

IN MEMORY OF JACQUELINE "JILL" WEECH

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It is with much sadness that I inform Society members of the death of fellow SCO member, Jacqueline "Jill" Weech of Abaco, Bahama Islands. Many of you had met Jill at our annual meetings in St. Lucia and San Juan.

Jill died as a result of a tragic boating accident at the end of September 1992. The exact details of the accident remain unknown. The Society wishes to express its condolences to Jill's mother, Rose Weech, and her family during this extremely difficult time.

Since 1988, Jill was employed as a Forestry Technician in the Bahamian Department of Lands and Surveys. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in plant sciences from Tuskegee University. During her tenure with the Forestry Section, she moved from Nassau to Abaco, which became her home. In the summer of 1990, Jill completed the conservation training program at the National Zoo's Research and Conservation Center, Front Royal, Virginia. Jill was responsible for the environmental education program in Abaco's schools and assisted Forestry Officers and visiting researchers in the field. She helped found "Friends of the Abaco Parrot" — a grassroots conservation group.

My first impression of Jill was a soft-spoken, smiling, Bahama Parrot T-shirt-clad, young woman who wanted to help count parrots during our 1989 parrot survey. She was very enthusiastic and optimistic about conservation efforts for the parrot. Every field researcher hopes of working with just such an individual and, indeed, I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had her as an associate during our years of fieldwork. I learned much from Jill. She helped me see the Bahama Parrot not only as a research topic, but as an invaluable part of a Bahamian's natural heritage, worthy of all of our conservation efforts. Individuals like Jill made my work with the Bahama Parrot possible.

Jill became active in the Society of Caribbean Ornithology in 1991 and presented her first paper, "Conservation on Abaco Islands," at the 1992 meeting in San Juan. She hoped to enroll in graduate school next year and pursue research on Abaco's birds. Birds of special interest to her were Bahama Swallows, migrating warblers, and Hairy Woodpeckers. She had vowed to give a paper on her "own research results" at the next SCO meeting in Cuba.

Jill was totally committed to ornithology and conservation in the Bahamas. Our last conversation centered on Jill's efforts to distribute the new Bahama Parrot coloring book and my review of a project proposal that she sent me. After talking to Jill, I always felt optimistic. She was a badly needed "breath of fresh air" to a sometimes frustrated, desk-bound field biologist.

There are no publications to list here for Jill Weech, nonetheless, she contributed to Caribbean ornithology. Those of us who had the opportunity to interact with her can not help but feel obligated to continue her commitment. It is individuals like Jill Weech who will help the Society of Caribbean Ornithology achieve its goals. She believed in the Society and her hopes are our hopes. I can only wish that her dream of an Abaco parrot reserve will become a reality sometime soon.

Jill Weech will be missed. With her passing, the Society has lost a devoted colleague, some of us a dear friend, and the Bahama Islands a bright hope for the future. A memorial service is planned by her family for next year.