

Peter J. Jones 1945–2024

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Peter Jones, whose ornithological career was principally concentrated on tropical topics, was also an inspirational teacher whose interests encompassed not only biology but also art and music. Peter established his reputation with innovative studies of the granivorous pest the Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* in Botswana and, later, in Nigeria alongside Peter Ward (1934–1979, *Ibis* 123: 546–547).

Peter was born in Orpington in Kent in 1945 but he and his parents, James and Irene Jones, moved not long afterwards to Cheltenham where James began working at the UK Government's communications headquarters (GCHQ), so Peter was brought up in the Cotswolds where his fascination with natural history flourished. After gaining a BSc in Zoology at the University of Exeter in 1966 he joined the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology at Oxford to study the ecology of Great Tits *Parus major* supervised by Chris Perrins, leading to a PhD in 1973 for a thesis entitled 'Some aspects of the feeding ecology of the Great Tit *Parus major*' and a paper with Chris on the inheritance of clutch size in Great Tits (*Condor* 76: 225–229).

In 1969, Peter's association with queleas began when he worked as bird ecologist for the Government of Botswana, living in Maun until 1972. The next year he was appointed as a Senior Scientific Officer at the Centre for Overseas Pest Research (COPR), then one of the UK Government's Overseas Development Administration's scientific units which was later to be privatized and became a part of the University of Greenwich's Natural Resources Institute (NRI). At COPR he joined Peter Ward for ground-breaking work on the ecology of quelea published in *Ibis* (118: 547–574; 118: 575–576; 119: 200–203) and the *Journal of Zoology* (*J. Zool., Lond.* 181: 43–56). This research, later synthesized in a series of book chapters published in 1989, formed the bedrock of our current understanding of the ecology, physiology, moult, migration and control strategies of this economically important and exceedingly numerous bird pest of small-grained cereals in sub-Saharan Africa. Having known Peter since his Oxford days, I was delighted when he agreed to work with me on projects based at NRI in the late 1990s to resume quelea work to develop forecasting models (*J. Appl. Ecol.* 44: 523–533), in a period when we also worked with his then PhD student Martin Dallimer on migratory orientation and molecular analyses of their populations and blood parasites.

In 1979, Peter left COPR to become Lecturer, and later Senior Lecturer, at the Institute of Evolutionary Biology, Edinburgh University, where he remained until retirement in 2006. At Edinburgh he supervised 10 PhD students and both there and when lecturing for the Tropical Biology Association he gained a reputation as an inspiring teacher,

garnering his extensive knowledge of tropical biology into concise and stimulating presentations. Some of this experience was gained while on expeditions to Henderson Island with Mike Brooke and to the Gulf of Guinea Islands with Alan Tye, the latter culminating in a BOU check-list (2006, no. 22). Peter also contributed extensively to many other ornithological subjects, including the African–Palearctic migration system.

Peter contributed enormously to ornithological circles by being, at various times, Vice President of the British Trust for Ornithology; Chairman of the Research Committee of the A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, University of Jos, Nigeria; Committee member of the British Ecological Society Grants Committee; Associate Editor of *Bird Conservation International*; Council member of the European Ornithologists' Union; Editor of *Avian Science*; and Vice-President of the BOU and Editor of *Ibis* from 1988 to 1993. Thus, he was a worthy recipient of the BOU medal in 2010 (*Ibis* 153: 438–439).

It was not only biology that interested Peter who had a fascination with art, being particularly fond of the paintings of Piero della Francesca, music including opera especially those composed by Janacek, old churches, industrial archaeology and esoteric literature such as the writing of Lucretius. Such subjects, and many more besides, were enjoyed with his many friends and colleagues, often embellished with Peter's pearls of wisdom and his wicked sense of humour. After retirement, Peter and his partner Catriona MacCallum moved to live in a remote part of Sutherland and later Peter moved to a cottage near Melrose. In 1969 he had married Isla Cardale, a union that ended in 1976, and he is much missed by Isla, Catriona, and all his other many friends, relatives, colleagues and former students.