

# Obituary

## NORMAN JOSEPH FAVALORO

Norman Favaloro, the son of Giuseppe Favaloro from Lipri, Italy, and Eliza Evelyn (née Hooper) of Cornish descent, was born in Colac, Victoria, on 15 August 1905 and died in Bendigo on 25 October 1989.

Educated at Bendigo State and High Schools, at Scotch College, Melbourne, where he represented the College in mile racing, and as a resident of Queen's College, University of Melbourne, where he studied law, Norman Favaloro was admitted to practise as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria in March 1932. In the same year he arrived in Mildura on a motor bicycle with a typewriter on the back to take up the practice he pursued successfully there until 1976.

He was thrice married, first to Myra Tilley, secondly to Jean Howie and thirdly to Lilian Knowles, his son Michael and daughter Nina being issue of the first marriage and his son Philip of the second. He is survived by his wife Lilian, his sons, daughter, step-daughter Susan and his sisters Nina and Iolanda.

In his younger days he owned, and manually worked on, vineyards in Sunraysia in addition to carrying out his legal practice. In the 1940-50s he was an active patron of the Mildura Concert Orchestra and was on the Board of Management of the local hospital for many years. He had also opened a successful local business, Mildura Industrial Supplies, and for some years was a member of the Royal Society of Victoria.

Norman Favaloro's life-long interest in birds began in childhood when, near Bendigo, he visited the bush with his Grandfather Hooper who encouraged his interests as did George Washington an elderly wood worker who was a skilled taxidermist and inspired Norman Favaloro to produce, later, excellent research skins. Another early companion, fellow egg collector and life long friend was the late Hugh Milne.

His interest soon centred upon birds' eggs and thus began the N.J. Favaloro Collection ultimately housed in an attractive 36-drawer cedar cabinet and bequeathed by him to the Museum of Victoria where it is now held. The Favaloro Collection is an outstanding one of almost entirely Australian eggs comprising some 1500 clutches including several 'Type Sets'.

Norman Favaloro, a member of the RAOU from 1923 and a Life Member from 1973, knew personally many early collectors and field workers and to examine his Collection is to become immediately confronted with egg collecting history both here and abroad.



'Fav' about to take off in a helicopter, Darwin, 1985.

Through such data slips as those of H. Collins, Hugh Milne, A.C. Stone, P.T. Sandland, R. Archer, F. Lawson Whilock, H.L. White, J.A. Ross, J. Neil McGilp, R.G. Ribbons, G.B. Ragless, E.L. Hyem, W. McLennan, E.M. Cornwall, and from overseas, Lt.Col. W.A. Payne, John E. Gardner, Alf Houmann, W. Mair, E. Stuart Baker and other collectors over a long period. Norman Favaloro personally collected many, if not most, of the clutches and, in earlier years, did some of the climbing.

Generally meticulous in preserving the data with the clutches in his Collection, though not all have a Set Mark, Norman Favaloro also gave special attention to preparation of the eggs and managed, through long practised skill, to side blow his eggs through a very small drill-hole. He was also skilled in the use of a bulb for blowing larger eggs and in preparing those addled and decaying or containing advanced embryos.

He was appointed an Honorary Associate in the Ornithology Department of the (then National) Museum of Victoria in 1940 and remained so until his death. He was thus one of the Honoraries whom the writer, as Curator of Birds (1955-84), met and talked with regularly and to whom he turned frequently for advice. Favaloro's, or to use a more commonly applied name,

'Fav's' knowledge of Australian eggs can be simply and truly described as expert and was accompanied by an extremely wide field knowledge of Australian birds. Problems of egg identification and other oological questions were frequently put to Fav during his regular visits to the Museum and rarely indeed did these not find a ready helpful comment or solution.

He was very generous also to the Museum in establishing the Favaloro Trust Fund of which the interest was available for the Ornithology Department, and in donating ornithological books from time to time. He was a nominated Museum collector and frequently made skins of the bird specimens he collected. Although he made a substantial number of contributions to *The Emu* much of his wide field experience was not translated into print. His *Honeyeaters of the Sunset Country* (1966, Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria. 79, 621-626) remains one of his most significant papers.

His endless activity and interest in new aspects left him little time for writing papers. No sooner was Bird Banding fully established than Fav took it up with boyish enthusiasm and a tireless vigour to eventually band 11 419 birds. In memory one can see him in the Museum courtyard setting out to drive back to Mildura with a supply of white mice in little wire cages with nylon loops attached to be used for catching and banding Australian Kestrels and Brown Falcons on the way.

In 1933-6 Norman Favaloro contracted encephalitis and this led to an association with the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute. For the Institute's research in the field of viruses Fav caught snakes at Lake Moira — 17 before breakfast to be precise; up to 200 Murray 'Crays' for the study of the copper content of their blood and, along the Murray, he worked on nestlings in water-bird colonies in research led by Dr Grey Anderson. Norman Favaloro was blessed with a strong and healthy constitution, was extremely energetic and was very resourceful — important attributes for field work.

