

## In memoriam: Dr. James W. Wiley, 1943–2018

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The passing of Dr. James W. Wiley (Jim) was a great loss for Caribbean ornithology and for the many lives Jim touched, both personally and professionally. The legacy Jim leaves behind is captured in four decades of published work. It is also captured in the loving stories told by those who worked, studied, and collaborated with him—stories that are expressed by the many authors who contributed to this In memoriam.

Jim's long career as a conservation scientist began at California State University where he earned a Master's degree in 1970. From there he went on to a Ph.D. program at the University of South Florida, which was quickly interrupted by an opportunity (see Herbert Raffaele below) to work with the Puerto Rican Department of Natural Resources studying Plain Pigeons (*Patagioenas inornata*) and White-crowned Pigeons (*Patagioenas leucocephala*). It was in Jim's nature to have many different projects going at once, and so, at the same time, Jim began studying the ecology of the Hispaniolan Parrot (*Amazona ventralis*) in the Dominican Republic, funded by the United States Forest Service. The psittacine expertise he developed on Hispaniola led naturally to a supervisory role with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Puerto Rican Parrot Project, an effort Jim and his wife Beth led until 1986. Among their many accomplishments in Puerto Rico, Jim and Beth established a captive breeding and release program that resulted in a marked increase in the wild population of Puerto Rican Parrots (*Amazona vittata*)—a captive breeding program that continues to the present day. Of course, Jim also engaged in numerous other ecological studies of Caribbean birds during this period, and finally finished his doctoral dissertation in 1982, by then focusing on the invasion of Shiny Cowbirds (*Molothrus bonariensis*) across Puerto Rico.

From Puerto Rico, Jim moved back to California in 1986 where he helped lead the nascent recovery effort for the California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*). In 1991, Jim took a position with Grambling State University in Louisiana where he was able to mentor many students from the Caribbean, several of whom are contributing authors of this piece (see Chandra Degia and Lyndon John below) and have gone on to assume prominent positions in Caribbean conservation. From 2001 until his



Jim Wiley posing for a photograph in what is believed to be the Guanahacabibes region of western Cuba.

retirement, Jim worked as supervisor of the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Throughout this time, and until his passing, Jim was deeply involved in numerous Caribbean research projects and was tirelessly supportive of island-based research and conservation efforts at all levels.

Additionally, Jim played a foundational role in the inception of *Journal of Caribbean Ornithology*. He founded its precursor, *El*

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*Pitirre*, in 1988 and single-handedly edited the first 17 volumes—just one example of Jim’s long publication legacy in support of Caribbean ornithology. For so many of us who have conducted field work in the Caribbean over the last 20 years, Jim’s resources have been a critical form of support. Personally, I still remember sitting in the office of Fundación Moscoso Puello in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, back in 2005, poring over Jim’s *A Bibliography of Ornithology in the West Indies* (Wiley 2000), transcribing citations I knew I had to get my hands on into my weather-beaten field notebook.

To commemorate the life and work of Jim Wiley here in the pages of *Journal of Caribbean Ornithology*, we decided to collect the tributes of a number of Caribbean ornithologists who knew and collaborated with Jim over his rich career. What follows are their stories and memories to celebrate all that Jim offered. What emerges is a portrait of a deeply kind and caring individual who was particularly devoted to supporting the development of his Caribbean colleagues and improving conditions for conservation throughout the islands.

#### **Rafaela Aguilera Román:**

Conocí al Dr. James W. Wiley en el año 1987. Fue un privilegio y una bendición para mí. Su sencillez y calidad humana son archiconocidas por todos. A partir de ese momento, comenzó una relación de asesoría, trabajo, amistad y afecto, nunca empañada por nada. De ello dan fe los trabajos presentados en eventos y las publicaciones derivadas de ellos, que considero algo han aportado al conocimiento de las colecciones ornitológicas cubanas. Entre ellas: *The bird collections of Cuba* (Wiley et al. 2008), *Bird egg and nest specimens in the collection of the Instituto de Ecología y Sistemática, La Habana, Cuba* (Román and Wiley 2012), y *Juan Cristóbal Gundlach’s contributions to the knowledge of Puerto Rican birds and his influence on the development of natural history in Puerto Rico* (Wiley et al. 2014).

La ornitología mundial está de luto. Todos le debemos mucho. Pero, tan sencillo, como él fue, y en especial para mí, con todo mi cariño, el Dr. James W. Wiley, es y siempre será, nuestro “Querido Jim.”

