



In memory of David Maehr

1955 - 2008



Dr. David S. Maehr, renowned wildlife ecologist and conservation biologist, was killed when the single-engine airplane he was riding in crashed on June 20, 2008 near Placid Lakes Airport in central Florida. The pilot, local citrus grove owner and conservationist Mason Smoak, also died. The two men were monitoring radio-collared black bears as part of a multi-year study of the Highlands-Glades County bear population.

Dave, a gifted naturalist and accomplished field biologist, was a pioneer in tracking large carnivores with radio and satellite telemetry and, most recently, cell phone technology. A prolific and award-winning author, he produced over 100 scientific articles and three books: *Florida's Birds*, *The Florida Panther: Life and Death of a Vanishing Carnivore*, and *Large Mammal Restoration: Ecological and Sociological Challenges in the 21st Century*. He was also a talented artist whose illustrations have appeared in over a dozen books and articles.

Born in Fairbanks, Alaska, Dave received his Bachelor's degree from Ohio State University in 1977 and his Master's degree in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Florida in 1980. Dave's work has been of particular importance to the Florida Everglades. Employed by the Florida Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission from 1980 to 1994, he became the preeminent authority on the elusive Florida panther. At a time when no more than 30 panthers were believed to exist in the wild, his radio tracking studies produced ground-breaking information about the species' habits, range, and conservation needs. He also designed and conducted statewide research on the Florida black bear and white-tailed deer. Dave worked closely with Florida ranchers and farmers to preserve habitat for panthers and bears.

After leaving the commission, Dave worked as an environmental consultant for a short time and then returned to academia, completing his Ph.D. at the University of Florida in 1996. He was hired by the University of Kentucky, and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2002. Dave was on sabbatical in 2007-2008 at Archbold Biological Station in Lake Placid, Florida, where he was recently appointed as Research Associate, the Station's highest accolade for visiting scientists. Dave fostered an upcoming generation of wildlife scientists by inspiring a strong sense of purpose and teaching them solid field and analytical skills. He mentored with a demanding yet warm and fatherly style.

In addition to his academic accomplishments, Dave enjoyed caving, scuba diving, and playing the trumpet. He was an avid swimmer and won a number of races in his age class at the University of Kentucky. He was outgoing, outspoken, adventurous and funny, and will be greatly missed by many admiring colleagues, students, and friends. Dave is survived by his wife Diane, two grown children Clifton and Erin, his parents Robert and Carol Maehr, his brothers Robert and Ted, and his sister Jennifer.

