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Robert I. Bowman, who died at home in Berkeley, California, on 12 March 2006 at the age of 80, was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. He graduated from Queen's University in Canada in 1948, majoring in biology and chemistry, and began graduate work at the University of California at Berkeley in 1950. In 1955, before receiving his Ph.D., he began a 33-year career of teaching comparative vertebrate anatomy, ornithology, and island biology in the Biology Department of San Francisco State University, where he retired in 1988.

Bob is widely known among ornithologists for his extensive research on Darwin's Finches of the Galápagos Islands. He made two major contributions to knowledge of these birds. The first, which became his doctoral work, was a detailed anatomical investigation of the skulls, their musculature, and how they functioned. His findings greatly extended the morphological understanding of the adaptive radiation beyond what had previously been achieved with simple measurements of museum specimens. His second major contribution was to do essentially the same with tape-recordings of vocalizations. This led him to conclude, contrary to his predecessor, David Lack, that coexisting species differed in their songs so much that songs constituted a barrier to interbreeding.

He supplemented the analyses of finch song in two important ways. First, he tested the power of transmission of songs through natural habitat by playing tape-recorded songs and recording how much of the original sounds penetrated the vegetation at different distances from the playback source. He was able to support an argument that song characteristics of the different species were adapted to the sound-transmitting properties of the habitat in which they lived. In other words, songs were adaptively adjusted to the local environment, in much the same way that beak sizes and shapes were adapted to local feeding environments. Second, he reared finches in captivity

at a time when this was possible to do outside the Galápagos. By playing tape-recorded song to young birds reared in isolation, he was able to show that song characteristics were learned in a moderately short period of life in an imprinting-like process. He was a pioneer in the study of finch songs and established the foundation on which much more has been, and continues to be, built. In everything he did, he was meticulous and rigorous. He was also a gifted draftsman.

I knew Bob for more than 30 years. We began a correspondence in 1972, when I was planning my first trip to the Galápagos. Bob was extremely helpful and generous with information about finches and the working conditions on the Galápagos. He continued to give useful advice whenever I asked for it, reading manuscripts, checking on records of finch occurrences, and offering opinions on my conclusions. At all times, he was courteous, whether agreeing or disagreeing with me. The last time he wrote to me was in 2002, answering a question about when he saw a warbler finch (*Certhidea*) on the island of Floreana. I regret mislaying his letter; when we published a paper last year in *Biological Conservation* on the possible extinction of this population, we failed to say that Bob may have been the last scientist to see one of its members (in 1957). I also regret not seeing him imitate the famous finches. As tourists have told me, he delighted in mimicking their behavior of bracing the beak against the ground and kicking a rock backwards to expose hidden seeds. Imagine that performance in the lounge of a tourist boat!

Bob will be remembered for his efforts on behalf of conservation at a crucial time in the history of the Galápagos. He was one of two scientific advisors to UNESCO and IUCN, commissioned to write a report on the state of wildlife in the islands and to make recommendations. The report played a large role in the creation of the Galápagos National Park (1959), the setting

up of the Charles Darwin Foundation (1959), and the establishment of a research station on the islands (1964). Those of us who have worked in the Galápagos owe a debt of gratitude to Bob for his part in all this, and for helping to preserve the heritage of a remarkable part of the world—a world within a world. The Republic of Ecuador recognized his contribution to science and conservation by awarding him a Medal of Honor in 1964.

An Elective Member of the AOU (1966), he was on the Executive Committee of the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science from 1977 to 1988, and President from 1981 to 1983. He was a

founding member and director of the Oceanic Society, founding member and President of the San Francisco Institute of Animal Behavior, President of the Cooper Ornithological Society (Northern Division), and on the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Zoological Society. He was a Fellow of the Academy of Zoology of India. He maintained a strong attachment to the California Academy of Sciences, where he was successively Fellow (1961), Trustee (1993), and Honorary Trustee (2002).

He is survived by his wife, Margret; two sons, Peter and Paul; and a sister, Marjorie Bowman Dickie. I thank John Hafernik for providing information about Bob's career.
