



Other Contributions

In Memoriam: Reed Bowman, 1958–2023

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Dr. J. Reed Bowman, Past President of the Association of Field Ornithologists and the Florida Ornithological Society, passed away unexpectedly in Sebring, Florida on 18 September 2023. Reed was best known for his extensive work on the biology and conservation of threatened Florida birds, particularly the Florida Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Leuconotopicus borealis*), and Florida Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum floridanus*). Reed was very active in the ornithological community: in addition to his extensive work with the Association of Field Ornithologists and the Florida Ornithological Society, he also served on multiple committees for the American Ornithological Society. Reed is sorely missed by his family, friends, and colleagues.

Reed was born in 1958 in Columbus, Ohio, USA but grew up in Westchester County, New York. He was an avid outdoorsman, working as a backcountry ranger in the High Peaks of the Adirondacks and fly-fishing at his family's cabin in northern Michigan. He was a gifted writer, producing numerous articles for *Adirondack Life*, *Florida Naturalist*, and the *Highlands-News Sun*, in addition to his scientific publications. Throughout his life, the outdoors inspired his science, writing, and photography.

Reed obtained a B.A. in English Literature with a minor in Environmental Science and Wildlife Management from the State University of New York Plattsburgh in 1980. He then earned an M.S. in Wildlife Biology with David M. Bird from McGill University in 1985 before completing his Ph.D. in Biology with Glen E. Woolfenden at the University of South Florida in 1992. His Master's thesis focused on the reproductive behavior of American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*), and his doctoral work focused on hatching asynchrony and brood reduction in the White-crowned Pigeon (*Patagioenas leucocephala*). Reed then moved to Archbold Biological Station for his postdoctoral research and never left, rising through the ranks to eventually become the Director of Avian Ecology in 2004. He became the first endowed John W. Fitzpatrick Director of Avian Ecology in 2021, and retired in February 2023.

While at Archbold, Reed expanded Archbold's long-term study of Florida Scrub-Jays beyond the station's borders and into the nearby suburbs, where these habitat specialists persisted despite loss of habitat and fire suppression. Working with Steve Schoech and others, Reed demonstrated the costs of suburban living, including changes in breeding phenology, increased predation pressure, reduced nestling food availability, and increased hatch failure. This body of work demonstrated that suburban populations were demographic sinks, changing our understanding of Florida Scrub-Jay metapopulation dynamics, and directing

conservation planning for this species to this day. This work earned Reed a place on the Florida Scrub-Jay Recovery Team, where he served for 24 years.

Further expanding the geography of his impact, Reed developed a partnership with Paul Ebersbach, the Environmental Flight Chief at Avon Park Air Force Range in Highlands and Polk counties, Florida. Always an advocate for birds and their habitats, Reed encouraged the Air Force to remove pine plantations fragmenting Florida Scrub-Jay habitat, eliminate cattle grazing from native prairie, and use ecologically appropriate fire prescriptions to improve habitat management. He was responsible for the long-term demographic monitoring and study of the Florida Scrub-Jays, Florida Grasshopper Sparrows, and Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at Avon Park. The insights from this work earned Reed positions on the Red-cockaded Woodpecker Species Special Assessment Team, where he served for seven years, and the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Working Group Implementation and Coordination Team. Later, Reed was instrumental in the decisions to establish a captive breeding program for Florida Grasshopper Sparrows. Birds from this captive breeding program were later used to re-establish an extirpated breeding aggregation of Florida Grasshopper Sparrows at Avon Park Air Force Range.

Reed advanced conservation by bringing partners together, even when those partners seemed to be unlikely allies. He worked with the Mosaic Company, and predecessor company IMC Global, to mitigate their impacts on the Florida Scrub-Jay metapopulation of Southwest Florida. Under Reed's guidance, Mosaic restored scrub habitat and translocated Florida Scrub-Jays from small, isolated populations into a core area. These actions reconfigured the metapopulation from many small isolated populations expected to go extinct to a better-connected metapopulation with a large core population that is now growing in size, and the probability of extinction of the metapopulation has decreased dramatically. Reed inspired a legacy of commitment to recover the population.

