

BANISTERIA

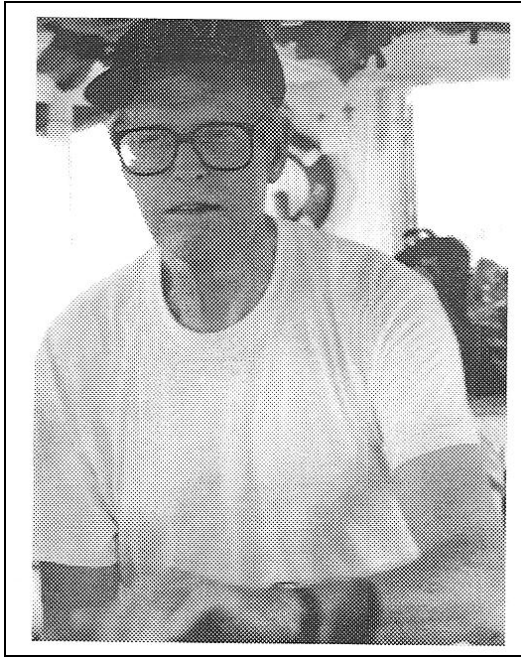
A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE NATURAL HISTORY OF VIRGINIA



Charles O. Handley, Jr.
(1924-2000)

A remembrance and partial bibliography of one of the most outstanding natural historians in Virginia history is presented on pages 51-54 of this issue

Miscellanea

Charles Overton Handley, Jr.**A Remembrance**

Charles O. Handley, Jr., age 75, died of a malignant brain tumor on June 9, 2000, following a brief illness. Charles was born in Longview, Texas, on July 14, 1924 and grew up in Virginia where his father (1897-1977) was a wildlife biologist (see *The Raven* 49: 69-70). A Curator of Mammals at the Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History at the time of his death, he began his employment at the NMNH with the Fish and Wildlife Service in the Division of Birds in 1946 and transferred to the Smithsonian staff in the Division of Mammals in 1950. He was an active member of the museum staff for more than fifty-three years. Charles earned his B.S. at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1944 (pre-med), and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Michigan in 1947 and 1955, respectively.

Although known to many of us as an explorer, natural scientist, and author, Charles was also a patient and caring teacher who, whether in the field or in more structured situations, loved to share his knowledge of nature with anyone who would listen. As part of the Smithsonian Resident Associate Program he taught several courses, both youth and adult, each year from 1966-1992; several of the kids now have their Ph.D.s. In the period 1962-1978 he taught a graduate level mammalogy course at the University of Virginia's

Mountain Lake Biological Station ten times, and for two summers he taught mammalogy and directed graduate students at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory. He was on the committees of graduate students from eight universities and served as field or dissertation advisor of pre- and post-doctoral students from several continents.

Charles was known to be a very precise, thoughtful, and careful scientist and author. Among his colleagues he was known as a guardian of the conventions and rules of nomenclature, publication, citation, and measurement. A necessary hurdle before publishing was the Handley test. No doubt, a high percentage of the manuscripts published on Virginia mammals in the past 50 years first passed over his desk for review. An omen of his future achievements in the field of mammalogy, Charles was in his early 20s when his book *Wild Mammals of Virginia* was published. I had the good fortune of collecting the first specimens of two Virginia mammals and also published on several range expansions—state records or locations that he had predicted in the book in 1947! Indeed, Charles was the patriarch of Virginia mammalogy. No one knew more about the diversity and ecology of mid-Atlantic mammals than Charles. Nobody knew more about factors that limit or encourage distributions of mammals of the mid-Atlantic region than did Charles. On a local scale, he personally obtained more than 50 years of bird notes and data from small mammal transects at the University of Virginia's Mountain Lake Biological Station. On a somewhat grander scale, the thoughts brought forth in his "Appalachian mammalian geography—Recent Epoch" (1972) and in his "Terrestrial mammals of Virginia: trends in distribution and diversity" (1992), are necessary—even fun—reading for anybody with an interest in mammals of the region.

Charles' knowledge of Virginia mammals served as a keystone to biologists, land managers, and others concerned with Virginia mammals. From 1977 to 1998 he served as chairman of the Virginia Mammal Advisory Committee. He was the primary author of the mammal chapter and author or co-author of many of the mammal species accounts in the proceedings of both the 1978 and 1989 symposia on Virginia's threatened and endangered species. Charles' efforts and contributions did not go unrecognized. Among awards that he received were the Thomas Jefferson Medal from the Virginia Museum of Natural History Foundation for outstanding contributions to natural history, as well as a Certificate of Appreciation from the Board of Directors of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland

Fisheries for his efforts in the conservation of endangered species. At least 12 taxa were named for him, including a winged bat fly, *Trichobius handleyi* Wenzel; a mite, *Hoffmania handleyi* Brennan and Jones; a hummingbird, *Amazilia handleyi* Wetmore; the mouse possum *Marmosa handleyi* Pine; and a bat, *Lonchophylla handleyi* Hill.

Charles was best known internationally for his work on mammals of the New World tropics. He was an expert on Latin American bats and rodents. It is difficult to find publications on the distribution, systematics, ecology, community structure, roosting, and foraging behaviors of various species of bats of that area that do not cite one of Charles' works. As a recent example, in the first number of the 1999 volume of the *Journal of Mammalogy*, at least three different papers cited work that Charles completed in Latin America.

Charles' publications, which number over 200 and include more than 50 dated 1990 or later, tell an interesting story about the mark that he made in biology. It is an unusually diffuse mark with subjects ranging from birds and bats to figs and whales. It includes a paper from "the European Theater of War," where he served with the U.S. Army 120th Infantry in 1944-1945. He published at least 60 papers on birds. He published articles of general interest, select encyclopedic accounts, articles on measuring specimens and bio-illustration, and popular articles in wildlife magazines. He published no less than 18 reviews of scientific publications, works that covered diverse groups, topics, and geographical areas. The list below includes most of Charles' publications that concern organisms of the mid-Atlantic area. It includes both peer and non-peer reviewed publications. Numerous papers summarizing results of Audubon Christmas Bird Counts and review articles are among those articles not included. In a broader geographical sense, the bibliography presented here is very incomplete—it does not include more than 80 peer-reviewed research articles and books on mammals of tropical America. Whether their research involves Virginia birds, mid-Atlantic mammals or mammals of Panama, Venezuela, or Brazil, future researchers will necessarily have to note his work in order to pursue their own studies—both in an immediate sense, and that of the broadly defined discipline.

Here we remember our colleague and friend and are reminded that Charles O. Handley, Jr. was a major contributor in our attempts to learn Virginia's natural history. In addition to two daughters, Rebecca and Rachael, from an earlier marriage, Charles is survived by Darelyn, his wife of 32 years, and their two sons, Benjamin and Thomas. One cannot help but think that

it must have been very special to Charles to have co-authored papers with his father, Charles O. Handley, Sr. (1946 and 1950), Darelyn (1996), and Ben (1998).

The Smithsonian Institution has established the Handley Memorial Fund to finish manuscripts underway and to assist Latin American students wishing to study at the National Museum of Natural History. Contributions may be sent to the Division of Mammals, NMNH, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0108.

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