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## William B Robertson Elected Honorary Member of The Florida Ornithological Society

Barbara C. Kittleson

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## NEWS

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**William B. Robertson Elected Honorary Member of the Florida Ornithological Society.**—Ask anyone a question about birds in Florida and chances are they will refer you to Bill Robertson for the best answer. How does a boy born in Berlin, Illinois come to spend his life studying the Florida Everglades? He came, he saw, he loved it, and he stayed to learn.

After received his B.S. from Carthage College, M.S. (1949) and Ph.D. (1955) from the University of Illinois, Bill came to the Everglades to investigate a little known ecosystem. The field work for his doctoral dissertation, *Breeding Bird Populations of Tropical Florida in Relation to the Vegetation*, was done in south Florida and the Bahamas, but it only stimulated his curiosity and whetted his enthusiasm to learn more. So he came back. Hired in 1957 as Research Biologist for Everglades National Park and Fort Jefferson National Monument, Bill became an expert on all aspects of the ecosystems of the Everglades, and the ornithology of Florida, and has expanded his expertise to include the West Indies. This includes over 140 exquisitely written papers and articles dealing, not only with the above, but also Swallow-tailed Kites, Roseate Spoonbills, and Sooty Terns. He has served on recovery teams or advisory teams for several endangered species, and written 12 of the species accounts in *Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida*. He was the first to recognize that water management practices in the Everglades were having adverse effects on the populations of wading birds. Bill was a member of several survey and study teams including Virgin Islands NP, Cross Florida Barge Canal, Big Cypress Swamp Jetport, and St. Thomas V. I. Jetport. He has received the U.S. Department of Interior Medal for Distinguished Service and the George Wright Society Award for Excellence, their highest honor. In 1993 he joined the newly formed National Biological Service. He is presently involved in a study of mercury contamination in birds, an ongoing study of the Sooty Tern nesting colony in the Dry Tortugas, and a study of the flora of the Dry Tortugas.

Bill was a member of the Committee on Organization when the formation of F.O.S. was being considered, was the first President, when the Society was struggling to establish itself, and was re-elected for a second term. He has also served on the Board of Directors (2 terms), Editorial Advisory Board, The Records Committee, the Nominating Committee, was "advisor and problem solver to the *F.F.N.*", and co-authored, with Glen E. Woolfenden, one of our Special Publications: *Florida Bird Species: An Annotated List*. He is a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Adjunct Professors at the University of Miami and at Florida International University. As an indication of the esteem in which he is held by colleagues Bill was "roasted" at an F.O.S. banquet at Flamingo in 1982. While it was hilarious, and Bill squirmed a lot, a great deal of respect and affection was hidden among the jibes.

A lifetime of accumulated knowledge generously passed on is the measure of this man. An invaluable resource, "Dr. Bill" is the person to turn to with questions on a myriad of topics. The uninformed amateur as well as the venerable biologist can ask the basic or complex question and be sure of a thoughtful, thorough answer. It is difficult to do justice to the various aspects and deeds of this quiet achiever who hides his awesome intellect behind a self-effacing demeanor. How do you enumerate the interests he has stimulated by letting his enthusiasm show, or know the encouragement he has given by taking time to elucidate for an inquiring mind? We are fortunate to have as an honorary member a man who embodies the interests and aims of F.O.S. I thank John C. Ogden for furnishing information from Everglades National Park.—**Barbara C. Kittleson**, 5334 Woodhaven Lane, Lakeland, Florida 33813.