

In Memoriam: John C. Ogden, 1938–2012

Authors: Frederick, Peter C., and McCrimmon, Donald A.

Source: The Auk, 130(1) : 192-193

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1525/auk.2013.130.1.192>

The BioOne Digital Library (<https://bioone.org/>) provides worldwide distribution for more than 580 journals and eBooks from BioOne's community of over 150 nonprofit societies, research institutions, and university presses in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences. The BioOne Digital Library encompasses the flagship aggregation BioOne Complete (<https://bioone.org/subscribe>), the BioOne Complete Archive (<https://bioone.org/archive>), and the BioOne eBooks program offerings ESA eBook Collection (<https://bioone.org/esa-ebooks>) and CSIRO Publishing BioSelect Collection (<https://bioone.org/csiro-ebooks>).

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Digital Library, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Digital Library content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non-commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne is an innovative nonprofit that sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.



The Auk 130(1):192–193, 2013
© The American Ornithologists' Union, 2013.
Printed in USA.

IN MEMORIAM: JOHN C. OGDEN, 1938–2012

PETER C. FREDERICK¹ AND DONALD A. MCCRIMMON²

¹*Department of Wildlife, University of Florida, Ecology and Conservation, P.O. Box 110430, Gainesville, Florida 32611, USA; and*

²*Cazenovia College, 22 Sullivan Street, Cazenovia, New York 13035, USA*



John C. Ogden at Etosha National Park, Namibia, September 2011.
(Photograph by Patty Kitchings.)

John C. Ogden, aged 73, a Fellow of the AOU, died at home in Homestead, Florida, on 31 March 2012 following a brief illness. John's love of ornithology and the natural world developed early, and his first publication (in *The Migrant*, journal of the Tennessee Ornithological Society) came out while he was in high school. During his four-decade scientific career, he became a pioneer in the restoration of entire populations (California Condor, Wood Stork) and ecosystems (Everglades) long before these approaches were commonly attempted. His insights were driven by his early-acquired biological intuition and his solid scientific investigations. His subjects were often endangered, and the recommendations from his studies usually controversial. Within these maelstroms, he was not afraid to take risks when he believed the science supported politically difficult choices, and he was never afraid to tell the truth about scientific uncertainty. Moreover, he was willing to step well outside his natural and secure role of biologist to become a translator between scientists and managers, a convincer of politicians, and he was ultimately able to turn a biologist's vision and worldview into solid planning and restoration.

John received his undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt University and went on to graduate studies at the University of Tennessee and the Florida State University. At the conclusion of his professional career, he had 85 publications to his credit, including basic work on reproductive and foraging ecology of waterbirds and raptors, and, frequently, publications with clear management implications. His works on raptors and wading birds remain classic references. The book *Everglades: The Ecosystem and Its Restoration*, published in 1994 and co-edited with Steven M. Davis, was hailed at the time by reviewers as the best book ever published on a single wetland and an indispensable benchmark.

John began his professional career in 1964 as an Everglades National Park field biologist responsible for long-term ecological studies of southern Everglades and Florida Bay vertebrates including the Wood Stork, Osprey, Short-tailed Hawk, American Crocodile, and American Alligator. From 1974 to 1988, he worked for the National Audubon Society, first as senior research biologist and later as director of the Ornithological Research Unit based in Tavernier, Florida. During this time, he oversaw a national

program of ornithological research conducted by seven science teams in Maine, New York, Florida, Texas, and California, and served for 5 years as co-director of the highly controversial California Condor Recovery Program. His work in the latter capacity ultimately resulted in more than 100 condors flying freely in California today.

In 1988, he rejoined the National Park Service as senior research scientist representing Everglades National Park on science and technical teams planning and implementing the Everglades restoration program. During this time, the groundwork was begun for what later became the multibillion-dollar Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP), arguably the largest and most ambitious ecosystem restoration program in the world. John's involvement in the development of that program was central, unwavering, and crucial. His studies in south Florida and Latin America on Wood Storks, together with a devotion to historical documents, had helped him develop deep convictions about what was wrong with the Everglades ecosystem. John's research and writing formed clear connections between hydroperiod, production of invertebrates and fishes, and stork nesting success, and this work became one of the foundations upon which the hydrological restoration of the Everglades was built. His vision of a functioning Everglades was highly integrative—at a time when most agencies were concerned with management of single species, John saw connections everywhere and realized that the emergent historical properties of the vast Everglades relied on numerous, connected physical and biotic functions. Unsatisfied with merely planning, at the peak of his career, John purposefully remained in south Florida and took positions that allowed him to oversee and directly guide the progress of Everglades restoration. He even participated in attempts to redirect restoration efforts in his retirement.

By 1995, John was appointed lead environmental scientist, Office of the Executive Director/Planning Department, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). He advised on science and policy issues associated with planning and implementation of the Everglades restoration program. In 2003, he was promoted to the position of chief environmental scientist, coordinating and directing technical and

scientific activities at SFWMD in support of the district's participation in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

From 2008 to 2010, John capped his career as director of bird conservation at the Miami office of Audubon of Florida. His work resulted in a statewide comprehensive bird conservation program, which included designing specific local and regional bird-monitoring programs for local Audubon chapters.

John was frequently recognized in his successful career. He was a Fellow of the AOU, received the Annual Conservation Award of the Everglades Coalition, the Distinguished Service Award of the Colonial Waterbird Society, the Palladium Medal of the American Association of Civil Engineers and the National Audubon Society, the Charles Brookfield Award of the Tropical Audubon Society, and, most recently, the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2012 Herbert W. Kale II Award and the Eagle Award of the Everglades Foundation. He also was the first and founding president of the Colonial Waterbird Society (now The Waterbird Society).

John was clearly driven by an insatiable love of nature, and this never stopped. While hospitalized for a month before his death, John kept binoculars at his side, identifying more than 40 bird species outside his window, and correctly identifying the signs of a nearby Swallow-tailed Kite nest (one of the pair was eventually satellite-tagged as a result). John Ogden was a wonderful, joyous person. His warm, friendly, easygoing personality belied a delight in irreverence, a sharp and unrelenting intellect, and an enviable sense of social and political astuteness. He will be missed sorely by friends, colleagues, and those he mentored so effortlessly.

The Everglades are frequently referred to as a "river of grass." In the 5th century BCE, the Greek philosopher Heraclitus wrote, "One cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters are ever flowing onto you." Everything flows in nature and nothing exists separately or permanently. Heraclitus also wrote, "To live is to die, to be awake is to sleep, to be young is to be old, for one thing flows into another." Such an understanding is part of the scientific and philosophical legacy that John inherited, actualized, and now leaves for those of us who survive him to carry forward.

John is survived by his wife, Maryanne; his son, Nicholas; his daughter, Laura; three grandchildren; and a brother, David.