor's contributions in avian systematics—all characterized by a meticulous eye for detail and highest standards of scholarship—span six decades and six continents, and are highlighted by his

definitive revisions of the largest avian family, the Tyrannidae. For their indelible contributions to systematic ornithology and biogeography, many conducted in collaboration with each other, the American Ornithologists' Union is pleased to recognize Raymond A. Paynter, Jr. and Melvin A. Traylor, Jr. with the Elliott Coues Award for 2001.

*Award criteria.*—The Elliott Coues Award is given for meritorious contributions having an important influence on the study of birds in the Western Hemisphere, but which have not been recognized through a Brewster Award. Contributions to ornithology not eligible for recognition with a Brewster Award by virtue of geographic limitations may be honored through a Coues Award, as may works including important innovative ideas that through brevity of publication outside the primary ornithological literature may not have been selected based on Brewster Award criteria. However, the Coues Award is not necessarily limited to such works. The award consists of a medal (authorized by the AOU Council at their 2000 meeting) and an honorarium provided through the endowed Ralph W. Schreiber Fund of the American Ornithologists' Union.



Melvin A. Traylor, Jr.