

# In Memory

## John L. Seubert

### 1921–2013

**JOHN L. SEUBERT** passed away on May 28, 2013, from complications related to congestive heart failure. He is survived by his wife, Jean, his son John, and daughter Leslie.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, John was a scientist and research program manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). He served in combat during World War II in Europe where he was detained as a prisoner of war. After the war, he received his undergraduate and Ph.D. degrees in zoology-wildlife biology from Ohio State University. His professional career began in 1952 with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, where he worked as a biologist and as chief of game research for the state.

John had a long and productive career with the U.S. Departments of Interior and USDA. Starting in 1961, he worked for 30 years as a research program manager with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and with the USDA-Wildlife Services (WS; formerly Animal Damage Control) program.

Through his work, John became a seminal figure in raising awareness of the bird-strike issue. During the 1960s and 1970s, while stationed at the USFWS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland, John provided leadership and funding for various research projects to help understand and reduce bird strikes with aircraft and bird damage to agricultural crops. These projects included pioneering work to predict the timing and location of waterfowl migrations, studying herring gull (*Larus argentatus*) population dynamics and control in the northeastern United States, developing surfactants to manage roosting populations of blackbirds (*Icterinae*) and European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*),



**John L. Seubert**

evaluating distress calls and other dispersal techniques for bird management at airports and in agricultural crops, and conducting fundamental research on avian chemosensory systems with Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While at Patuxent, he was promoted to co-acting director and was involved in the whooping crane (*Grus americana*) and gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) captive breeding projects that were important programs in enhancing populations of these endangered species.

In 1977, John was appointed chief of the mammal damage control section of the Denver Wildlife Research Center (now National Wildlife Research Center), which he led until his retirement in 1991. As a research administrator, John hired and mentored a number of the Denver Wildlife Research Center's scientists and was dedicated to helping scientists conduct high-quality work related to wildlife damage management. He organized and supervised field stations in Sandusky, Ohio; Gainesville, Florida; Olympia, Washington; Hilo, Hawaii; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In cooperation with several universities, he also organized and supervised research related to vole (*Microtus* spp.) damage in orchards. His research contributions and role as a research leader resulted in many publications and reports.

Even long after retirement, John continued to produce important contributions to the field of wildlife damage management. For example, he published a paper on the increasing hazards of Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) to aviation at the International Bird Strike Committee (IBSC) meeting in London in 1996 (Seubert 1996), and he is a coauthor of a paper on this topic to be published in the upcoming issue of *Human–Wildlife Interactions* (Dolbeer et al., 2014). His

1994 paper delivered at the International Bird Strike Committee meeting, Vienna, on evaluating wildlife hazard management plans for airports (Seubert 1994) was incorporated into the Federal Aviation Administration's recently published volume, *Wildlife Hazard Management at Airports, a Manual for Airport Personnel* (Cleary and Dolbeer 2005). In 2000, John received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Bird Strike Committee USA for his work related to wildlife damage management and bird-strike prevention.

An avid sportsman who enjoyed both hunting ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) and fishing, John supported numerous wildlife conservation organizations. In his leisure time, he enjoyed working in his beautiful yard and big vegetable garden.

When Jean was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2005, he cared for her at home until 2012 when they moved into a retirement community in Lakewood, Colorado.

Just prior to his passing, John was honored by The Forgotten Heroes Campaign and presented with World War II medals by the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Any letters or cards of condolences to the family may be sent to 1800 Zinnia Street, Golden, Colorado 80401.

—Submitted by:

Richard A. Dolbeer and Gail M. Keirn

## Acknowledgments

We thank John's children, John and Leslie, for their contributions to this tribute, as well as the contributions of Mike Fall, Don Zielesch, and other former and present employees of NWRC.

## Literature cited

- Cleary, E. C., and R. A. Dolbeer. 2005. Wildlife hazard management at airports: a manual for airport personnel. Federal Aviation Administration, Office of Airport Safety and Standards, Washington, D.C., USA.
- Dolbeer, R. A., J. L. Seubert, and M. J. Begier. 2014. Population trends of resident and migratory Canada geese in relation to strikes with civil aircraft. *Human–Wildlife Interactions* 8:In Press.

Seubert, J. L. 1994. Assessing the implementation of wildlife hazard management programs at civil airports. *Proceedings of Bird Strike Committee Europe* 22:275–283.

Seubert, J. L. 1996. North American Canada goose populations: an increasing hazard to aviation? *Proceedings of the Bird Strike Committee Europe* 23:235.

---