

OUR RESPECTS

Arthur S. Hawkins, 1914–2006

Arthur S. Hawkins (Art), a pioneer and international leader in waterfowl research and management, died 9 March 2006, at his home near Hugo, Minnesota. At the age of 92, Art left this world with binoculars around his neck and walking sticks in hand, doing what he enjoyed most, walking around his farm to observe the arrival of early migrant birds. He kept meticulous records of his field observations over the years, and a daily journal beginning in 1957, with the last entry on 8 March 2006; “Didn’t freeze last night. Saw a pair of mallards at 8:30, feeding.—turkey tracks near the barn and pheasant tracks near the bench—.”

Born in Batavia, New York, USA, Art loved hunting, fishing, and trapping as a boy, outdoor passions that led him to seek a career in natural resources management. He completed undergraduate studies at Cornell University in 1934 and obtained his Master of Science degree at the University Wisconsin in 1937. There he worked on a bobwhite quail project as one of the early students of Aldo Leopold. After college, Art began work with the Illinois Natural History Survey in 1938, where he was introduced to emerging waterfowl and wetland problems of that era by Frank Bellrose, who became a lifelong professional colleague and personal friend. Together, they conducted initial studies on the development of artificial nesting structures for wood ducks and laid the groundwork for waterfowl population surveys and determination of annual hunter kill of ducks along the Mississippi River. Upon returning in 1945 from 4 years in the United States Army during World War II, Art continued his waterfowl work with the Illinois Natural History Survey.

In 1946 Art took a job with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as one of the first flyway biologists, where he became one of the pioneers who helped develop the concept for formation of the Flyway Council System. Beginning in 1948, he was instrumental in organizing the Mississippi Flyway Waterfowl Committee, which subsequently led to the formation of the Mississippi Flyway Council in January 1952, followed by the Technical Section in January 1953. He became the Service’s Mississippi Flyway Representative in 1953. He spent the next 8 years working seasonally on waterfowl production studies and wetland relationships in Manitoba, Canada. There, in cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Manitoba Wildlife Branch, and the Delta Waterfowl Research Station, he worked with another of Leopold’s students, H. Albert Hochbaum, then Director of the Delta Research Station.

In addition to his initial field work in Canada, Art immediately began promoting the need for Flyway Management Plans, and initiated work on the Mississippi

Flyway Management Plan in 1953, which was completed in 1958. Then he began to encourage the preparation of species management plans, several of which were completed, including a plan for midcontinent mallards and plans for specific Canada goose populations or flocks. He was a leader in attempts to improve harvest management of Canada goose populations in the Mississippi Flyway. He was a strong advocate of good sportsmanship and believed that hunters were a dimension of game management too often forgotten in professional circles. He maintained that hunting pressure could be controlled, while maintaining high standards of quality and satisfaction among hunters. Right up to the time he retired in 1974, he was a tireless supporter of species management, international cooperation, and esthetic values of game management. He continued to work as a reemployed annuitant for USFWS until the mid-1980s. In retirement he continued to be active in a variety of environmental and resource management issues in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and played a strong role in formation of the Wood Duck Society in 1985, and the Leopold Education Project.

Based on early relationships, Art was a strong advocate of Leopold’s “Land Ethic” philosophy and applied many conservation practices to his farm, lake, and marshes in Minnesota. In spite of his busy schedule over the years, Art always took time to promote the concept of sound management based on good science, and he was a prolific writer. He was the author or coauthor more than 150 technical papers, numerous management plans, and a great variety of project reports and news articles. He was a contributor to the book *Waterfowl Tomorrow* (1964), and was the leader of the Editorial Committee for the book *Flyways—Pioneering Waterfowl Management in North America* (1984), both published by the United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service. The walls of his office and home were adorned with significant awards recognizing his many accomplishments.

Over a period of 65 years, he influenced the lives of many people working in the field of natural resources research and management. Those of us who had the opportunity to work in the field with Art soon learned that work began at daylight and ended at dark, weather and endurance permitting. We quickly learned Art’s survival technique by putting a peanut butter sandwich in our hind pocket to get us through the day. He was an inspiration and role model for young and old alike, and an important mentor to all who sought his advice and wisdom. He was well read on many current conservation topics and his enthusiasm for debate was infectious. He certainly earned his recognition as one of the pioneers in waterfowl management in North America and was a legend within the migratory bird fraternity. He was still active in these circles at age 92, and expressed his