

**Jeremy J. Hatch, 1937–2015**

Authors: Jennifer M. Arnold, and Stephen A. Oswald

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IN MEMORIAM

## Jeremy J. Hatch, 1937–2015

Jennifer M. Arnold\* and Stephen A. Oswald

Division of Science, Penn State University, Berks Campus, Reading, Pennsylvania, USA

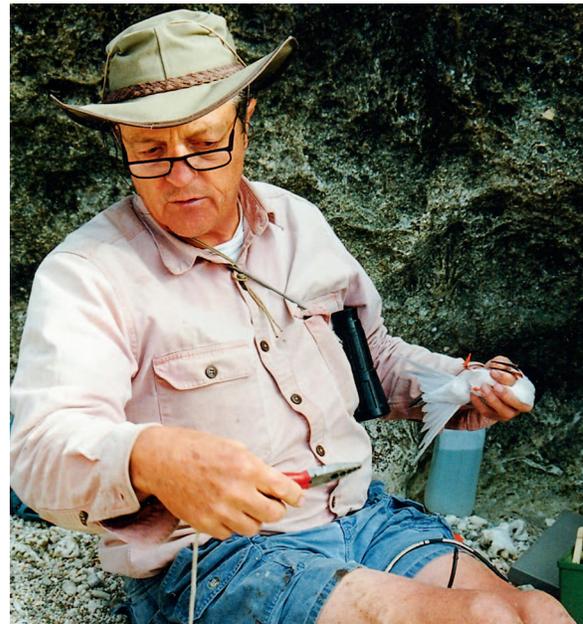
\* Corresponding author: [jma25@psu.edu](mailto:jma25@psu.edu)

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Jeremy Hatch died on December 2, 2015, in his home in South Tawton, Devon, UK, after a struggle with melanoma that ultimately led to brain cancer. He will be fondly remembered for his excellent mentorship, attention to detail, enthusiasm for fieldwork, contributions to ornithology, caring heart, and dry sense of humor.

Think back to your graduate school days. Do you remember that late-afternoon lecture with that British-sounding professor? The one who looked benign, as you settled back in your seat, but before your eyes could close, would jolt you back to reality with an unexpected action or question. Perhaps you had a thesis advisor who set extremely high standards for thorough, well-planned experiments, although he was probably harder on himself than on you. Perhaps you were lucky enough to be on a field excursion with your research advisor and watch as, with the enthusiasm of the proverbial kid in the candy shop, he would undertake some elaborate experiment, visit new islands, or just band a few chicks. Well, if you attended UMass Boston, that professor would have been Jeremy Hatch.

Jeremy John Hatch was born in London on October 7, 1937. He was instilled with his family's natural curiosity and with his mother's deep love for the Devonshire countryside. His father was in the British Colonial Service in Nigeria, so Jeremy boarded at Bryanston School in Dorset. It was there that he became interested in birds, inspired by his zoology teacher, Mr. Harthan (known to his students as "GDH"), and by extensive birding outings with his brother and other members of the school's natural history society. Following in the footsteps of Charles Darwin, he went on to study at Christ's College, Cambridge, for his undergraduate degree, graduating in 1961. He enrolled in a Ph.D. program at Duke University, studying the song of mockingbirds under the mentorship of Peter Klopfer. During this time, he studied endemic mockingbird species as part of an expedition to the Galápagos Islands, working alongside Jack Hailman and Robert Risebrough. He completed his dissertation in 1967 and accepted a National Institutes of Health postdoctoral fellowship under Donald Griffin at Rockefeller University.



**Jeremy Hatch doing fieldwork on the Abrolhos Islands, Western Australia, in 1997.** Photo credit: Chris Surman

Jeremy was appointed Assistant Professor of Biology at the newly founded University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston in 1969. There he continued to pursue his career-long interest in seabirds, which had begun in the late 1960s, using experimental and observational approaches to study the life history and behavior of terns, gulls, and shearwaters. His academic partnership with Ian Nisbet cemented his research focus on seabirds, and terns in particular. Jeremy's legacy includes more than 50 papers in scientific journals, a plethora of inventions for fieldwork that are still in use today, and the detail-oriented approach to science that he so carefully fostered in his students.

