

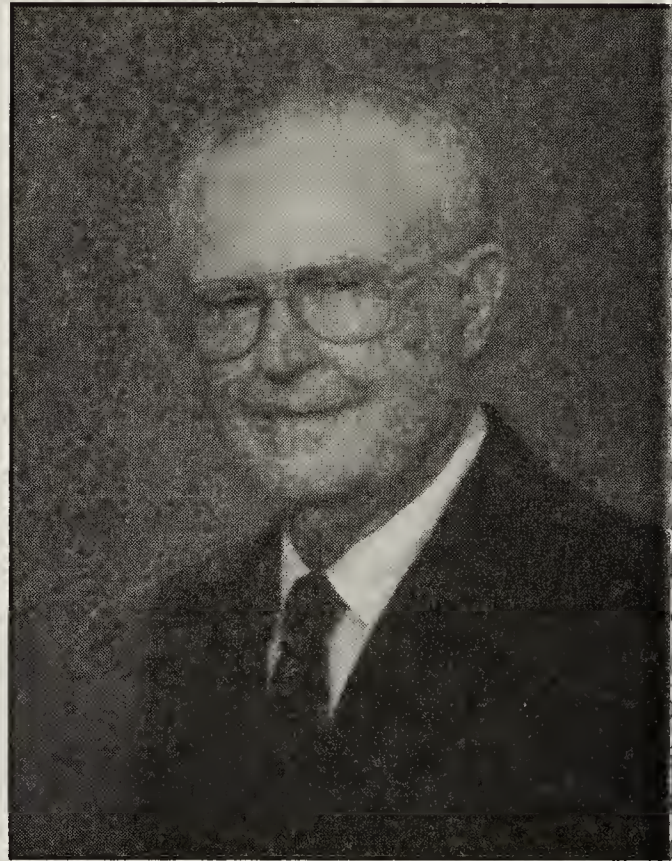
# IN MEMORIAM: JEROME H. STOUDT, 1910 - 1996

C. STUART HOUSTON, 863 University Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7N 0J8, and  
ALEXANDER DZUBIN, 2410 York Ave., Saskatoon, SK S7J 1J5.

Jerome H. Stoudt was among the pioneering group of dedicated American wildlife biologists who made significant contributions to the knowledge of waterfowl and wetland ecology of western Canada.

Jerry was born on 24 February 1910 in Hastings, Minnesota, where he graduated from high school in 1927. He was among the first to graduate from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry and Wildlife Management (1931) and a Master of Science in Wildlife Management (1940). For his thesis he developed a system for inventorying duck populations and production — and continued these waterfowl censuses near Cass Lake, Minnesota, for nearly 20 years. He also devised a widely-used system of ageing broods by dividing them into three classes.<sup>6</sup>

Jerry joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1942, and managed, in turn, new wildlife refuges at Horicon (Wisconsin), Upper Mississippi (Minnesota), and Sand Lake (South Dakota), before becoming Flyway Biologist at Aberdeen, South Dakota in 1948. In 1952 he began 15 consecutive years of waterfowl studies in parkland at Redvers, southeastern Saskatchewan, and in 1963 a 10-year study of canvasbacks at Minnedosa, Manitoba. The two studies overlapped from 1961 through 1965. He transferred to the Division of Wildlife Research in 1958, and in 1963 he was assigned to the newly established Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center at Jamestown,



*Jerome H. Stoudt*

North Dakota. He received a Merit of Outstanding Service award from President Nixon, and retired in 1973. He moved to his retirement home in Bella Vista, Arkansas, but also maintained Bear Lodge Camp for hunting in Wyoming, from 1959 through 1995. He died 5 September 1996 in Bella Vista, Arkansas. His funeral service and burial were in his home town of Hastings, Minnesota.<sup>1</sup>

