Imperial Japan’s defeat in the Asia-Pacific War and dissolution of its empire led to stark redefinitions of the goals of Japanese scientists whose earlier endeavors supported the wartime state. I investigate zoologists, a subset of Japan’s prewar scientific community, and examine how the study of ornithology became a linguistic paradigm and symbol of the postwar nation’s new democratic ideals: birds brook no political or social borders as symbols of freedom and flight. Many of these zoologists were aristocrats and politicians in the former Imperial Diet, so their connections with Occupation officials like ornithologist Oliver L. Austin benefited broader relations between former enemies. I argue that both Japanese and American scientists enjoyed embedded networks of knowledge collaboration or competition pre-existing the conflict, whereby a postwar language of scientific research decoupled from empire aided Japan's rapid reintegration by re-establishing earlier paradigms of peaceful internationalism through global wildlife conservation, genetic research, and bird migration studies. (Photo: The Orinthological Society of Japan)

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