Reed was not only dedicated to birds, but also to his colleagues. He served as the President of the McGill University chapter of the Wildlife Society (1989), the Florida Ornithological Society (1997–1999), and Association of Field Ornithologists (2014–2016). He also served on numerous committees and advisory boards, including the Board of Trustees for the Florida Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (2001–2013). Reed was the co-editor-in-chief of the newly open access *Journal of Field Ornithology* and a long-term member and chair of the Research Awards Committee for the American Ornithological Society (2001–2013). As President of the Association of Field Ornithologists, he moved

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the organization in a bold new direction, purchasing Avinet Research Supplies to help support the organization's mission. Reed's legacy of service lives on in that of his students, whose involvement in professional societies took root under his example.

Reed's many significant contributions to ornithology and conservation led to recognition from multiple groups. Reed was elected a Fellow of the American Ornithological Society in 2005 and awarded the Margaret Morse Nice Medal for lifetime contributions to ornithology by the Wilson Ornithological Society in 2018. These awards honored his career accomplishments in long-term studies of bird behavior and life history, and highlighted his innovative incorporation of cutting-edge technologies such as genomics, drone mapping, and wildlife telemetry into long-term demographic studies to advance the study and conservation of threatened species. In 2021, he received Florida Audubon's Guy Bradley Award for his lifetime contributions to the conservation of threatened species and a USFWS Regional Director's Honor Award as a member of the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Working Group.

Reed's legacy extends far beyond his > 100 academic publications and contributions to conservation policy. During his time at Archbold, Reed mentored 22 graduate students, 110 interns, 4 post-docs, and 164 seasonal and permanent research assistants. He pushed his mentees to excel and gave them the freedom to pursue their interests, but also provided a lot of support. Reed sought students "with an independent streak a mile-wide" (quote from his professional website), and was always enthusiastic about workshopping ideas, experimental designs, and analysis plans, or providing an extra set of hands or eyes in the field. He regularly nominated his mentees for positions at the Association of Field Ornithologists and always brought a flock of students to conferences. Reed cared deeply about his students, staff, and interns. He continued to keep in touch with many if not all of his mentees and organized an Archbold reunion at each professional meeting he attended. His many mentees now continue to make advances in ornithology and conservation across the country.

Beyond his ornithological expertise, Reed was also an avid naturalist and accomplished photographer. He had a deep knowledge of Florida's fauna and flora, and he often displayed his love of nature through stunning photographs (you can see some of his photos at <https://www.reedbowman.com/>). His photographs have won multiple awards and been featured in calendars, journal covers, and other publications. From his photography website, Reed wrote that his goal "is to represent nature as I see it and as I want others to see it ... [and to] present my subjects in their rawest, most visceral, wildest forms ... the form in which we encounter nature with all our senses and the form that fills us with awe, humility, and serenity." He hoped that his photography "will foster the aesthetic and emotional appeal of nature; something that sometimes the logic of science fails to instill - all so that we may increase the public's appreciation of the diversity of life and landscapes that are at risk." Reed was generous with his photographs, offering to capture specific scenes for public and scientific presentations, gifting many to coworkers and colleagues, and donating others to be auctioned for charity. During his retirement, Reed planned to compile his photographs and write a coffee table book showcasing the unique beauty of the Florida scrub.

Reed is survived by his wife Charlotte, children Seth and Mei, siblings, nieces and nephews, and other family members. Reed was enormously proud of his family. His office was filled with family photos and art created by Charlotte, Seth, and Mei. He was always eager to share his children's accomplishments from Mei's swim meet wins and international choir performances to Seth's newest film or cocktail recipe, and he was looking forward to spending more time with family after retirement.

Reed personally impacted the lives of thousands of individual birds and changed the conservation trajectory of multiple populations and species. They are all (presumably) thankless, probably regarding him as, at best, a peanut dispenser or convenient sentinel perch. However, we, two of his protégés, are not. His enthusiasm about science, insight into natural history, dedication to conservation, and unwavering support of others are things we strive to emulate. We will miss his dad-jokes and seemingly encyclopedic knowledge of great birding spots, beautiful hikes, and hidden-gem hole-in-the-wall restaurants. Reed's life was too short, but he lived that time fully. Thank you Reed for all that you have done for Archbold, ornithology, conservation, and the lives of the many people and birds who live in a better world because of you.

Fig. 1. Reed Bowman (1958–2023) with a Florida Scrub-Jay (rGQ-H, the male breeder at the territory FENC from 2014 to 2022) at Archbold Biological Station. Photograph by Anders Gyllenhaal.



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