

2004 DORIS HUESTIS SPEIRS AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS IN CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGY

Spencer G. Sealy

The Doris Huestis Speirs Award is the most prestigious award of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, recognizing outstanding contributions to Canadian ornithology. The SCO/SOC is pleased to present this award in 2004 to Dr. Spencer G. Sealy.

We honour Dr. Sealy for his contributions to ornithology in Canada over his 40+ year career, including research, teaching, supervising graduate students, and support of ornithological museums. His major research areas include behavioural and evolutionary ecology of avian brood parasites and their hosts, ecology of seabirds, songbird population trends, and sociality among tropical birds. Spencer began his ornithological career as a youngster in Battleford, Saskatchewan, and his first published in 1960 when in grade 11. R.W. Nero, C.S. Houston, R. Webb, and K. Vermeer had a strong influence on his early career. During his M.Sc. (University of British Columbia 1968; advisor M.D.F. Udvardy) and Ph.D. studies (University of Michigan 1972; advisor R.W. Storer), he conducted the first major breeding and feeding ecology studies of little known Pacific alcids in remote locations in the Bering Sea, Alaska (Least, Crested, and Parakeet Auklets), and at the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia (Ancient and Marbled Murrelets).

Immediately after graduate school, he began teaching in the Department of Zoology at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg where he developed a large program of avian research at the Delta Marsh Field Station located at a forested-dune ridge on the shores of Lake Manitoba. That work has focused on breeding and feeding ecology of passerine communities (Yellow Warbler, Least Flycatcher, etc.) and brood parasitism (Brown-headed Cowbird). In addition, he developed the Department of Zoology Ornithology Museum (preparing most specimens himself), studied cloud-forest communities in Costa Rica, and continued studies of Pacific seabirds (especially at the Bamfield Marine Station on Vancouver Island, British Columbia) and Queen Charlotte Islands' avifauna.

Thus far, Spencer has supervised 9 Ph.D. and 42 M.Sc. students that have conducted studies on many avian groups and a vast array of topics. By 2003, he had published an amazing 230 papers, many with his students who now also contribute strongly to ornithological research in Canada and around the world. While he has published widely in international journals, he has also maintained an active interest in contributing to regional journals, especially Blue Jay, and maintains an avid interest in natural history. Spencer has carried a heavy undergraduate teaching and committee load (introductory biology, chordate zoology, ornithology, mammalogy, and special courses at the Delta Marsh Field Station, Bamfield Marine Station, and Iceland). He has mined almost all ornithological collections in North America and many around the world for information on historical distribution, seabird vagrancy, plumage, cowbird hosts, and egg characteristics.

Spencer has also been an active member of the ornithological community as reviewer, referee, and board member. He was founding member of both the Pacific Seabird Group and SOC/SOC, and is an active member of several other ornithological societies. He has been closely associated with the publication of *The Auk*, *Canadian Journal of Zoology*, and *Picoides*, and now is the editor of *The Auk*.

Spencer is one of few Canadian ornithologists to have studied and been interested in almost all aspects of the distribution, ecology, behaviour, and physiology of Canadian birds. Such a breadth of knowledge is rarely seen today with greater research specialization. Spencer's hard work, extreme dedication, and daily commitment over more than four decades is truly inspirational.

Congratulations, Spencer!

The D.H. Speirs Award Selection Committee for 2004 consisted of Gilles Seutin (chair), Erica Dunn and Mark Brigham.