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Fourth Herbert L. Stoddard, Sr. Memorial Game Bird Lecturer: Dr. G. R. Potts

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FOURTH HERBERT L. STODDARD, SR. MEMORIAL GAME BIRD LECTURER:

DR. G. R. POTTS

Leonard A. Brennan

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The Stoddard Memorial lectures began during the 1994 Game Bird Seminar at Tall Timbers. The purpose of the lecture is to bring a distinguished biologist to Tall Timbers and have him or her speak about how Stoddard's ideas influenced his or her research program and development as a scientist or manager. Since Tall Timbers was hosting Quail IV, I thought it made sense to incorporate the Stoddard Lecture as part of the Fourth National Quail Symposium.

Dick Potts is the preeminent game bird researcher alive today. As you will see in his paper, Stoddard's ideas had a significant impact on Dick's predecessors at the Game Conservancy, an organization that is a leader in game bird research on both sides of the Atlantic.

Dick's record of research has been essential for moving game bird biology out of the realm of traditional descriptive natural history and into the modern era of quantitative ecology and controlled, manipulative field experiments. Such concepts are being embraced by game bird researchers in America, thanks in no small part to the seminal work of Dr. Potts.

In 1986, Dick Potts published a classic book *The Partridge: Pesticides, Predation, and Conservation*, which made me, and many of my contemporaries, completely rethink our approaches to game bird research, especially in the context of modern agricultural and forest environments and how the present condition of these environments affect wildlife. The effects of

pesticides, (especially the indirect effects of modern chemicals that do not bioaccumulate, but can be problematic for wildlife), to say nothing of predation, are both hot button topics that engender conversation and debate which quickly outstrip the inferential bounds of published information. Dick tackled the nefarious problems of pesticides and predation head-on as factors responsible for the vexing decline of gray partridge (*Perdix perdix*) in England. Because Dick took an approach to his partridge research that incorporated long-term data collection, field experiments, and modeling, he was able to advance a conservation agenda for partridge population recovery based on sound science.

Herbert Stoddard's ideas influenced the development and direction of both Tall Timbers Research Station and the Game Conservancy. The Game Conservancy was founded the same year that Stoddard published his "big book" on bobwhites. By correspondence and in personal visits, Stoddard communicated his ideas about game birds and their management to the founders of the Game Conservancy, and thus had a great impact on the development of this important organization. Having Dr. Potts deliver the Stoddard Memorial lecture is yet another example of Stoddard's ideas and inspiration coming full-circle. As the host of Quail IV, I cannot think of an individual more suited than Dr. Potts to be the 4th Stoddard Memorial Lecturer.