A major hallmark of Jeremy's contributions to ornithology is the breadth of his research inquiries in seabird ecology, especially human impacts on seabirds. These included studies on band wear and loss in terns, applied studies in seabird biology (particularly the effect of

expanding cormorant populations, health threats from gull populations, and the potential impacts of offshore wind-farm projects on seabirds), as well as more empirical studies on the terns of Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts. His work also led to the discovery of a female-biased sex ratio in the endangered Roseate Tern in North America. He subsequently examined the demographic causes and consequences of this sex ratio in both New England and Western Australia. He also authored or coauthored three meticulously detailed *Birds of North America* accounts (Arctic Tern, Great Cormorant, and Double-crested Cormorant). Beyond this, however, the titles of his conference presentations and supervised student theses point to a further layer of research interests and productivity. While terns still feature prominently (with different questions about flight dynamics and management techniques), there are also works on sperm whales, right whales, oystercatchers, tree swallows, and other passerines. His considered and precise scientific approach was easily and fruitfully extended to such diverse taxa. Jeremy's research was supported by many sources, including the National Science Foundation, Sea-Grant, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the Boston Globe Foundation.

Jeremy loved fieldwork and had a profound, natural grasp of field-based research. Less widely known, except by those who worked closely with him, is that he had exceptional ability when it came to designing field equipment. A long list of creative devices includes self-weighting nest boxes for Roseate Terns, novel spring-net and treadle traps to catch even the most trap-shy bird, and a floating fish tank. His design for an observational blind, solidly constructed but collapsible for boat transport, and his simple but effective trap designs are still regularly used by ornithologists who had worked with Jeremy over the years. He patiently mentored his students in projects that developed similarly creative field equipment: temperature sensors for measuring precise temperatures of the internal environment of an egg and remote spray boxes to mark birds without trapping them are just two examples. His mind was always working on some gadget, and walking around Jeremy's lab was like entering a time machine, full of interesting-looking but befuddling gadgets that would soon become the next solution to a field biologist's latest conundrum.

Jeremy had a very astute scientific mind that led him to design elegant field experiments as well as to critique those of other researchers. Every manipulation was mapped out in detail, with all possible consequences thought through. This not only led to many successful experimental studies but also proved to be a wonderful pedagogical tool. As his colleague John Ebersole remarked, "I co-taught ecology with Jeremy during my first hectic semester at UMass Boston. I think I learned more from Jeremy in this course

about both UMass Boston as an academic institution and how to teach students effectively, than students learned from me about principles of ecology. He stressed presentation and development of the classic experiments that tested the ecological principles that I was so fond of explaining." Jeremy's style was classical, logical, and effective. Although he could be very critical of his own work and the work of others, he was patient with his students, inspiring us to think more incisively, never holding grudges if we became frustrated by his desire to improve our work, and always supporting us when we got to our final presentation or paper submission.

Humility in all things is perhaps the mark of a great mentor and no small part of Jeremy's legacy is passing on the fruits of experience simply by example. It was not until writing this that we both realized how much impact Jeremy had had on our lives. We see his hallmark methodology in the way we approach our teaching and research. Jeremy's words of advice for an aspiring student searching for a graduate program were "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." This play on words also describes Jeremy's shrewd approach to fieldwork that allowed him and his students to remain productive within the unpredictable world of field biology.

Jeremy was an Elective Member of the AOU. He was also an active member of seven other ornithological societies in North America and Europe and a regular presenter at the annual meetings of the Waterbird Society (previously Colonial Waterbird Society) throughout his career. He undertook arduous fieldwork until his retirement (and even afterward), banding hundreds of thousands of birds, marking tens of thousands of nests, and probably wearing out hundreds of pairs of field clothes in the name of ornithology.

Jeremy retired from UMass Boston in 2004 and moved back to Devon, England. He lived on the edge of Dartmoor National Park, where he would take long walks with his dog, was a keen birder, and was actively involved in several environmental organizations related to the park. He is survived by two sons, Oliver and Nick; their wives, Molly and Bradel; his granddaughter, Camilla; and his brother, Stephen. While Jeremy's contribution to science is indisputable, perhaps even more important is the legacy, both personal and academic, that he left to those of us who were fortunate enough to have had him as a mentor—his compassion for others, his incisive scientific mind, and his zeal as a teacher. He will be sorely missed by the field of ornithology and by all of us who can remember that slightly eccentric, British-sounding professor from our salad days.

We thank Ian Nisbet, John Ebersole, Ann Sanson, Stephen Hatch, Rick Kesseli, Jessica Macan, and Margaret Jeffery for sharing stories and details about Jeremy's life.

Memorials Editor: Ted Anderson, ted020@centurytel.net