

## A Notice to Readers . . . and Writers

Inevitably, the advent of *Continental Birdlife* was acknowledged first not by potential readers, but by potential rivals: editors and other persons involved with other bird journals were the first to contact us. These contacts were cordial — birdwatchers, after all, are a civilized breed — but the question they asked us was a pointed one: why a new bird journal?

There are already publications that tread the line between birdwatching as a hobby and field ornithology as a science. We know that; we read them; we have written for some of them; we enjoy them all. And we do not intend to compete against any of them. But our reading of these other journals has been punctuated by impressions that we would have handled things differently if we were the editors. These impressions had become so frequent, recently, that we could only conclude that a journal designed to our specifications would be substantially different from any existing publication . . . stepping into an unfilled niche, so to speak.

Of course, no publication exists in a vacuum. We carefully studied many bird journals (from North America and elsewhere) while deciding what to print in *Continental Birdlife*. Several features which we would have liked to include were purposely omitted, simply because they would have duplicated the efforts of available North American publications. On the other hand, we shamelessly lifted a number of ideas from *British Birds* (probably the world's finest popular bird journal) on the grounds that our geographic areas of interest were non-overlapping. (Incidentally, we in turn have already been "lifted from:" our first-draft "Information for Contributors to Continental Birdlife," circulated in October 1978, impressed another set of editors so much that they promptly inserted a condensed version of it in their own publication! Of course we were pleased by this oblique vote of confidence.)

Inevitably, despite our reassurances to the contrary, promoters of the other bird journals will continue to think of us as "competition." But this is a healthy influence. In the presence of "rivals," the only way for bird magazines to "compete" is for each to strive for excellence. This may cause some headaches for the editors involved; but everyone else, the great majority of the reading, birding public, can reap the fruits of the competition for just a few dollars a year. We think it sounds like a great idea.

The proliferation of journals offers additional advantages to another group of persons: those who write articles for publication. Authors now have a wider choice; they can send their work to the journal that best suits the tone of their manuscripts.

Our current desires for material for *Continental Birdlife* are described in some detail in the following pages. We hope that authors writing in any of these areas of interest will consider sending us their manuscripts. True, our standards for acceptance are high; but we are friendly, our range of bird-related interests is quite wide, and we will gladly work with authors in preparing material for publication. If you have an interesting article in any stage between rough idea and finished manuscript, let us hear from you.