#### **Felisa Collazo Torres and José González Díaz:**

It is with enormous respect and gratitude that we remember our time and interactions with Dr. James Wiley. From our first to our last conversations with Jim, we were always met with kindness and a big smile. Perhaps most pronounced was Jim’s encouragement of the work we were undertaking with birds in Puerto Rico, and the spirited enthusiasm and willingness to help that went along with that.

When we approached Jim asking for his guidance on a book we were publishing about the Puerto Rican Tody (*Todus mexicanus*) and its taxonomy, we received more than we could have ever asked for in return. Not only did Jim praise our efforts and motivate us to continue pushing ahead with what had turned out to be a monumental effort, he offered to fully review the 150-page book, editing for both content and grammar. Here are the opening words of the communication we received back from Jim after he undertook this enormous favor:

“First, let me say that I have seldom read a manuscript/publication that demonstrates such passion for an author’s subject,

as well as digging deep within the subject and presenting the results with such emotion. You are to be congratulated on what you have accomplished.”

We were unaware that Jim was struggling with his health during this time. We received a fully copy-edited draft of our book from him only a short time before he passed away. That gesture spoke volumes about the man’s character. His commitment and love for his friends, colleagues, and the world of ornithology, continued to burn bright until the very end. He was a man that loved what he did, and that showed through in everything that he touched. As a person, and as a Caribbean ornithologist, we will always remember Jim as “One of the Greats.”

#### **Chandra Degia:**

Landing in Shreveport, Louisiana in 1993 as teenagers, we were met at the airport by Dr. James “Jim” Wiley. Dr. Wiley was to be our advisor for the Wildlife Biology, Bachelor of Science degree program at the historically black, Grambling State University. “We” were two Jamaican students who had a love for nature and birds and had been recruited by Dr. Wiley to pursue studies in his program. During our first few days in Louisiana, Dr. Wiley and his wife, Beth, hosted us in their home and “showed us the ropes.”

Dr. Wiley would cycle to campus even during the rainy, bleak, and cold Louisiana winters. He would arrive on campus very early to work in peace before the din of campus activities began. Sometimes I, as well as other wildlife majors, would bar other students or even lecturers from seeing Dr. Wiley when we knew he was in hot pursuit of a fast approaching deadline. We respected him and felt somehow protective of him. He would encourage us—mere undergrads—to submit papers to various conferences, and would also drive a bus-load of us to deliver presentations across the south. Dr. Wiley never hesitated to introduce us to his esteemed colleagues and peers. He seemed to want the best for us and exposed us to as many opportunities and people as he could. Dr. Wiley also continued to recruit budding scientists from the Caribbean to study under his tutelage.

Dr. Wiley would often silently deposit a basket of delicious-smelling muffins in the wildlife lab, where we wildlife majors—including Crystal Pearson, Leonard Huff, Michael Bobb, Bertram Rogers, and Jimmy Brown—hung out between classes. Dr. Wiley would inform us that Beth had baked him those sugar-free, baked treats in an attempt to help him cut down on his sugar intake because he was “too hyper.” Classes with “Doc,” such as Ornithology and Mammalogy, were filled with tales of adventure—saving California Condors, working with the Puerto Rican Parrot, and getting out of sticky situations on conservation expeditions in Haiti.

Dr. Wiley helped to shape my early adult years. Many of the things I learned from him, I tell my own students now. For example, “the better you get at your job, the farther you get away from doing what you love and the more administrative work and management you end up doing as you grow in your career.” I learned not just about conservation biology from Dr. Wiley but received many valuable life lessons from him. May his family, friends, and loved ones be comforted and supported at this time and may they know that he influenced and shaped many lives during his sojourn here at Earth School. May his spirit fly free . . .

**Hiram González Alonso:**

The Cuban zoologists are in mourning because we have lost a great scientist and friend.

He left behind so many publications with Cuban investigators, all unconditionally so as to better the development of our work. He also supported many master's theses, doctorates, and higher-level books for the benefit of continued teaching.

Jim contributed to the development of projects, primarily of endemic and threatened species, and he took an active part in investigations with specialists, conservation programs, and environmental education. He was always a very humble and simple person, but with great knowledge.

For us it was a duty and an honor to make Jim an Honorary Member of the Cuban Zoological Society and present him with the John Gundlach Award.

We will always remind Cubans of our eternal friend who was quiet and had a kind smile. I wish to express my deepest felt sympathies to all of Jim's family and friends.

