

## C. BROOKE WORTH

ROBERT S. RIDGELY

C. Brooke Worth, well-known naturalist and long-time member of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, died in Kennett Square, Pa., on December 19, 1984, at the age of 76.

Dr. Worth joined the DVOC in 1927, and in the late 1920's and early 1930's he was a very active participant in Club affairs. He was a frequent speaker at Club meetings, and an entry in the Abstracts of Proceedings for 1930 indicated that he served on the Field Trip Committee that year with John A. Gillespie, Julian K. Potter, and Edward S. Weyl.

Born in the Delaware Valley, he was educated at Swarthmore College and then earned a medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania. Wanderlust struck him early, and he devised a means whereby he would not have to "suffer through" a staid medical practice but rather travel the world working for various medical research institutions, notably the Rockefeller Foundation. He is best known for his work in the tropics, principally in India, South Africa, and Trinidad and as an author who helped to dispel the myth that the tropics were unhealthy, unpleasant, and unsafe. He became one of the world's foremost experts on mosquitoes as disease vectors between wild mammals and man. Yet he was interested in all aspects of tropical wildlife, from the lowliest insects to birds and monkeys, and his evocative writings demonstrated that the tropics could indeed be visited in relative comfort. And my, the rewards!

He retired to his south Jersey farm in the 1960's, there devoting himself to conservation work and his writing. Over the next several years he wrote three books which were destined to become near-classics: *Mosquito Safari*, *A Naturalist in Trinidad*, and *Of Mosquitoes, Moths, and Men*, each filled with humor and a great deal of insight.

Dr. Worth worked closely with The Nature Conservancy, and in 1981 he donated 177 acres along West Creek in southern New Jersey to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, which in turn transferred the property to The Nature Conservancy as the Conservancy's first preserve specifically for rare moths.

Always a birder by persuasion, he confesses in *A Naturalist in Trinidad* that he was a compulsive list maker (starting as a boy way back in 1923!), and as of November 4, 1965, he announces proudly that his "world life list" was 1,561 species. Nonetheless, it's clear that Dr. Worth had some problems dealing with some of the more fanatical modern-day listers who do nothing more than glance at a bird and are then no longer interested in it. He relates the tale of a lady disdainfully commenting "you're off the hook" after he showed a group of visitors one of Trinidad's gems, the Rufous-tailed Jacamar, this after a rather frustrating day afield.

All-around naturalists of Dr. Worth's ability and dedication come upon the scene only too infrequently.

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