

RAOU FELLOW: CITATION

At the Annual General Meeting on 16 May 1981 the Council's recommendation that Mrs P.N. Reilly be elected Fellow was unanimously accepted.



PAULINE NEURA REILLY

Mrs Pauline Reilly is the epitome of those 'serious amateurs' to whom reference is often made in the literature of scientific ornithology, to which they have made notable contributions. She has, in the words used by the Article that describes the qualities needed in a person nominated for a Fellowship of the Union, 'rendered distinguished service to Australian ornithology' as a field worker, as an administrator and as an author.

Born in Adelaide in 1918, her early interest in birds was nourished by former President, Dr Graham Brown, when they both lived in Colac, Victoria. She became a member of the Union in 1956; served as a Council member during the years 1966-67 and 1971-72; has been a member of the Field Investigation Committee from its formation; and was President of the Union from 1972 to 1975. She has also been a Committee member and President of the Bird Banders' Association of Australia and a Regional Organizer of the Bird Banding Scheme since 1964. As a Committee member of the Victorian Ornithological Research Group, she was at one time its Field Survey Organizer. At present she is Chairman of the Atlas Sub-committee, consultant to the Sandringham City Council on environmental matters and to the Phillip Island Shire on matters relating to penguins.

Her contribution, in 1964, to *The Australian*

Bird Bander (now *Corella*) concerning the Flame Robin Survey, which she had organized, was the first of a number on the same topic. These were followed by the reports of the Penguin Study Group (prepared in conjunction with Mr P. Balmford). With Mrs E.M. McCullough, she produced, in 1972, a pamphlet on the treatment of oiled seabirds for the Field Investigation Committee of the Union. She has also contributed papers and articles on other topics to ornithological and general publications. She has lectured widely, and her book, *Fairy Penguins: A Brief Life History with Photographs*, now in its third printing, is only one of several. The photographs were taken and prepared by herself with notable skill. Her formidable energy has been not only intellectual. In pursuit of penguins she has descended by rope the cliffs of the Great Australian Bight and she has been one of the few women to visit Macquarie Island as an expedition member. It was during her Presidency that the Supplement to Vol. 73 of *The Emu* was prepared and her introduction to that Supplement, entitled 'Ornithology in Australasia - Practice, Prospects and Progress', indicates her openness to new ideas and her sensible approach to matters of controversy.

A sentence in a recent citation which states that, when her successor took office, the Union 'was approaching another period of stagnation' needs

to be firmly corrected. In fact, it was during her Presidency that the springboard from which, subsequently, a great leap forward could be made was laboriously built. It was at that time that the decision was taken to move from the cramped quarters of Clunies Ross House; to publish (with all its imperfections or rather with as few of them as possible) the first part of a new Checklist and the Interim List of Songbirds; to set up the Record Appraisal Committee. It was Pauline Reilly who obtained the concession that contributions to the Union for scientific purposes should be tax-deductible, a concession that recognized that work approved by the Field Investigation Committee would be of scientific importance. It was she who led the delegation to

Canberra which convinced the Commonwealth Department concerned that the Union possessed the human resources capable of compiling an Atlas of the distribution of Australian birds. Finally, it was she who was largely responsible for persuading the people who were to carry out the task for which she had been preparing to offer their services.

Not always as physically robust as her achievements might suggest, she was never anything but robust in mind and, for all her directness of approach to problems and to people, she was always without pettiness and sensitive to the feelings of others. It is those qualities that have enabled her to achieve so much.