**Floyd E. Hayes:**

Jim was always quiet and unassuming at the society's meetings, but he was the opposite in our private e-mail correspondences. During a span of more than two decades, we exchanged hundreds of e-mail messages. We first became acquainted in the mid-1990s when he edited my manuscripts for the society's journal, *El Pitirre*. After I became the journal's editor (by then, *Journal of Caribbean Ornithology*), I edited and published five of his manuscripts, of which several were lengthy and highly detailed. Jim was admirably ruthless in finding errors and correcting them, which predisposed him to being an excellent editor. Jim was surprisingly chatty in his e-mail messages, frequently sending holiday greetings and providing unsolicited details about his trips to Cuba and elsewhere in the Caribbean, and about his failing health. Naturally, Jim was concerned about the welfare of birds, but what impressed me the most was his frequently expressed concern for colleagues in Cuba and elsewhere in the Caribbean. He strived to provide his colleagues access to the society's publications and other relevant literature, and he endeavored to facilitate their efforts in publishing their data. His colleagues were lucky to have Jim as their friend. As a highly esteemed and respected biologist, Jim was the ultimate role model. We should aspire to emulate not only his professionalism, but also his collegiality. Jim helped make the world a better place for humanity and our cohabitants of the planet, and so should we.

**Lyndon John:**

I knew Jim first as one of many friends from my early career with the Saint Lucia Forestry Department, when Paul Butler (Founder of RARE) and then Chief Forest Officer, Gabriel Charles, introduced me to the Society of Caribbean Ornithology [officially this name from 1988–2001; Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds: 2002–2012; and BirdsCaribbean: 2013–present]. I was fascinated by the research being conducted in the region and Jim was a significant part of all that. It was much later as a mature student in 1996 and as one of his undergraduate students at Grambling State University (GSU), Louisiana, that the relationship became truly multi-dimensional.

My wife, Jacqueline, and daughter, Déja (aged 9 or 10 years

old then), were with me during those GSU years, and so the relationship with Jim and his wife, Beth, was beyond academic. Back then, Déja would occasionally join me in Jim's classes when she wasn't in school. Jacqueline recalls Jim as not being particularly fond of social events, but whenever he was invited home to a party or some social event, she would make a point of serving cake and ice cream as late as possible, because she'd say that as soon as he got those, he'd be off! We also found out that he was an avid cyclist who would put in many hours cycling between Grambling and the Arkansas border, and it was later that we learned that he had represented the USA as a member of the Olympic cycling team during the Mexico City Olympics in 1968.

Most of us appreciated Jim for his academic rigor. He was a meticulous professor and I enjoyed the challenges that came with taking his classes. I'll never forget turning in an assignment and getting a grade of 99%! That, in itself, was an accomplishment coming from Jim, but I reviewed the paper for the usual red ink mark that cost me that 1% and, upon not finding it, went to him and asked why he hadn't just given me the 100%. He gave me a mischievous smile and said, "I may not have been able to find that error, but I know it's there!" To which I just laughed and shook my head; it's a standard that I've appreciated ever since.

Over the years, I appreciated the candor we shared that allowed me to express my opinions fearlessly on the range of conservation challenges confronting the Caribbean, and the possible solutions and approaches being considered. We need this more than ever and I hope his legacy goes on to inspire the next generation of Caribbean conservationists to serve the region with his Olympian spirit.

**Steven C. Latta:**

I think of Jim Wiley as the quintessential conservation field ornithologist. I did not know him well, but I knew of his long history of work in the Caribbean, and his importance to Hispaniolan ornithology, and I collaborated with Jim on essential Hispaniolan book projects. Here I comment on his important—and often overlooked—role as a pioneer of Hispaniolan bird studies.

Jim Wiley was one of the first ornithologists to go beyond studies of the distribution of species on Hispaniola and attempt to better understand their ecology and conservation. Jim's pioneering studies in the Dominican Republic included studies on the status of the American Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) and the ecology of the Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*). But most important was his completion of the first study on the ecology and behavior of the critically endangered Ridgway's Hawk (*Buteo ridgwayi*), and his work on the White-necked Crow (*Corvus leucognaphalus*), which was extirpated from Puerto Rico in the 1960s but persists on Hispaniola. His data on the Ridgway's Hawk has helped guide current research and conservation efforts, while his data on the White-necked Crow resulted in a still-standing recommendation to reintroduce the crow to Puerto Rico as part of a restoration of the island's original ecosystems.

