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Dr. Allan W. Hook (1953-2013)



The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club (TTFNC) lost another of its stalwarts with the recent passing of Allan Hook just short of his 60th birthday. I first met Al in 1976 when we were graduate students together at the University of

Georgia. He specialized in the nesting biology of solitary wasps, while I did social wasps, so that our interests complemented each other nicely. Al went on to do his PhD at Colorado State University, a stint that included a period in Australia. Soon after graduation, he joined the faculty of St. Edward's University in Texas, where he remained for the rest of his life.

In the early 1990s Al told me that he had a sabbatical coming up and asked whether Trinidad would be a good place to work on solitary wasps. I responded right off that it would be a very good choice, seeing as the local solitary wasps were quite juicy and had hardly been studied since E. McC. Callan was here almost half a century

earlier. Thus began Al's happy, fruitful association with Trinidad, which included a later sabbatical year and at least a few weeks during most other years.

Not one to just do his tropical field work and then go home, Al developed a large and enthusiastic circle of friends both in academia and among the country people. And as an ardent lifelong naturalist he quickly discovered and joined the TTFNC, to which he contributed both financially and through his participation.

Despite being a sociable guy, Al remained a bachelor into middle age. He was by no means averse to female company -- ahead of his first sabbatical, I went so far as to organize a Trinidadian girlfriend for him, so he could hit the ground running -- and we just figured he was destined for lifelong bachelorhood. Not so. When he was already past 50 he and Rosemary Guzman discovered each other, and they remained devotedly wedded to the end of his days.

Among Al's most treasured duties at St. Edward's was as academic director of the nearby Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve, a 92-hectare forest that serves as a recreational, conservation and research site. It is very fitting, then, that the Hooks have established an endowment in his memory to support research by students from around the world at Wild Basin. For instructions on how to contribute to this worthy endeavour, see <http://bit.ly/drahook>.

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