

ORLANDO H. GARRIDO RECEIVES SCO AWARD AS OUTSTANDING ORNITHOLOGIST

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During the 1993 annual meeting of the SCO, Orlando Garrido was presented with the Society's Outstanding Ornithologist Award in recognition for his valuable contributions to the fields of systematics, ecology, and conservation of Cuban birds. Below is the text of the presentation made at the banquet.

Members of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology

Guests: Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today I have the pleasure and great satisfaction to render honor to the person I consider the most outstanding systematist of Cuban vertebrates: Orlando H. Garrido.

His serious study of biology began when he was just 15 years old, when he dedicated most of his time to collecting insects, mainly butterflies and beetles. His interest in ornithology was stimulated in 1952 when he met his professor, Oscar Owre, at the University of Miami. Orlando stayed at the University for 4 years, taking courses in biology and business administration, but did not finish his studies there because the funds from his tennis scholarship ran out. Rather, he completed his education through self-teaching.

For 7 years he traveled the world with a tennis racket, playing the European, African, Asian, and American circuits, for a total of 54 countries visited. In 1961 he returned to Cuba and began to study the country's birds in close collaboration with James Bond.

As relevant as is his work in ornithology, so is his work with other groups of Cuban vertebrates. His broad knowledge, experience, and field skill made him the prominent authority, not only of birds, but also of reptiles and coral reef fishes. Orlando's knowledge of mammals and invertebrates, in particular the systematics of the tenebrionid beetles, is also remarkable.

Everyone who knows him has a favorite anecdote about Orlando. Each is unique; for example when he discovered a new species of hutia in a cay after he found only a fecal pellet, or when he captured with his bare hands a Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) a few seconds after telling his field assistant he was going to do it. On one occasion when I wanted to test his field skills, I asked Orlando to guess a new bird I had seen in my last field trip. He only asked about the exact date of my observation. When I replied, Orlando told me not only the correct species, but also the sex.

Orlando Garrido is an untiring investigator of our biodiversity, as demonstrated by his many discoveries: of 9 species of Cuban hutia known to science, 5 were discovered by Orlando; 91 taxa of reptiles, 13 taxa of birds, 30 new records of fishes, and 3 new to science are attributed to Orlando Garrido. He has found more than 50 new species of invertebrates, 15 of which have been dedicated to him.

His publication record is also prolific, containing 181 titles, including several books, such as "The Catalogue of Cuban Birds" and "Ecological Segregation in Cuban Avifauna."

Recently I asked him what was his greatest satisfaction in his long career. I was not surprised to hear that everything has been a great satisfaction to him: every discovery, each description, the rediscovery of the many *Anolis* species, of the Snowy Plover in Cuba, and on and on.

His greatest wish is to see the Zapata Rail (*Cyanolimnas cerverai*), the only bird in Cuba that he has not observed. He has never lost the hope to find it someday, but I feel sorry for the rail that has the misfortune or disgrace of this long-wished meeting.

Among the many international honors or charges bestowed on him are an American Ornithologists' Union Fellowship, membership on the International Council for Bird Protection, Honorary Membership in the Polish Journal, *The Ring*, and Scientific Advisor for the RARE Center.

For the human point of view, there are three adjectives that can not be missed when we talk about Orlando. They are giving, modest and last, but not least, that which forms much of his personality — his sense of humor.

"The Field Marshall," he is called by all of us who love, praise, and respect his work. I feel lucky to be working with him in this period of his life. I want to thank the Organizers of this meeting for conferring to me the great honor of contributing this short, but honest, homage to Orlando.

On behalf of all the persons present here, our most sincere respect and admiration. We thank you, Orlando, for your enduring contributions to Cuban natural history.

We wish you good health to continue your prolific work which you have so freely shared with all of us.

Congratulations, Orlando!

UNIECO '93

La Universidad de Cara a la Naturaleza Primer Simposio de Ecología ("UNIECO '93"), was held at the University of La Habana, 6-11 December 1993. About 120 delegates, including large delegations from Mexico and Venezuela, attended the symposium. Scientific papers were presented in several concurrent sessions, including Environmental Education; Applied Ecology; Populations, Communities, and Ecosys-
Page 10

tems; as well as video and computer sessions. Several plenary sessions were also presented, including "Interaccion Biologo-Sociedad en la Conservacion de la Biodiversidad" and "Biodiversity," which were chaired by SCO members Orlando Torres Fundora and Vincente Berovides, respectively. Attendees were treated to several organized excursions to historic old Habana, museums, and a diverse array of field

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