

Crucial to the development of skills within the Wildlife Service and among the many volunteers who participated in those programmes, was training. Brian was responsible for the planning and direction for 15 years of the Wildlife trainee scheme, a system which was recognised in its day as the best on the job training in the Government Service.

In the latter part of his Wildlife Service career he provided consultancy advice for a number of international bird and conservation projects in Australia, Seychelles, Mauritius, Christmas Island, Papua New Guinea and Kiribati. This has been developed further, since his retirement from Government service, with the formation and direction of Wildlife Management International Ltd who have undertaken projects for the British Government, European Union, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Galapagos Conservation Trust and Falklands Conservation.

Brian was an important member of the NZ Ornithological Trust Board who organised both the 20th International Ornithological Congress and ICBP (Birdlife International) Conference in 1990. He was a recipient of the Queens Service Medal in 1984 for his contribution to endangered species management and the eradication of exotic animals from islands, and was awarded the Society's Falla Memorial Award in 1987. The Royal Australasian Ornithological Union honoured him with a Fellowship in 1990.

This is but a summary of the life of one of New Zealand's most influential ornithologists - a continual fosterer of bird study who has, in spite of some of the overpowering problems presented by the slide of so many species towards extinction, remained an optimist. He has continually tried to push the boundaries of what people generally expect is possible by operating in his own words with 'a tenacious pigheadedness'.



John Warham

Although John began observing, photographing and writing about birds at an early age, it was not until relatively late in life that he began his academic training and became established as a professional ornithologist. When he left school in

1937 he embarked on a career as an industrial chemist. The Second World War soon intervened, and John spent six and a half years in the British army, rising to the rank of captain. He then returned to his original employer in the textile industry working as a methods engineer and later a works manager.

During this period he furthered his interest in birds, and seabirds in particular, with visits to places such as the island of Skomer, off the west coast of Wales. In 1952, John and wife Pat, whom he had married in 1943, decided to leave the 'rat race' and travel overseas. They bought an army truck, shipped it to Albany in Western Australia, and this became their principle home for the next few years. From 1952 to 1959, they wandered the continent and its offshore islands observing birds and selling their writings and photographs to cover living expenses.

In Australia, little was then known about many of the birds he photographed. John's well-illustrated articles reporting his observations on a variety of birds, in particular bowerbirds and seabirds, were at the time the most authoritative studies published. This phase of their lives ended with John spending 15 months on sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island as a member of the 1960-61 Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition. Pat stayed back on the mainland.

They returned to England in 1961, where John enrolled at the University of Durham, graduating four years later with a BSc. Hons (1st) in biological sciences. In 1966, they emigrated to New Zealand where John had obtained a lectureship in the Zoology Department of the University of Canterbury. At Canterbury, he maintained his interest in seabirds, especially those of the sub-Antarctic islands. He took a leading role in the direction of the University's Snares Island Biological Programme from the mid 1960s, the University's 1969 Antipodes Island Expedition and a wide range of other projects around New Zealand and its offshore islands.

During these expeditions John achieved a good balance between accomplishing his own research and providing rigorous supervision for graduate students. His students found him a hard taskmaster who could be highly critical, but at the same time he was always willing to help those who tried to meet his exacting standards. For his own research on seabirds John received a PhD. from the University of Canterbury in 1973, and a DSc. from the University of Durham in 1985. John 'officially' retired from the University of Canterbury as Reader in Zoology in 1985.

Over the years John has studied a large number of petrel and penguin species and his published record of these studies is prodigious. From his fieldwork in Australasia he has published at least 60 scientific papers on seabirds covering aspects of the biology of at least 23 different species.

The results of his earlier work were summarised in *The handbook of Australian seabirds*, which he co-authored with Dom and Vincent Serventy and published in 1971. In his PhD. thesis John brought together the results of his field work on five of the six species of crested penguins undertaken on the Snares and Antipodes Islands, Macquarie Island, and on mainland South Westland. He published it as a series of papers on the different species which, 20 years later, are still important references for this group. In addition to his scientific writings John has written

numerous popular articles on birds including, for example, 19 species in *The Readers Digest complete book of New Zealand birds*. Following his 'official' retirement he embarked on his most ambitious project, a two-volume monograph of the petrels. The first, *The Petrels: their ecology and breeding systems* was published in 1990, and the second, *The behaviour, population biology and physiology of the petrels* in 1996. These have been widely acclaimed as the definitive texts on the petrels and seem likely to remain so for many years. In conjunction with this project John compiled a 13 000 reference bibliography of the Procellariiformes which he now has available on the Internet.

John has been an accomplished bird photographer since his youth, and has published books on both 'bird photography' and 'wildlife cinematography'. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society in 1950, and a Fellow in 1957. These skills have perfectly complimented John's career as a seabird biologist.

His photographs appear throughout his popular and scientific writings, and have been commonly used in general texts such as Harrison's *Seabirds of the world – a photographic guide*, and *The seabirds of Australia* published by The National Photographic Index of Australian Wildlife.

While the size and significance of John's contribution to ornithology has been widely acknowledged overseas, it has not previously been honoured in New Zealand. The Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union awarded John the D.L. Serventy Medal in 1992. He is also a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists Union, an Honorary Member of the British Ornithologists Union, and a Senior Member of the International Ornithological Committee of the International Ornithological Congress.

