

Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. LIFE MEMBERS**THE HAMERSTROMS**

Frances and Frederick Hamerstrom are affectionately known to most *Foundation* members as Fran and Hammi (the “a” is pronounced with a Boston accent). The Hamerstroms’ infectious fascination for raptors and their convincing call for genuine understanding has spurred raptor enthusiasts, young and old. Fran and Hammi were there, and could be counted on, in 1966 when the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. hatched. Fran and Hammi became life members in 1988. They have attended all of the Foundation’s Annual Meetings to date. Fran has served as Central Director; Frederick has served as a major ref-

eree for many years, helped edit the seminal raptor management techniques manual “Management of Raptors” and drew up the Foundation’s resolutions at almost every meeting.

The Hamerstroms’ devotion to raptor biology was and is positively exemplary. They conducted most of their work on raptors using personal funds in off-hours from their regular positions. Their first major paper, “The Great Horned Owl and its prey in north-central United States” by Paul L. Errington, Frances Hamerstrom and Frederick Hamerstrom, was written when Frederick was a graduate

student and Fran an undergraduate at Iowa State College. This paper won the Wildlife Society Award in 1940.

As to early interests, Frederick writes, "I remember when I was a kid imitating soaring red-tails calling. None ever came down to me." Fran feels that her lifelong practice of falconry has heightened her skill as a raptor researcher. She took her first quarry with a kestrel in 1919.

Fran and Hammi diligently kept on top of ornithological literature. Their bookshelves bend under the weight of volumes of European and North American journals. Despite a fervent interest in what others wrote, the Hamerstroms turned to the birds themselves for inspiration and ideas.

Catching and marking raptors has always been of passionate interest to the Hamerstroms. Their methods have been described in technical papers—and with far more detail and flavor in "Birding with a purpose: of raptors, gaboons and other creatures." This book won the Council for Wisconsin Writers Award in 1984. Fran and Hammi have published 69 technical papers, a number of popular accounts, 1 poem on raptors, and the following books written by Fran and edited by Frederick:

Birding with a purpose: of raptors, gaboons and other creatures. Iowa State University Press.

Harrier, hawk of the marshes: the hawk that is ruled by a mouse. Smithsonian Institution Press.

Birds of prey of Wisconsin. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Eagles, hawks, falcons and owls of America. Roberts Rinehart.

An Eagle to the Sky. Lyons and Burford.

Soon to re-appear is: **Adventure of the stone man**, a children's book; Lyons and Burford. **Bird trapping and bird banding**, by Bub, Hamerstrom and Wuertz-Schaefer, is in press; Cornell University Press.

Fran markets her own books and all proceeds go to research on birds of prey (Rt. 1, Box 448, Plainfield, WI 54966). Fran also writes books with messages other than raptor biology. Her latest, "**Is she coming too?—Memoirs of a lady hunter**," recently took first place for the best non-fiction book in 1989, presented by the Council for Wisconsin Writers.

The Hamerstrom's international household is most remarkable. Their daughter, Elva, and son, Alan, have been exchanged with the kids of notable German biologists, among them Nobel laureate Konrad Lorenz. Fran and Frederick live in a stately old house modestly equipped with modern conveniences. Fran's pies are legendary; on these a few gaboons have had their table manners polished. The house was always open to their many friends, not just those interested in raptors, but those with a genuine interest in music, life and humanity.

IN MEMORIAM

FREDERICK N. HAMERSTROM

1909–1990

Frederick Hamerstrom, known to most people as “Hammi,” died in March in a log cabin overlooking coniferous forests and the rushing waters of Oregon’s North Umpqua River—a scene symbolic of the beauty and the wild landscape that he loved all his life.

With Fran, his wife and teammate for 60 years, he pioneered in the field of wildlife research, delving into the ecology, life history, and management of prairie chickens, sharp-tailed grouse, pheasants, bobwhite quail, great horned owls, hawks, ospreys, sandhill cranes, white-tailed deer, and furbearers. He was one of the world’s foremost authorities on grouse, and is best known for his landmark research on prairie chickens and the development of a habitat management plan involving preserving a scatter pattern of grassland areas to provide essential life support—a strategy that saved the disappearing prairie chicken in Wisconsin and one that is used now in the management of other critical species and habitats elsewhere in the country and in the world.

After graduating from Harvard with a degree in English Literature, he turned to his love of wildlife, and with Fran embarked on a career of wildlife research and management long before such a field was formally established. He earned an M.S. under Paul Errington at Iowa State University, and a Ph.D. under Aldo Leopold at the University of Wisconsin. His field studies took him to Necedah, Wisconsin as a project game manager for the Resettlement Administration, to the Edwin S. George Reserve of the University of Michigan as a field biologist, and to Portage County in central Wisconsin where he led the prairie grouse research for the Wisconsin Conservation Department and its successor the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for 23 years.

His studies, speaking engagements, and participation in international meetings have taken him throughout the United States and Canada, Mexico, Europe, Russia, and Australia.

Hammi worked closely with Fran in raptor research and helped form the Raptor Research Foundation. Besides working with eagles and a variety of hawks and owls in Wisconsin, they spent the last 17 winters trapping and banding Harris hawks in Texas, and carrying out nesting studies on ospreys in Mexico.

He was not only a researcher, but an author (authored or coauthored with Fran 69 technical papers, and reviewed some 40 others) and a meticulous editor of countless writing efforts of students and peers alike. He was also an outstanding teacher, not in the classroom, but as he worked with students and colleagues in the field and patiently instructed thousands of volunteer observers about to enter the prairie chicken blinds. Many honors came to Hammi and Fran, among them the Wildlife Conservation Award of the National Wildlife Federation (1970), two Wildlife Society Publication Awards in 1940 and 1957, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Research Award (1973), and the United Peregrine Society Award (1980). Since 1972 both Hamerstroms have served as adjunct professors in the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

The name Frederick Hamerstrom will forever be in the annals of natural science. He was world-renowned, but he preferred to continue his simple life, without a lot of modern amenities, in tune with the land. His keen mind continually kept track of new research developments, helped young wildlife ecologists write in clear concise language, encouraged Fran (he was her best critic and editor) in capturing their life and times in her books. In unselfishly offering his help to so many others he often deferred his own personal agenda. There was an elegance about this soft-spoken gentle man, and a deep conviction about the integrity of the natural land community, with wildlife an integral part—for the role it played in the community, and for the thrill it provided in the hunt.

His devotion to accurate wildlife research is shown in this anecdote that Fran tells. They had trapped and banded 1200 Harris hawks in Texas and examined 70 feathers on each one. “Darling, don’t you think we have enough?” “I don’t think so,” Hammi answered, “but we’re mighty close.”—**Ruth L. Hine, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (retired), 3609 Nakoma Rd., Madison, WI 53711.**