I first "met" Jim when I was an eager young field biologist and he was the editor of *El Pitirre*. I had moved to the Dominican Republic in 1992, and by 1996 I was living in a remote corner of the country without electricity or other "conveniences," and where my tie to the outside world was a single fax machine via the



community phone at the CODETEL office. Yet, on a regular basis I would fax Jim my *hand-written* submissions on observations of new and unusual species from my corner of Hispaniola for *El Pitirre*. Jim would very kindly edit, format, and *type* my submissions, as well as provide the criticism and guidance that all early-career scientists require! Only once do I recall him ever so gently suggesting that perhaps my manuscripts could wait until I had access to a typewriter!

My experience with Jim, *El Pitirre*, and the then Society of Caribbean Ornithology resulted in my invitation to join Allan Keith, along with Jim and José Ottenwalder, in writing *The Birds of Hispaniola, Haiti and the Dominican Republic: an Annotated Checklist*, which was published by the British Ornithologists' Union in 2003 (Keith et al. 2003). Jim also joined me, Chris Rimmer, and others in writing the first complete field guide to the birds of Hispaniola. Published by Princeton University Press in 2006, *Birds of the Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Latta et al. 2006a) was translated into both Spanish and French (Latta et al. 2006b, Latta et al. 2006c)—a feat not often seen in the world of field guides—marking a major advance in Hispaniolan ornithology that in many ways Jim Wiley had initiated.

#### Lourdes Mugica Valdés:

Jim lo daba todo sin pedir nada a cambio ni quejarse de nada. Nos dio conocimientos, información, apoyo profesional que se expresó en libros, en revisiones de nuestros trabajos a publicar, en equipamiento, y apoyo logístico para acampar cuando no teníamos nada para trabajar. Por encima de todo fue un amigo incondicional en el verdadero sentido de la palabra, una persona con la que siempre pudimos contar, estuviera lejos o cerca durante más de 30 años.

#### Nils Navarro Pacheco:

I remember Jim as the most gentle person I have ever met in my life; his smile is still fresh in my mind and will remain unforgettable. I met him in 1993 during the meeting of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology that took place in Zapata Swamp, where I presented my bird paintings for the first time. I knew his papers in advance and it was a great pleasure to have the opportunity to meet him; he was a legend among us, and I felt very proud! I asked him for advice about my first illustrations—he was very kind, dispensing his time and giving me much advice. Later, I gave him one of my paintings as a gift; it stamped our friendship for the rest of his years.

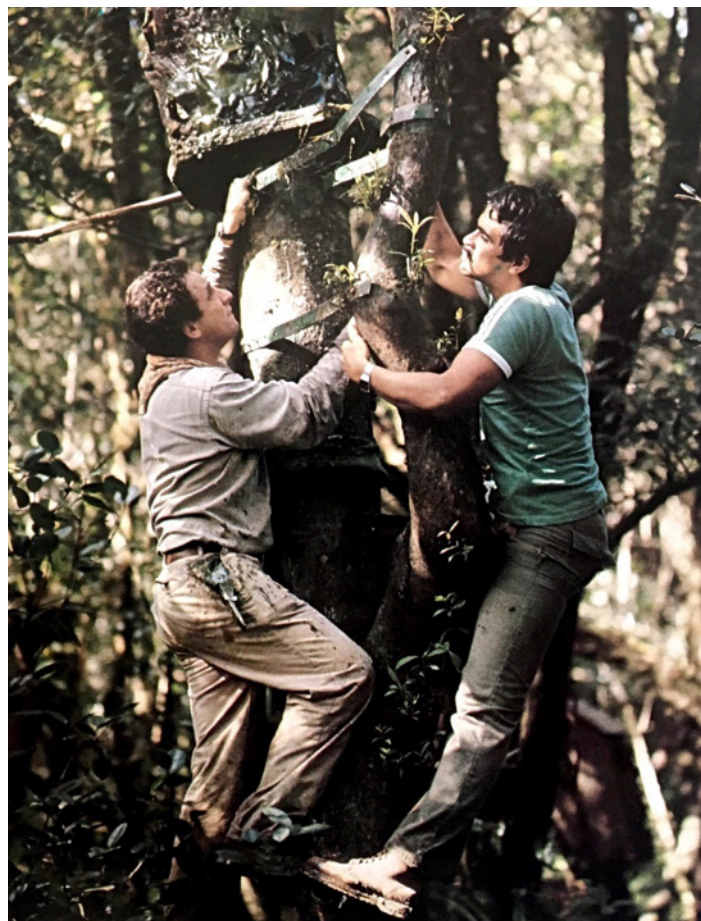
Jim, who visited eastern Cuba frequently, never failed to visit me in Holguín Province. We hosted him many times and he loved the “Imperial Rice” that my mother prepared for him. I sincerely enjoyed sharing with him, and he inspired and made me feel important in many ways. Jim pushed me to publish and improve my career as a naturalist. He made the arrangements for my first opportunity to visit another country at one of the meetings of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology when I was very young, and he also sponsored many Cuban biologists. It was a privilege that Jim wrote the foreword for my book *Endemic Birds of Cuba: a Comprehensive Field Guide* (Navarro 2015), which I will keep as a treasure of his memory for the rest of my life.

