

ABOUT THE COVER: THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS

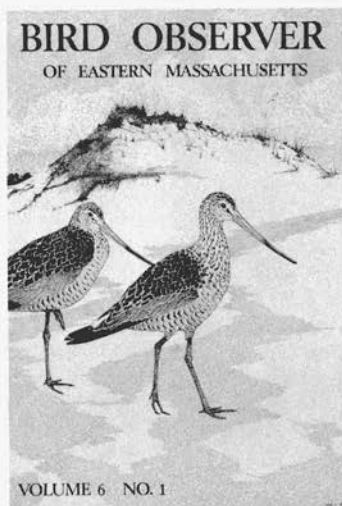


Twenty years ago the first issue of *Bird Observer* (then *Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts*) appeared with a black-and-white cover featuring two stylistic Sanderlings. The inspiration and artwork were from Paula Butler, a graduate of the Museum School of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and *Bird Observer's* first editor. Her idea was to have a striking cover that would catch people's attention and get them to pick up a copy of the publication. This cover was used for the first five years of *Bird Observer*.

Beginning with Volume 6, Number 1, a new cover featured two Hudsonian

Godwits. These fine birds were hunted to near extinction by market gunners and have been slowly recovering since they received legal protection early in this century. This cover was chosen in a competition in which a dozen designs were considered. The artist was Margaret La Farge, a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design. This lovely picture graced the cover of *Bird Observer* for nine years.

In 1986 the winds of change were gusting about *Bird Observer*. A Computer Committee was fast implementing the conversion to modern desktop publishing, and a Cover Art Committee was meeting to see whether a new approach to cover art—a different cover with each issue—was feasible. Changing the name of the publication to reflect a more cosmopolitan audience was actively considered. All of these changes appeared in the first issue of 1987. Typewritten copy gave way to right-justified margins and Times Roman print; the title was shortened to *Bird Observer*; and Scott Hecker's Great Horned Owl became the first of the new series of covers.





Cover by Rick Frey



Cover by Robert Shetterly



Cover by Scott Hecker

The cover of this twentieth anniversary issue is the thirty-seventh in the series and is a collage of eleven covers representing the work of the eleven artists who have contributed all of *Bird Observer's* cover art. Since switching to a different cover for each issue, we have tried to choose subjects that match the season of the issue and that represent a broad spectrum of bird families. The illustrations have generally been representational, although we broke with this tradition somewhat with the wraparound Great Horned Owl cover of the December 1992 issue. With the exception of the Great Horned Owl (two covers) and the Peregrine Falcon (three covers), a different species has graced the cover of each issue. Shorebirds have been well represented (four covers), as have owls (three species). Waterfowl and gamebirds, gulls and terns, thrushes, blackbirds, and herons and seabirds have been featured on two covers; finches on three; and "dicky birds," including a hummingbird, sparrow, vireo, nuthatch, two warblers, and two wrens on a dozen covers.

The eleven artists who have contributed covers to *Bird Observer* remain active in the art world, and most continue to contribute either cover art or artwork that enlivens *Bird Observer's* text. Paula Butler spends most of the year in Puerto Rico, where she has largely shifted from doing bird art on plates and other ceramics to landscapes in watercolor. Margaret La Farge has illustrated a number of books, including George Gaylord Simpson's *Penguins: Past and Present*, and Roger Pasquier's *Watching Birds: An Introduction to Ornithology*. Rick Frey of Oklahoma continues as an artist specializing in birds. The Black-capped Vireo, his sole contribution so far to *Bird Observer* cover art, accompanied a where-to-find-birds article on Concan,

Texas, where this rare species breeds. Robert Shetterly, whose work frequently appears in magazines and books, has also contributed a single cover, field studies of Peregrine Falcons. Scott Hecker and William (Ted) Davis have each contributed two covers. Scott, whose collage cover is an Eastern Screech Owl, is currently coordinator for the Coastal Breeding Bird Program for the Massachusetts Audubon Society and an active artist. Ted, *Bird Observer's* department head for cover art, contributed the Great Blue Heron silhouette. Julie Zickafoose, whose Song Sparrow cover is among her three covers, has done



Cover by Ted Davis

many covers for *Bird Watcher's Digest*. John Sill's Evening Grosbeak was originally published in the *Bird Identification Calendar* by Stephen Greene Press. The second of his five covers came from his *A Field Guide to Little-Known and Seldom-Seen Birds of North America* and featured several make-believe species of "Yellowlegs." Gordon Morrison, whose eiders are one of his six covers, has recently published a series, "Birds in the Garden," in *Horticulture Magazine* and did the illustrations for the forthcoming *A Field Guide to Ecology of Western Forests*, authored by John Kricher. Paul Donahue continues to paint birds in the winter in Maine (where he often sees Common Redpolls, his collage cover) and spends most of the year in Peru working for International Expeditions, Inc., at the Amazon Center for Environmental Education and Research. Barry Van Dusen provided the Cox's Sandpiper cover, along with eight others. He continues to be a successful independent artist, with recent displays in the international show, "Birds in Art," at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin.



Cover by Gordon Morrison



Cover by Julie Zickafoose



Cover by Paul Donahue



Cover by John Sill



Cover by Barry Van Dusen

We hope that our readers will agree that in the case of *Bird Observer*, you can "judge a book (journal) by its cover," and that the verdict is a positive one.

W. E. D., Jr.