

To Eerik Kumari on his 70th birthday



Prof. Kumari (to the right) discussing with Prof. v. Haartman at the Third Baltic Ornithological Conference in Helsinki, October 1980. — Photo: Lehtikuva.

The leading ornithologist of the Estonian SSR, and one of the leading ornithologists of the entire USSR, Prof. Eerik Kumari, Tartu, celebrated his 70th birthday this year, on 7th March.

Prof. Kumari's connections with his Finnish colleagues go back to the thirties. The first year that his name appeared among the authors in the present journal was, I think, 1937, when he published articles on an invasion of Snowy Owls in Estonia (this invasion was also observed in Finland) and on the occurrence of the Ortolan Bunting in Estonia. In 1939 he wrote an account of the first Kingfishers found breeding in his country. This article was later followed by a large monograph on the nesting habits of the species.

When the regular joint meetings between the Finnish and Estonian ornithologists started again in 1968, Eerik Kumari was, of course, the central figure. Several articles of his in *Ornis Fennica* form valuable souvenirs of the changes in the bird fauna of Matsalu Bay these meetings. One of them (1976) treated during the century that had passed since Russow discovered this paradise, to whose exploration nobody has contributed as much as Kumari. No one who was present then

will ever forget that shining day at the end of May when we had the opportunity to see this paradise with our own eyes, and under the expert guidance of St Peter in person, Prof. Eerik Kumari. For me, at least, the sight of the resting Barnacle Geese against the deep blue, storm-swept sea had an unforgettable beauty. Had Goethe's Faust been there, he would not have hesitated to utter his famous words: "Verweile Augenblick, du bist so schön!"

As a careful and well-read scholar, Kumari possesses the best possible qualifications for writing large scientific surveys in a popular manner, as is shown by his book on bird migration (*Lindude ränne*, 1975). A good linguist, he knows the literature in both the East and the West, and nobody writing on migration should forget to check what he has to say on such subjects as ornithophenology, invasions and irruptions, or the dependence of migration on landscape and weather.

Prof. Kumari is a honorary member of the Finnish Ornithological Society. His friends and colleagues north of the Gulf of Finland, wish him many more years of successful ornithological activity and happy outdoor life.

Lars v. Haartman