Jim looked a very serious man, and in fact he was, but inside of Jim there was a child with a very fine sense of humor.

At the time when Jim was the editor of *El Pitirre*, the relationship between Cuba and the United States was in a very bad condition. It was extraordinarily difficult for us to receive information from the US, and so Jim started to send every issue of *El Pitirre* to Cuba. He would stamp an official post envelope with a label that referred to his place of work, which included the words “Ministry of Interior of the United States.” All of my envelopes arrived broken and damaged from the Cuban post office, though officially sealed with a very sturdy adhesive tape. I told Jim about this when I saw him next, and he smiled but did not answer me. Then, when the next issue arrived, I was surprised to find that the envelope looked fine, and not damaged! Then I looked at the label, where Jim had stamped just his name, home address, and a lot of pink images of flowers, cats, and dogs! I did not receive any more damaged envelopes. . . I miss him! Rest in peace my dear friend! We will never forget you! You have dug very deep into both the history of Caribbean ornithology and into the members of its community.

Jim passed away during the days when I was finishing my latest publication, *The Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Cuba* (Navarro and Reyes 2017). Now I feel very pleased to dedicate this work in memory of such an extraordinary person:

*To the memory of Jim Wiley, a great friend, extraordinary person and scientist, a guiding light of Caribbean ornithology. He crossed many troubled waters in pursuit of expanding our knowledge of Cuban birds.*



**Fernando Nuñez-García:**

Jim trained me to work with Puerto Rican Parrots (*Amazona vittata*) at El Yunque National Forest. He was impressive both as a scientist and field biologist. I remember the first time I observed while he climbed a huge tabonuco tree (*Dacryodes excelsa*) just using spikes and no other security equipment. In the rainforest, most trees are covered with large vines and it is difficult to move one's security equipment while climbing.

After I finished my contract working at El Yunque, I worked as a volunteer with Jim studying cowbird parasitism at the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station. Jim provided a small stipend as I did not have any other source of income. He gave me personal checks and I believe my stipend was taken from his own personal funds. Later, he supported me so I could pursue a Master's degree in biology from the University of Puerto Rico. Both my wife and I were so grateful for Jim's advice and generosity that we decided to name my son Fernando James. We call him Jimmy.

Jim Wiley was unassuming, humble, and generous. Jim's quality as a human being was as great as his talent as a scientist.

**Carlos Peña:**

Cuando conocí a Jim Wiley en Holguín, nunca pensé que tendríamos una amistad para toda la vida y que, sin él proponerse, se convertiría en un paradigma para mí y muchos colegas en Cuba, simplemente porque su naturaleza siempre fue la del infatigable investigador, la del amigo siempre dispuesto a ayudar, la del colega dispuesto a colaborar en cualquier circunstancia, la del hombre generoso y humilde, que siempre se sintió comprometido con su trabajo y con sus colegas y amigos. No es necesario decir que lo vamos a recordar, porque Jim siempre estará con nosotros.

**Herbert Raffaele:***Jim Wiley's first job in the Caribbean:*

Just how did Jim become involved in Caribbean bird conservation? Well, back in the early 1970s, shortly after Puerto Rico had created its Department of Natural Resources, there were designated funds available to undertake several new conservation initiatives—one of which was focused on the status of the island's pigeons and doves. In fact, the need for a researcher was quite serious because the funds allocated for columbid research had been sitting unspent for so many years that they were on the verge of reverting back to their source—the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Not knowing anyone locally with the skills to do such work, I consulted with Dr. Noel Snyder, then in charge of the Puerto Rican Parrot recovery program at El Yunque. Noel had come to Puerto Rico having previously been a professor at the University of South Florida, and when asked whether he could suggest potential candidates, he unhesitatingly put forward Jim's name, stating that without a doubt Jim had been by far his best graduate student and would do a stellar job. That was enough for me. Jim was called. He was hired. And the rest is history.

