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NED K. JOHNSON YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD, 2009

RENÉE DUCKWORTH

The Ned K. Johnson Young Investigator Award honors a lifelong supporter and former president of the AOU. The award, first presented in 2005, was created to recognize outstanding and promising ornithological research made by persons early in their careers, with the hope and expectation that such individuals will provide future leadership in ornithology within and beyond North America. The AOU is proud and confident in its selection of Renée Duckworth as the 2009 recipient of this award.

Duckworth studies the role of behavioral variation in driving ecological and evolutionary processes. Her work is unusual in that it integrates physiological and evolutionary ecology, quantitative genetics, and phylogenetic comparison to understand an understudied but important evolutionary process: range expansion. Duckworth received her Ph.D. from Duke University, where she studied the role of behavioral variation as a determinant of species distributions through a series of field experiments and surveys of selection on natural variation among populations of two songbird species. This work, published in *Proceedings of the National*

Academy of Sciences and several other prestigious journals, illuminated the roles of aggression and dispersal and their evolution in the reciprocal range shifts of Western and Mountain bluebirds. Duckworth's research fills a vacuum in evolutionary theory: What prevents populations from occupying larger areas than they do? The novelty of her approach is that she appreciates that no one level of biological organization is sufficient to explain a complex evolutionary process and uses diverse techniques to tease apart those interacting levels of organization. Her research has improved our understanding of phenotypic integration, another emerging but underexplored area in vertebrates, and of the influence of behavioral variation as a driver of species diversification.

After completing her graduate work, Duckworth was awarded an International Research Postdoctoral Fellowship by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to study at the Institute of Evolutionary Biology at Edinburgh University in Scotland, where she learned pedigree-based statistical models as a tool for investigating the genetic basis of variation in dispersal and aggressive behavior in