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## Lohrer researches history of Central Florida's ecology

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Archbold Biological State Executive Director Hilary Swain presents Fred Lohrer with an Audubon print signed by board member Hilary Swain, thanking him for his 46 years of service to Archbold in 2018. Lohrer is a longtime lover of birds.

COURTESY PHOTO

VENUS — Do you remember where you were on June 9, 2022?



the upcoming Nixon v. McGovern presidential election. Perhaps you were listening to “A Horse with no Name” or “Lean on Me” on your favorite AM radio station. Many of you may have not been born yet or were not living in Highlands County, Florida. However, if you were Fred Lohrer, Archbold librarian emeritus, on this date, you would be heading in to meet with Richard Archbold, and beginning your first day as the new librarian and research assistant at Archbold Biological Station.

Lohrer earned a master’s degree in ornithology in 1972, under the tutelage of Dr. Glen Woolfenden, at the University of South Florida. Woolfenden was in the very early stages of a project that is now in its 53rd year, studying the Florida Scrub-Jay at Archbold. Lohrer was first hired shortly after completing his degree and has performed dozens of jobs for Archbold over the past 50 years, always with the organization’s principles foremost in mind. He has been a face to the community, meeting thousands of school children over the years. He has answered research questions from interested individuals in every medium from typewritten letter, to rotary phone call, to high speed email; and all in between. If you have a need for information regarding Archbold, you can count on Lohrer to have the answer.

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He has a love for, and a professional background in, ornithology. Some personal accolades relating to this work include publishing 46 scientific papers, along with editing seven other scientific works. He is a life member of the American Ornithologist’s Union, American Ornithological Society, and Florida Ornithological Society (of which he is also a founding member). He also was associate editor of The AUK, one of the most prestigious ornithological journals. Lohrer has studied shrikes, kites, owls and more. His knowledge of the bird communities of Florida is vast and he has participated in many projects to disseminate this knowledge to others.

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As Archbold's first librarian, he built and oversaw a collection with few parallels at any American field station. Circa 7,500 volumes were present upon his transition to librarian emeritus in 2018, the overwhelming majority added during his time. There are also thousands of bound journal subscriptions that he added to the stacks as well, providing a wealth of easily accessible and cataloged materials. Especially in a pre-internet era, this trove of publications was a welcome sight for Archbold employees and collaborators, and many issues are still in use today. Lohrer has also been an invaluable mentor and friend to the current Archbold librarian.

Lohrer is well known for saving anything of historical value for posterity. He once said, "In the 'museum' (now the Archbold Avian Ecology Lab), where Richard Archbold was the collections manager, I saw a letter from Ernst Mayr, stating that Leonard Brass's expedition narratives were so valuable for New Guinea exploration and ecology that he should reprint them for the general scientific community. I was not then smart enough, or bold enough, about Station history archives to have either snatched the letter or copied it, and the letter eventually disappeared." Even decades later, Fred's remembrance of this event, and regret at the loss of the item, perfectly encapsulates how he feels about the history of Archbold.

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Lohrer represents the last 50 years of Archbold as well as anyone could. He has dedicated his life to teaching others about the ecology of Central Florida, to collaborating with hundreds of scientists on dozens of research projects, and to assisting any and all who come to him in need of knowledge. In his illustrious career he has helped countless individuals achieve their goals, while himself conducting rigorous research.

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