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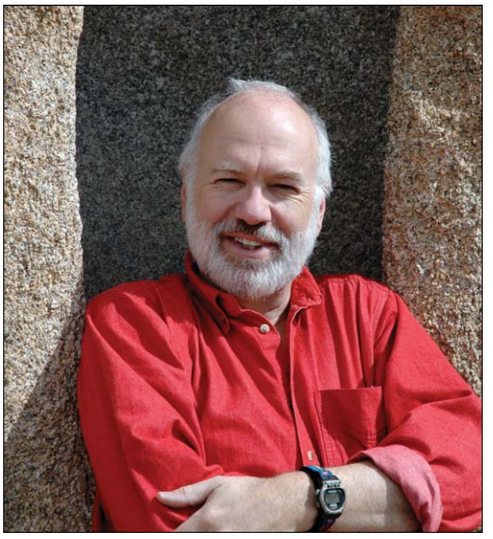
ELLIOTT COUES AWARD, 2010

Robert D. Montgomerie



Robert Montgomerie at Joshua Tree National Park, California, March 2005.
(Photograph by Denise Michaud.)

Bob Montgomerie is a Canadian behavioral ecologist, best known for his wide-ranging studies of sexual selection and parental care in birds. He studies sexual selection in the broadest sense, integrating work on plumage signals, sexual conflict, genetic mating systems, parental care patterns, and life-history evolution into a cohesive understanding of avian reproductive strategies. His research program is noteworthy both for the broad diversity of species and topics in which he and his students have made important contributions and for his knack for creative insights and questions. His research spans a remarkable taxonomic and geographic diversity, with detailed field studies on more than 40 bird species in North and Central America, Europe, and Australia—from hummingbirds to ptarmigan, fairy-wrens, bowerbirds, and robins. The diversity of the birds he has studied is remarkable enough, but he has also conducted pioneering research on mating tactics, sperm evolution, and sexual conflict in damselflies, fruit flies, snakes, frogs, and a dozen species of fish. His research is invariably question-driven, motivated by a deep understanding and passion for the natural history.

Montgomerie's interest in birds began in his early teens, working with ornithologists at both the Royal Ontario Museum and the fledgling Long Point Bird Observatory. He published his first paper—on differential migration in Least Flycatchers (*Empidonax minimus*)—while in high school. His Ph.D. research with Peter Grant at McGill focused on competition in Mexican hummingbirds and was followed by a prestigious 10-year research fellowship at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, where he is currently professor and research chair in the Department of Biology. Upon settling at Queen's in 1980, Montgomerie began a two-decade research program on the behavioral ecology of High Arctic–breeding birds at Sarcpa Lake, Nunavut, with innovative studies on mating systems and parental care in Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*), Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*), Lapland Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*), and several shorebirds. Because tundra-dwelling

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