Jerry recognized the importance of long-term ecological studies in the prairie region, measuring waterfowl numbers and productivity through a series of wet and dry cycles and changing land-use programs. He pioneered the use of Labrador retrievers to capture ducklings and moulting adults

during summer banding operations. "Dogs are usually referred to as man's best friend, but Jerry was really his dogs' best friend and constant companion."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to a number of reports dealing with the Dakotas and Minnesota, beginning in 1937, Jerry published seven valuable long-term studies dealing with Western Canada. The most important of these are "Ecological factors affecting waterfowl production in the Saskatchewan parklands", summarizing his findings at Redvers,<sup>5</sup> and Habitat use and productivity of canvasbacks in southwestern Manitoba, 1961-72."<sup>6</sup> In addition to his publications,<sup>2,3,4,5</sup> more detailed unpublished annual reports, which give phenology and water conditions, are also in the library of the Prairie and Northern Wildlife Research Center in Saskatoon. Jerry noted at Redvers that snowshoe hares reached high populations only in 1952 and 1953, that red foxes were rare in 1952, but had become abundant by about 1960, that raccoons were completely absent during the first ten years, were first seen in 1960,<sup>4</sup> and became common by the late 1960s, and that crows decreased drastically during the drought of 1959-1963.<sup>6</sup>

The Redvers study area was L-shaped, one-eighth of a mile wide and 40 miles long,<sup>4</sup> extending east from Manor and then north from Redvers,<sup>3</sup> almost to Fairlight. Most ponds dried up in 1959 and only ten held water at the driest point, 10 July 1961, but conditions improved until by 10 May 1964 there were 574 potholes in the 5-square-mile study area.<sup>4</sup> In those years the land surrounding the ponds was 58% cultivated and 31% in pasture. Just over half (52%) of the wetlands had wholly or partially wooded borders.<sup>2</sup>

Peak waterfowl production years were

1952 and 1953, with 249 and 246 broods, respectively, or about 50 broods per square mile. During those two years, Mallards formed 44% of the breeding duck population, followed by Blue-winged Teal (24%), Northern Pintail (10%), and Green-winged Teal (6%).<sup>4</sup> Jerry located 1942 mallard nests with an average clutch of 8.4 eggs and initial 31% nest success (over 40% if renestings are included).<sup>3</sup> A mean of 6.0 Mallard young survived to achieve nearly full growth (class 3). Predation accounted for 92% of all nest losses, including 38% by striped skunks, 39% by crows and magpies combined, and 7% by ground squirrels.<sup>4</sup> Predation by the red fox also became more and more serious, but difficult to measure accurately because the incubating duck was usually carried off by the fox. The fox population had increased after a '1080' program of coyote extermination that ended in 1952.

Because they ate ducks or eggs, Jerry developed an intense hatred of red foxes, coyotes, raccoons, and crows. Raccoons were especially destructive in his Minnedosa study area, where Canvasback nest success fell to an all-time low of 8% in 1968; raccoons were responsible for 56% of nest losses, or 64% of those lost to predation, 1961-1972.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, at Redvers, Canvasback nest success was 70%.

Jerry was a kind, tolerant, perceptive, optimistic man with a great curiosity and a deep, personal understanding of basic biological principles, the need for quality habitat to support wildlife populations, and the role of hunting in wildlife management. While he worked himself and his assistants very hard, he was a good listener, a staunch supporter and a congenial companion. Those privileged to have known this grand gentleman of the old school of wildlife management are most fortunate.

## Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Harvey K. Nelson for the Stoudt portrait and for allowing us to quote extensively from his funeral tribute and from "Our Respects: Jerome H. Stoudt."<sup>1</sup> J.B. Gollop and H.M. Reeves offered constructive criticism.

1. Nelson, H.K. 1998. Our respects: Jerome H. Stoudt, 1910-1996, *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 26:178-180.

2. Stoudt, J.H. 1959. Redvers waterfowl study area with comparative data for seven previous years. USF&WS. Project A-8. 110 pp.

3. Stoudt, J.H. 1969. Relationships between waterfowl and water areas on the Redvers Waterfowl Study Area. pp.

123-131 in *Saskatoon Wetlands Seminar*. Can. Wildlife Service Report Series #6.

4. Stoudt, J.H. 1971. Ecological factors affecting waterfowl production in the Saskatchewan parklands. USF&WS Resource Publ. 99. 58 pp.

5. Stoudt, J.H. 1982. Habitat use and productivity of canvasbacks in southwestern Manitoba, 1961-72. USF&WS Special Scientific Report Wildlife # 248. 31 pp.

6. Stoudt, J.H. 1984. Duck nesting studies. In: A.S. Hawkins, R.C. Hanson, H.K. Nelson, H.M. Reeves, eds. *Flyways: Pioneering Waterfowl Management in North America*. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington



*Giant Silk Moth*

*Clearwater Lake Provincial Park, ME*