

## **William Richard John Dean**

Nationality: South African

Employment:

1958-1971. Served apprenticeship and worked as a Process Engraver in the printing industry.

1972-1973. Field ornithologist for the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, based at the McGregor Museum, Kimberley, collecting avian blood proteins, eye-lens proteins and egg-white proteins, and other bird specimens. At this time worked in the field in Angola, Cabinda, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

1974- 1978. Research assistant for the Transvaal Division of Nature Conservation at Barberspan Ornithological Research Station in the western Transvaal (now Northwest Province), ringing ducks and other waterfowl, and studying aspects of the biology of several aquatic birds.

1978-1979. Officer-in-Charge of Tzaneen Nature Reserve, northern Transvaal (now Limpopo Province), responsible for setting up a new nature reserve and instituting an alien vegetation control programme.

1979-1982. Officer-in-Charge of Nylsvley Nature Reserve (site of the Savanna Biome Project), responsible for management planning, general running of the reserve, organising game capture operations, organising a burning programme and alien vegetation control.

January-April 1983. Employed by the Transvaal Museum to clean up and catalogue the extensive collection of birds eggs at the museum.

1983-June 1986. In private industry.

July 1986 - 31 December 2005 (now retired). Research Officer at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town. Most research carried out was on plant-animal interactions in collaboration with S. J. Milton . Projects have involved investigations of soil nutrient status, cicada biology, ant biology, bird-plant interactions, densities of birds in rangelands lightly and heavily grazed by domestic livestock, GIS mapping of bird species distributions, collaborative modelling studies on the movements of nomadic birds, and seed dispersal by birds.

September-November 1989. Part of a South African team carrying out studies of alien vegetation and other biota on Inaccessible Island (Tristan da Cunha group), South Atlantic Ocean. Studies done here (in collaboration with S. J. Milton) included the importance of disturbances made by nesting albatrosses for germination sites for plants, and studies on the biology of terrestrial and marine birds.

April 1995-September 1995. Guest Scientist at the UFZ-Centre for Environmental Research (Umweltforschungszentrum), Bad Lauchstädt, Germany. Studies during this period included the effects of small-scale disturbances in set-aside agricultural lands and the factors promoting the formation of thickets in abandoned cherry orchards.

Current projects include gathering data on the historical distribution of birds in southern Africa, and various small studies, including regular waterbird counts and bird community studies in the Prince Albert area.

*Publications:* Recent major publications, among a total of over 200 scientific publications, include editing (jointly with Sue Milton) a synthesis of research in the Karoo (Cambridge University Press, 1999), a monograph on the birds of Angola (British Ornithologists Union, 2000) and a book on nomadic desert birds (Springer-Verlag, Berlin, 2004), editing (jointly with PAR Hockey and PG Ryan) the revision of Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa (2005), and editing (jointly with Karen Esler and Sue Milton) a farmers guide to rangeland management (Karoo Veld. Ecology and Management, Briza press). Editor of the *Ostrich* (the ornithological journal published by BirdLife South Africa) from 2000 to 2006.

*Expertise:* National Research Foundation B-rated researcher (independent researcher who enjoys international recognition). Ornithology (general), arid savanna and desert bird biology (particularly food and reproduction), avian biogeography, plant-animal interactions in arid and semi-arid ecosystems, desert ecology. My interests and expertise are at a grass-roots level, rather than at a theoretical level.

Elected an Associate Member of the Transvaal Museum in June 1982 in recognition of services to the museum.

Awarded the Gill Memorial Medal for lifetime service to ornithology south of the Zambezi on 21 March 2009.

*Theses:*

MSc *Cum laude* (1991). Thesis: *Ecological effects of mound-building by the harvester ant *Messor capensis* on Karoo plants*. Botany Dept., University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

PhD (1995). Thesis: *Where birds are rare or fill the air: the protection of the endemic and the nomadic avifaunas of the Karoo*. Zoology Dept., University of Cape Town.