*Jim Wiley as a colleague:*

During the 1970s in Puerto Rico, the Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) was slowly recovering from near extirpation earlier in the century, doubtless due to predation on their nests by intro-

duced predators. Up to that point, though it obviously bred on the island, its nest was unknown. Consequently, I was extremely excited to receive a tip of a nest having been found in a pasture near Cabo Rojo, far down in the southwest corner of the island.

It was days before I managed to make the trip and in the interim I had mentioned to Jim what details I knew of the discovery. Unfortunately, despite searching intensively for the bird and its nest, I came up empty-handed. Documenting the first nest of the Short-eared Owl in Puerto Rico would have to wait for another day.

A few days later, back in San Juan, I ran into Jim. Again, the Short-eared Owl came up in our conversation. I related to him that I hadn't found the bird, only to then learn that he, too, had gone to the site and had located the nest! Impressed, I congratulated Jim on his discovery, needless to say being a bit miffed that I had somehow flubbed this great opportunity. But that was not the end of it. On inquiring about where Jim planned to publish the discovery he responded, "Nowhere." Querying why, he said, "Well, it's not my discovery, it's yours. I would never have found the nest without all the background information you provided." That was Jim. He never let any personal ambitions he may have had take precedence over his sense of integrity and fairness. He was a truly special guy.

*Modest Jim:*

I had known Jim for at least 10 years when a colleague of mine informed me that Jim had represented the U.S. in the 1968 Olympics on the cycling team. It was another 25 years before I learned that he had been a two-time national spearfishing champion. Had I known him another 40 years I'd probably have discovered some other incredible accomplishment of his.

*Modest Jim 2:*

Jim, for this story in his 60s, was accompanied to the field by an extremely fit ornithologist about 30 years his junior. They were doing bird surveys one hot summer morning using ratty old rental bikes. After hours of counting they were hot and sweaty, but Jim's companion, a glutton for exercise, challenged Jim to race him back to the bike shop. Jim demurred, saying they had ridden enough, but his companion pressed the point. Finally, Jim relented, and his companion yelled "Go!"

All that Jim's friend saw was dust. He didn't see Jim again until back at the shop, arriving with a little less inflated view of himself, but with increased awe of modest Jim.

**Pedro Regalado:**

Sobre Jim Wiley tengo mucho que decir. Lo conocí en persona a principios de los años 90, pero ya más de una década antes teníamos correspondencia por instancias de James Bond quien ya tenía algún intercambio de información conmigo. El le recomendó a Jim me contactara para recibir alguna información sobre las aves de Cuba, principalmente sobre la distribución (desde 1970 yo viajaba mucho principalmente hacia la mayoría de los cayos de Cuba). Jim Wiley fue para mí un gran amigo y un profesor siempre presto a brindar ayuda y asesoría. La primera cámara digital que tuve en mi vida me la regaló Jim e intercambiamos fotografías. Recuerdo que cuando le envié una foto de una hembra de Gundlach's Hawk (*Accipiter gundlachi*) en mi mano

entrenada para la cetrería, se sorprendió mucho y comentó que era la primera vez que veía un cubano practicando la cetrería. Después me envió por correo un libro entero fotocopiado sobre cetrería de los hermanos Frank y John Craighead, considerados los mejores halconeros del mundo en aquel momento.

Así pudiera mencionar numerosas anécdotas. Recuerdo una en particular simpática cuando en un conteo de grullas en la Isla de la Juventud (1995), Jim y su grupo de conteo fueron los que más contaron ese día, unas 8 grullas. Entonces le dije que al otro día iba a contar más grullas de las que él había contado. Jim se sonrió con esa sonrisa bondadosa que lo caracterizaba y me dijo: “Apuesto que no me ganas...”

Al otro día mi grupo de muchachos y yo contamos 27 grullas... que fue todo un record para la actividad. Jim no lo podía creer y después me pregunto por lo bajo:

“¿Cómo lo hicistes?” y le respondí “es que tengo un secreto, yo las llamo... pero si me guardas el secreto te diré como lo hago” ...Me miro muy serio y me dijo: “No se lo diré a nadie” ...y le expliqué que el día antes, después del almuerzo había ido con mis muchachos y le prendimos fuego a varios lugares en la sabana, y al otro día todas las grullas de los alrededores estaban allí alimentándose. ¡Ese día Jim se rio mucho!

