

APPENDIX IV

NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL ATLAS COMMITTEE FORMED

MIKLOS D. F. UDVARDY¹

At the symposium a working group was appointed and a Committee (NAOAC) was formed by three Canadian and 17 USA delegates with Dr. Miklos D. F. Udvardy as convenor. The purposes of the Committee are to encourage regional atlas projects in as many states or provinces of Canada, USA and Mexico as possible, and to coordinate the regional projects to obtain uniformity of methods and to provide a communications center. Further, to promote, at an appropriate time, a North American Breeding Bird Atlas Project. The Committee resolved that the UTM system should be adopted, and a 10 km square grid established uniformly for all of North America, so that each new atlas project will mesh with the overall design. The issuing of a Newsletter has also been decided.

This event is an important step also from the point of view of biogeography and conservation of the biosphere of our continent. The UTM grid will provide uniformity and it is hoped that in time all biogeographical data would be recorded in this decimal system. Such a grid has been established in the British Isles already in the 1950s resulting in the Atlas of the British Flora

(1962), of the breeding birds of Britain and Ireland (1976) and several ongoing projects in biogeography. Hence it spread to continental Europe where, besides several published or ongoing national atlas projects the European Invertebrate, Floral and Breeding Bird Atlas surveys are exemplarily coordinated international biogeographical efforts. Australia, New Zealand, and several African countries also have their atlas projects though owing to the size of some of the areas some countries use a latitude—longitude based grid.

A regional atlas project is either the combination of field work and compiling and mapping of previously existing (herbaria, museum specimens, published papers) data or, to discount distributional and density fluctuations characteristic of plants and animals, it is based on 5 to 10 years of field work of volunteers guided by specialists. The need of central coordination and animation arose as the number of atlas projects already started or going in the USA and Canada approaches twenty. The Committee asks interested geographers, ornithologists and potential other volunteers to contact the editor of the Newsletter, Dr. M. D. F. Udvardy, Department of Biological Sciences, California State University, Sacramento CA 95819 or Dr. Chandler S. Robbins, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Laurel, MD 20811, co-convenors of the Committee.

¹ Dept. of Biological Sciences, California State University, Sacramento, California 95819.