

that a detailed counterargument is unnecessary. I shall merely observe that it is a recipe for anarchy, would reduce systematics to unweighted vote-counting, and would logically result in the dissolution of both the Rules of Nomenclature and of the ICZN itself. In any case, Zug erred in stating that his preferred name, *elephantopus*, for the Galápagos tortoises, has the status of a *nomen veneratum* with 50+ years of unchallenged status. It was first proposed for the Galápagos tortoises as a whole by Mertens and Wermuth (1955) — i.e., less than 50 years ago, and only 29 years before I made the case for *nigra* — a decision that has, in general, been followed by subsequent serious systematists and reviewers, even if not by all non-systematists or amateur chelonophiles. It is also a supporting (although not a crucial) argument that, in the case of a decision of this kind, it is very desirable to utilize a name for which the type specimen still exists — and that conceivably, using modern or even future technology, might even be identified some day!

What *is* a data-based analytical perspective, if not that which I have wrought?

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## IN MEMORIAM

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### A Man to Envy: James J. Parsons, 1915-1997

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James J. Parsons, whose monographic review of the green turtle, *Chelonia mydas*, published 35 years ago, helped define the course of modern studies of that marine reptile, died aged 81 on 19 February 1997. A student of the cultural geographer Carl Sauer, he succeeded that formidable figure as doyen of Berkeley geographers when Sauer died in 1975. His doctoral work on colonization in western Colombia, completed in 1949, introduced him to Latin America.

Because of this Colombian connection, and having met people from the Colombian Caribbean islands in Cartagena, he then turned to the high reef-encircled western Caribbean islands of San Andrés and Providencia, where he worked with the support of the Office of Naval Research during the spring and summer of 1953. In this study he ranged widely through the English-speaking settlements of the western Caribbean, including Belize, the Bay Islands, the Corn Islands, and Bluefields, as well as working on archives in Kingston and Washington. The results of this study in historical and cultural geography were published in 1956 under the title *San Andrés and Providencia: English-Speaking Islands in the Western Caribbean*. Chapter 6 dealt with the development of the sea turtle trade between Grand Cayman and the Nicaraguan Banks, as well as with the West Indian monk seal, *Monachus tropicalis*, by then already probably extinct. Parsons did not work on Grand Cayman itself, however; another of Sauer's students, Edwin Doran, completed his doctoral work there in the year that Parsons went to the western Caribbean.

Archie Carr had already begun his long campaign for the study and conservation of turtles with his *Handbook of Turtles* in 1952. His long-continued field work in Florida and Costa Rica was well under way by 1955, and *The Windward Road* appeared in 1956. Parsons, his curiosity thoroughly aroused by the San Andrés and Providencia study, was encouraged by Carr and began work on his wide-ranging monograph *The Green Turtle and Man*, which was published in 1962. I was soon to begin my own academic career and was able to send Parsons some information I had found in the Belize archives on early turtle conservation in Bermuda which was based on the western Caribbean experience. Thus



began an association which was to extend for the rest of his life: amazingly he produced that letter from his meticulous files only a year ago.

*The Green Turtle and Man* was circumglobal in scope. It covered sectors of the Caribbean and West Indies, northern South America and Brazil, Ascension and the Cape Verde Islands, the Seychelles and East Africa, the Maldives, Laccadives, and Southeast Asia, Sarawak, the Philippines, Australia, Hawaii and the rest of the Pacific including the Galápagos, and the west coast of the Americas. It was based on an extraordinary knowledge of the archival and primary literature over the last five centuries: there were some 250 references cited, many of them of considerable obscurity. I have to say that for the parts of the world I know well it would be difficult to surpass his command of the historical record even now (though the book does omit the Chagos Archipelago, since Parsons never worked in the archives in Mauritius and Bombay).

He did not make specific studies of turtles in the field: his style was that of the classical Berkeley historical and cultural geographer. It says much for the intellectual scope of a man whose first degree was in economics that he should have a chapter on remora fishing. He ended the monograph by considering "The future of the edible green turtle in an expanding world" (this was at exactly the time of the remarkable Princeton symposium, partly organized by Sauer, on *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*). The final chapter was largely a photo-essay on Carr's beginning work at Tortuguero.

Most of the many fine illustrations were by Archie Carr and Tom Harrison: Parsons gave historical depth and cultural perspective to the great phase of turtle field work they were initiating.

Parsons did not return to turtle work after this book, except for a paper on the hawksbill turtle and the tortoiseshell trade in 1972, and a brief reference in his largely autobiographical presidential address to the Association on American Geographers, on "Geography as exploration and discovery," delivered in 1976. He received many honors, including gold medals and an honorary doctorate from the Republic of Colombia. Several of his books (though not *The Green Turtle and Man*) were translated into Spanish. His hawksbill paper and an excerpt from the green turtle book were reprinted in his selected writings (*Hispanic Lands and Peoples*, edited by W.M. Denevan) in 1989. I was on San Andrés and Providencia last summer, and found that everyone concerned with the history and conservation of those islands knew his name. He had hoped to return there for the first time in over 40 years last fall, but illness made that impossible.

Like Darwin, Parsons could be described all his life as "a man of enlarged curiosity." Archie Carr wrote as the very first sentence of his foreword to *The Green Turtle and Man*: "A geographer is a man to envy." That certainly was true of Jim Parsons. His book on the green turtle is truly a classic in its field.

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