In 1953 on an outback trip with a companion he collected and brought back in a damaged car that, at one stage, travelled only 25 miles in four days, two live pure bred Dingo pups, six Flock Bronzewing and two Black Falcons for Healesville Sanctuary, having to shoot Galahs for Dingo and Falcon food on the way.

Between 1950 and 1965 Norman made three trips to the subantarctic, namely to Macquarie Island where he collected King Penguins and their eggs for the (National) Museum of Victoria, to Heard and Kerguelen Islands and again to Macquarie Island.

His field work reached its highest peaks in the dis-

covery and collection of the nest and eggs of the White-eared Monarch *Monarcha leucotis* on Fraser Island (1931, *Emu*), Queensland and in his discovery and ultimate collection of the new species the Grey Grasswren *Amytornis barbatus* Favaloro and McEvey, together with its nest and eggs (Favaloro & McEvey, 1968. *Memoirs of the National Museum of Victoria* 28, 1-9); a discovery that had its origin, thanks to his quick eye and ready field knowledge, in a glimpse of the bird during his 1942 dingo/pigeon/falcon trip.

Norman Favaloro was President of the RAOU in 1952-54 and was the Treasurer from 1965-68. On the Council he showed both wisdom and a caring consideration for others. For the 75th anniversary of the Bird Observers Club of Australia in 1980, he gave a valuable address in which he drew together many interesting historical aspects including reference to the varied and often difficult conditions confronting early field workers for whom he had great respect. He personally knew the original B.O.C. members, Charles Barrett, Sir Charles Belcher, Dr Brooke-Nichols, A.J. and A.G. Campbell, F.E. Howe, J.A. Kershaw, A.H.E. Mattingly, and the later members Dr J.A. Leach, J.A. Ross, T.H. Tregellas, F.E. Wilson and Les Chandler. J.A. Kershaw, then Director of the National Museum of Victoria, nominated him for RAOU membership.

Norman Favaloro was buried at the Mildura cemetery by a Minister of the Uniting Church. Fav was a cheerful, generous and compassionate man. His ornithological expertise is missed in related circles; his friendly warmth much more widely.

A.R. McEvey

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- 1928. A robin tragedy. *Emu* 25, 214.
- 1926. The toll of bush fires. *Emu* 26, 137
- 1926. Nesting of eagles. *Emu* 26, 139.
- 1930. Some notes on nest-building of three birds — *Gymnorhina hypoleuca*, *G. tibicen* and *Strepera versicolor*. *Emu* 30, 105-109.
- 1930. Scrub-wren and its nesting material *Emu* 30, 155.
- 1931. The Australian flycatchers (*Monarcha canescens* and *Carterornis leucotis*) with a description of the type eggs of the latter. *Emu* 30, 161-168.
- 1931. The Cicada Bird. *Emu* 30, 192.

1931. Notes on *Arses kaupi* and *Arses lorealis*. Emu 30, 241-242.
1931. Bird feeding at night. Emu 30, 267.
1931. Notes on a trip to the Macpherson Range, South-eastern Queensland. Emu 31, 48-59.
1931. The Lotus Bird (*Irediparra gallinacea*). Emu 31, 82-92.
1931. Further notes on the Lotus Bird. Emu 31, 246-247.
1932. Bird "jumping" another's nest. Emu 31, 249.
1933. Fantail Cuckoo with Red-browed Finch. Emu 33, 141-142.
1937. Ducks in mallee scrub. Emu 37, 159-160.
1940. The Spotted Bower-bird in Victoria. Emu 39, 273-277.
1940. Some birds of Womboyne Inlet. Emu 40, 89-94.
1941. Notes on the Blue-and-white Wren. Emu 40, 260-265.
1942. The usurpation of nests, nesting sites and materials. Emu 41, 268-276.
1943. The Marsh Sandpiper. Emu 42, 141-144.
1944. Notes on the two resident Victorian plovers. Emu 43, 145-153.
1944. The White-breasted Sea-Eagle along the Murray Valley. Emu 43, 233-242.
1946. Eggs of the Powerful Owl. Emu 46, 44-48.
1947. The Caspian Tern on inland waters. Emu 46, 380-381.
1947. Birds sheltering from heat. Emu 47, 61-62.
1948. Silver Gulls in North-west Victoria. Emu 47, 352-356.
1949. Notes on the Red-capped Dotterel in inland localities. Emu 49, 13-18.
1952. An inland record of the Pied Cormorant. Emu 52, 161-162.
1953. Where 'robins' meet. Emu 53, 223-224.
1981. The Red Goshawk. Australian Bird Watcher 9, 44-53.
1981. Ruddy Turnstones west of the Darling River, NSW. Australian Bird Watcher 9, 99-100.
1982. The Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*. Australian Bird Watcher 9, 268-271.
1983. A case of selective feeding by the Brown Goshawk. Australian Bird Watcher 10, 138-139.
1984. Long-billed Corellas in North-central Victoria. Australian Bird Watcher 10, 237-238.