#### **Ernesto Reyes Mouriño:**

Mis recuerdos de Jim son muchos. Fueron incontables las veces que coincidimos en diversos lugares de la geografía cubana y en mi memoria está su sonrisa y sus brazos extendidos para estrecharnos un abrazo. Muchas veces lo vi montando en su bicicleta para entrenarse en la ciénega durante largas jornadas mientras estudiaba la vida natural de especies endémicas cubanas. ¡A él mi eterno agradecimiento de ser llamado por él “Mi amigo”! Gracias Jim, fue un orgullo conocerte en vida.

#### **Yaroddy Rodríguez:**

Tengo muchas anécdotas con Jim, ese hombre fue muy especial. La primera vez que lo vi vino a casa de mis padres y recuerdo yo tenía unos 19 años. Mi mamá me prestó su bicicleta para acompañarlo a la terminal de trenes, pues se iba para la universidad de Santiago de Cuba. En lo que venía el tren nos sentamos en un parque y comenzó a darme clases de etología y de cómo debía investigar los nidos de las especies y de cómo preparar un manuscrito. En aquella época él era el editor de *El Pitirre* y desde aquella vez se las ingenió para hacerlo. Digo eso porque en esa época era difícil la comunicación entre USA y Cuba.

Regresando a aquella tarde sentados en el parque, nos entretuvimos tanto conversando que me robaron la bicicleta y se me cayó el cielo encima. Él me dijo que no me preocupara, que el que la robó era porque lo necesitaba y que un día yo podría comprar 10 bicicletas. Yo por supuesto no entendía nada de eso y cuando vino el tren el me regalo mis primeros binoculares, recuerdo que eran Bushnell. Cuando se fue él en el tren yo me fui para mi casa a enfrentar a mi mamá. En los binoculares encontré 200 dólares y una nota que decía “Para que le compres una bicicleta a tu mamá y un día cuando puedas comprar 10 bicicletas me los devuelves...” Después de casi 20 años cuando estubo en mi nueva casa le dije “Jim ahora ya me puedo comprar las 10 bicicletas y aquí tienes tus 200 dólares”. Se sonrió y me dijo que gracias a aquella plática que tuvimos en ese parque yo había lo-

grado convertirme en lo que soy y que estaba muy orgulloso de ser mi mentor.

#### **Bárbara Sánchez Oria:**

Jim Wiley, fue uno de los investigadores más talentosos y abnegados en el área del Caribe. Dedicó gran parte de su vida al estudio y conservación de las aves de la región, con innumerables contribuciones en diferentes temáticas. Tan grande como su vida científica, fue su dedicación y disposición de ayudar a muchos ornitólogos cubanos, caribeños y también a investigadores de otras ramas. Su publicación sobre la recopilación de literaturas de aves del Caribe fue una obra que amplió el conocimiento de los ornitólogos en sus diferentes proyectos investigativos. Se preocupó infinitamente para que los resultados científicos de los cubanos fueran divulgados en *El Pitirre* y otras revistas de renombre en Norteamérica, facilitando literaturas y asesoría científica para el desarrollo de esos estudios. Personalmente para mí fue un maestro y un verdadero amigo.

#### **Helen Snyder:**

We have great memories of Jim and Beth from our years together in Puerto Rico, doing fieldwork in Arizona, Mexico, Florida, and Peru. His personal adventure stories were the stuff of legends, but he always told them reluctantly and modestly.

I once asked him if he had considered using horses for fieldwork as they would enable him to cover more ground. He said no, horses didn't seem to like him. I pressed for details, and he explained that he'd had to kill a horse once when he was hunting, I think in Montana and maybe with the Craigheads. On a multi-day trip they had shot an elk, butchered it, and tied the meat onto a pack horse at their camp, but during the night a grizzly attacked the meat-covered horse, injuring it so badly that Jim had to kill it.

On another occasion, he told me about scuba diving off Baja, maybe doing gobi work, when he felt a bump and turned around to find an Orca checking him out. He said he slowly brought his speargun up and held the Orca at arm's length with it, rising to the surface until, as he described it, he just stepped out of the water onto the edge of the reef.

