IN MEMORIAM

Alvin Peterson

Alvin M. Peterson of Onalaska, a member of W.S.O. since 1941, died November 4, 1980 at the age of 95. The W.S.O. has lost a distinguished naturalist and conservationist.

Mr. Peterson had 10 publications in the Passenger Pigeon from 1943 to 1956. Some members will also remember him as a trip leader during the LaCrosse campout.

Born in Blanchardville, he retired from teaching in 1923, and moved his family to Onalaska, at the age of 38.

There, he and Mrs. Peterson supported the family as free-lance nature writers. They were both avid conservationists (before environmentalism became the word). Alvin Peterson was a prolific writer, with several books and more than 2000 articles on birds, plants and trees.

He was not only a top notch field ornithologist, but studied nature in general. His second outdoor love was plants, and as his hearing started to fail in his early seventies, he concentrated more on botany, remaining active in the field into his nineties.

In 1976 he donated his plant collection of about 1800 specimens to U.W.-LaCrosse, where it is a valuable and treasured portion of the herbarium.

Mr. Peterson is survived by his wife, Mae, a son, Robert in Citrus Heights, California; and a daughter, Mrs. Margaret Loving of Bend, Oregon.

Here at U.W.-LaCrosse we often take students on field trips to the Midway Prairie Scientific Area, which Peterson was instrumental in getting preserved. The pasque flowers and blazing stars growing there are a fitting tribute to his memory.

Howard Young