

H. Elliot McClure 1910 – 1998

H. Elliot McClure, preeminent ornithologist and conservationist in Asia for more than half a century, died at age 88 at 3 p.m. on December 27, 1998, in St. John's Pleasant Valley Hospital, Camarillo, California.

He is survived by his wife, Nobuko; daughters, Jeannette Powles and Clara Ann Folk; grandsons, Alexander Powles and Forest Miles; granddaughter, Heather Folk, and his sister, Mary T. McClure. His first wife, Lucy Esther Lou Fairchild, preceded him in death in 1991.

Dr. McClure was born on April 29, 1910, in Chicago, Illinois, the only child of Clara Phillips and Howe A. McClure. He was brought up in Chicago, and in the towns of Texas, Kankakee, Danville, and Decatur, Illinois. During his youth he worked with insect ecology in Texas, Ill. With two degrees in entomology from the University of Illinois, he changed to wildlife management for his Ph.D. at Iowa State University in 1941. During 1930, Dr. McClure began his lifelong work in the study of birds until his death. The war interrupted his work with upland gamebirds in Nebraska, and he was stationed in California rather than in tropical Asia as he had hoped.

After World War II, during which Dr. McClure served in the U.S. Navy, he was hired by the State of California to study an outbreak of encephalitis in horses in Bakersfield. His interests turned to zoonoses which involve vertebrates and insects and especially the migration of birds with their possible relationships to human and mammalian diseases. This led to his being sent to Asia by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Washington, D.C. In Asia (11 years in Japan, 5 in Malaysia and 9 in Thailand), he set up an international study of bird migration called MAPS (Migratory Animal Pathological Survey) which no less than 14 countries joined. Under his leadership, over a million birds of a thousand species were ringed by the MAPS program. During his personal work with birds in America and Asia, McClure himself ringed over 100,000 birds of 550 species.

During his lifetime he published over 150 scientific articles and eight books on birds, and other subjects of interest. His books, *Bird Banding* (1984) and *Migration and Survival of the Birds of Asia* (1974, 1998) are definitive works in his speciality. In 1994, he published his autobiography, *Stories I Like to Tell*.

Dr. McClure was truly a 'great and tireless teacher'. He inspired a generation of naturalists who went on to expand the conservation efforts that we see in Thailand today. He had a wonderful sense of humor which harmonized well with his broad knowledge, and made people around him feel at ease and enjoy his teaching more. To us, his "Thai daughters," as he called us, Dr. McClure's working model has been a great inspiration, from which our formulas for life have become: be a diligent assistant, be a qualified researcher, and be a whole-hearted administrator.

His contribution to ornithology in Asia will never be repeated. His outstanding work on bird migration has become a stone foundation for the study of migration of birds in Asia

today. Without question, Dr. McClure deserves to be recognized as the “father of bird banding and migration of the birds of Asia.”

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