He seemed to need no sleep: while working by day in Puerto Rico on Plain Pigeons (*Patagioenas inornata*) he got interested in the Puerto Rican Screech-Owl (*Megascops nudipes*) and stayed up watching nests all night. He was on the US cycling team in the 1968 Olympics and in California he was still prone to long, punishing bike rides. He told me he liked to see how much pain he could take, and that while in training for the Olympics he couldn't eat enough to keep from losing weight.

#### **Monica Tomosy:**

The mid-1980s was a time when United States government support for conservation was weak, and wildlife biology students were often advised not to expect to have a career in biological resource management. Nevertheless, I reached out to Jim Wiley, at the suggestion of Steve Beissinger, to see if I might have an opportunity to conduct some kind of research that could help the Puerto Rican Parrot recovery efforts. Jim welcomed my offer with encouragement and options. When administrative politics derailed the project we had spent over a year preparing



for 2 weeks prior to the start of the field season, Jim personally committed to ensuring I could implement a new worthwhile project.

As I worked through my 30 plus year career in conservation, the experience of Jim's mentorship stayed with me always. I have had the good fortune of working with many wildlife conservation leaders. Of them all, Jim Wiley was the most dedicated, committed, generous, and humble conservation leader I have ever known. He was the most profound role model I had the gift of knowing. Now I see his mission carries on through the BirdsCaribbean network of kindred souls.

### Joseph Wunderle:

Jim Wiley was inspirational as an indefatigable field biologist and scholar with remarkable attention to detail. Jim was a field person's field person. If anyone could uncover or dig out vital information on natural history and basic biology of a species from the field it was Jim Wiley. He was the go-to person for basic information vital for the conservation of threatened species and readily shared his published and unpublished data and observations. In the field, Jim observed the behavior of birds (e.g., parrots, raptors) which other biologists had missed. Because of his formidable observation skills and tenacity in the face of daunting field challenges, Jim was the guy most likely to get the data. He was also a diligent scholar. Who but Jim Wiley, in his monumental and now classic, *A Bibliography of Ornithology in the West Indies* (11,648 titles, 817 pp., Wiley 2000), would dig through Pennant's (1784–1785) *Arctic Zoology* and dredge up information on West Indian birds? Imagine reading through the 1879 volume of *Crónica Médico-Quirúrgica de la Habana* (Morales 1891) and finding something of relevance to West Indian ornithology as Jim did, bringing to ornithologists' attention a published note on olfactory abilities of Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*)?! Only Jim Wiley would discover publications before an author or co-author realized that the work was in print, as happened in my case when I discovered in his bibliography two citations of publications which I was unaware had been published.

Jim's role in the early years of the Puerto Rican Parrot (*Amazona vittata*) recovery effort were legendary, as recently recounted to me on learning of Jim's passing by Dr. Frank Wadsworth, former Director of the Institute of Tropical Forestry who retired after 60 years with the U.S. Forest Service. Dr. Wadsworth noted in an e-mail to me:

"I 'supervised' him officially with others on the early parrot efforts. He told me that without the parrot program in El Yunque we would have lost the bird. I took that as gospel, since Jim was always quiet as to the accomplishments."

"A mystery at the time was how Jim could always return with evidence of contacts with parrots while others could not find them."

The story of the early years of the Puerto Rican Parrot recovery effort including the initiation of the captive breeding program by Jim and his wife Beth is available in the classic monograph "Parrots of Luquillo" (Snyder et al. 1987).

As a recipient of the prestigious Alexander F. Skutch Award from the Association of Field Ornithologists, Jim's research and publications have been recognized for their quality and the stunningly wide variety of West Indian bird species that he studied.

It will be challenging for future ornithologists working in the region to match that diversity, at least for the breadth of field studies on different species. Jim knew Caribbean birds. His contributions to Caribbean ornithology place him in the league with past giants in the field including James Bond, Alexander Wetmore, and Juan Cristóbal Gundlach, who substantially advanced our knowledge of the region's avifauna. Moreover, despite Jim's shy ("I don't do banquets"), quiet, unassuming disposition, he readily served the region's community of bird watchers, ornithologists, and conservationists as a founding member of what is now known as BirdsCaribbean, founding editor of *El Pitirre*, and as a teacher and mentor to many in the region. He was a legend in his own time. I was fortunate to have known Jim as a friend and colleague and hope that his contributions continue to inspire others who live and work in the region but never had the opportunity to meet him.

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