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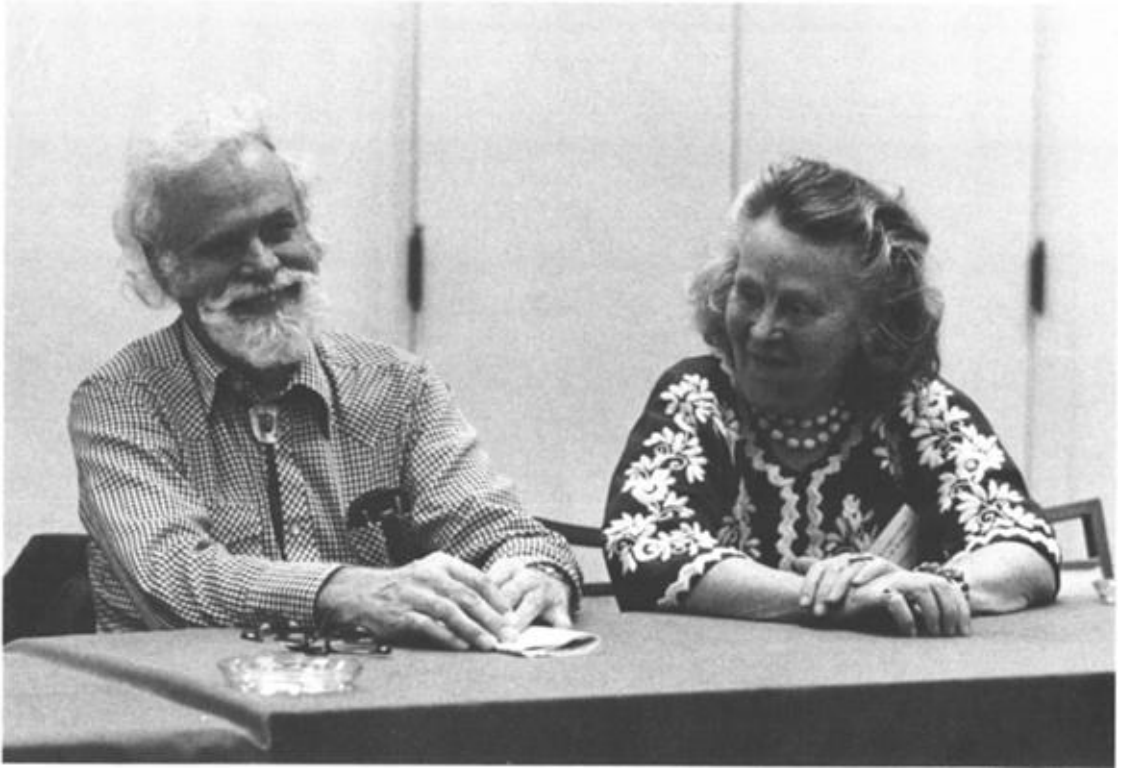
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Frederick N. and Frances Hamerstrom
(Photo by Peter Stettenheim)

PREFACE

This issue of **The Journal of Raptor Research** is in celebration of Frederick and Frances Hamerstrom. By their example and their numerous important contributions they have become an American institution. They have left an impact on the history of American ornithology, on wildlife management, conservation, and on prairie chicken and raptor research, that can never be erased. Why are Fran and Hammi so admired and loved? Because of the example they have set. They never forgot that field research is the naturalist's fountain of knowledge and they never stopped asking searching questions. In contemporary ecology we now probably have far more mathematical models than we have the necessary facts to feed into these models. But the Hamerstroms gathered facts year after year. And they had so much fun doing it that they infected a whole generation of young workers with the same enthusiasm, the same devotion, and the same feeling of doing what makes living worthwhile.

For 59 years Fran and Hammi worked as a team, in the selection of their college courses, in the choice of the research projects, and in the writing up of the results of their work. Between them they authored or co-authored 238

papers and innumerable reviews. After a few years they often could not tell who had written the paper, for one had drafted it and the other one had polished it. Hammi edited all of Fran's ten books and refereed most of the papers sent in by journals in the United States and abroad. Fran handled the papers in German and French and did the more daring aspects of the field work such as the climbing of trees and rocks. Hammi firmly stated, "I prefer to have one foot on the ground." Both of them were particularly proud of a major contribution to science each had made: Hammi developed the scatter-pattern (for managing prairie chickens, a device for preventing fragmentation). Fran discovered that it was not the Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius*) who controlled vole abundance but rather that the abundance of the harrier was controlled by the size of the vole population.

Fran and Hammi of course are not merely an American institution. They forged links with ornithologists worldwide. They attended international congresses and made friends everywhere. And let us never forget the selfless dedication with which they, particularly Fran, organized and ran the help for the starving and bombed out European ornithologists after 1945. This quite literally saved lives, because many of them were on the verge of death by starvation. For Fran and Hammi it was simply something "one has to do." They never made any fuss about it, even though they should have received the highest decorations. I am mentioning this aspect of their achievements only to highlight their versatility and their humaneness.

As an old friend and admirer of theirs it gives me the greatest pleasure to write these words of greetings and appreciation. I am delighted that this issue is dedicated in their honor.—Ernst Mayr, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, 26 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

