

The Blue List for 1977

Robert Arbib



Piping Plover. Photo/L.H. Walkinshaw, from N.A.S.

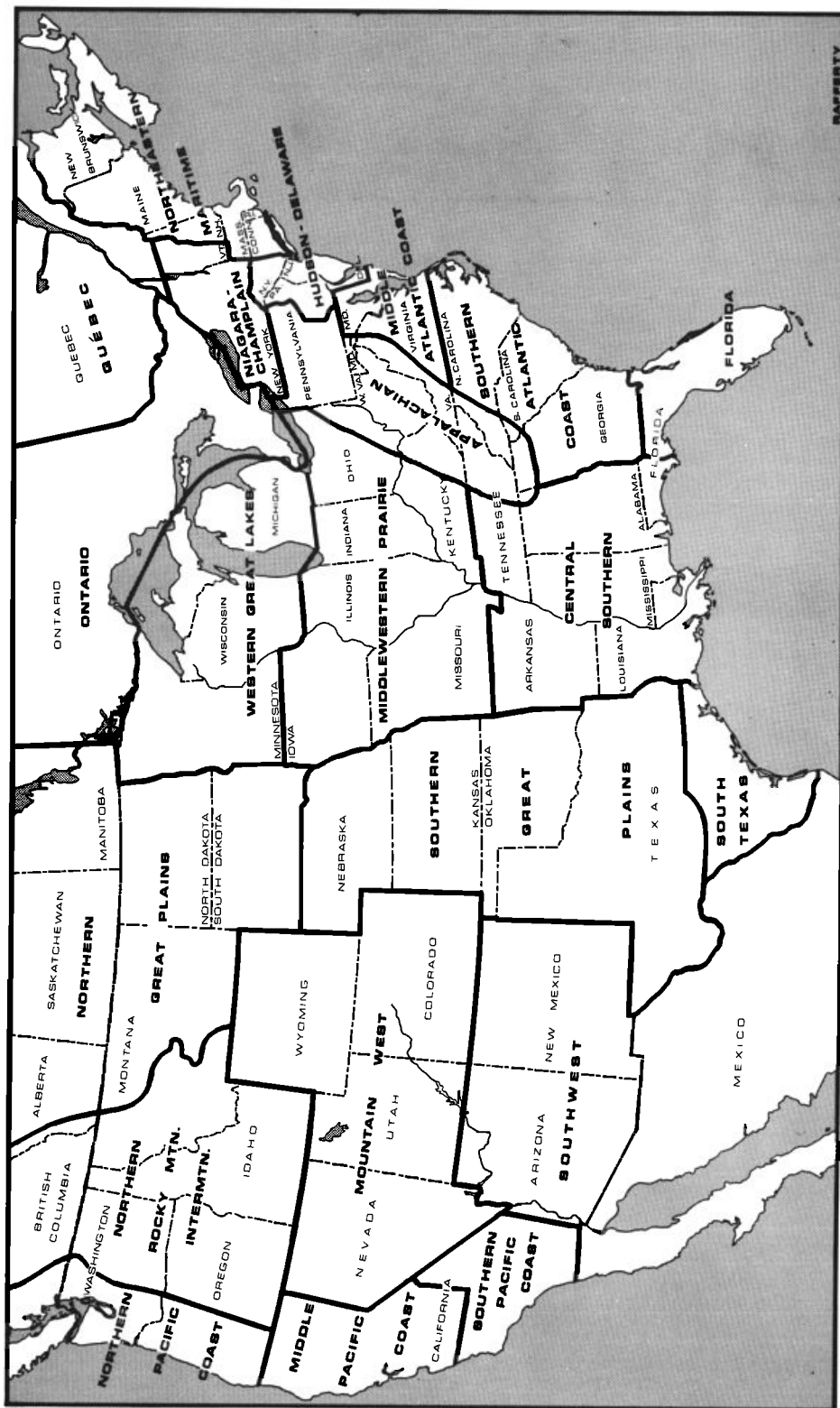
When the Blue List was inaugurated six years ago (*American Birds* 25:948, 1971), we wrote "With this issue we inaugurate the maintenance of a list of North American bird species which are of especial concern, and of which observers are asked to take particular note. The species named to this list are ones which have recently or are currently giving indications of non-cyclical population declines or range contractions, either locally or widespread.

"Blue List birds are not to be confused with the very rare or officially "endangered" species, although some of them may be rare and local, while others may be rapidly approaching the endangered status . . . This is the list for species more common and usually more widespread [than Whooping Crane] — perhaps even still abundant — which for reasons of effects of chemicals on breeding biology, reduction of breeding or wintering habitat, predator problems (including man) or other causes, are now — or seem to be — substantially reduced in numbers either regionally or throughout their range.

"When a species is Blue-listed, that is a signal to observers everywhere to be aware that observations (or the lack of them) . . . are especially wanted and valuable. Observers should make special efforts to report on these birds to their Regional Editors, to be incorporated in the seasonal reports.

"The Blue List is essentially an 'early warning system.' In itself it cannot prevent the decline of any species, but by focusing the attention of thousands of observers on the problem species, it cannot help but improve our understanding of their changing status, and alert the scientific community, governmental agencies and the general public to situations that need action."

Six years later, these words still hold true. Today the Blue List has acquired status and prestige of its own; it has been the source and inspiration for the official list of threatened species issued annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and is frequently quoted in environmental impact statements and other conservation publications. But there is still much room for improvement. In the coming years we will attempt to refine and redefine our procedures to make the list more sensitive to changes in status, and more reliable. We have rejected some nominations this year because the respondent was at the edge of the species' normal range, where expansions and contractions are normal, or because the species is at best an occasional visitor to the respondent's region, or because the species is well-known to have pronounced population cycles. We have not however, rejected species which, although they may actually be abundant in some parts of their range, are suffering obvious declines in others.



The Reporting Regions of the United States and Canada. Not shown: Alaska, Northwestern Canada, and other northern latitudes of Canada.

A number of respondents have written thoughtful critiques of various aspects of the Blue List and its procedures. We quote excerpts from the most interesting:

"Although there are inherent dangers with any list (e.g., it gives a false sense of security to the general public, it can be subjected to "political" pressures), my general assessment of the List is quite favorable. The "List" has been widely circulated and is seeing increasing use in environmental assessments, inventories, reports and statements. This acceptance has occurred at both the state and federal level and lists of "Blue Listed" species are regularly included in impact assessments. I feel, however, that much of the value of such lists is lost because the Blue List, as currently published, gives only a sketchy indication of regional differences in status. Thus, for example, Yellow Warblers are listed in Northeastern impact statements and Loggerhead Shrikes in Southwestern ones although they are common in both these respective areas.

There is, admittedly, a need to watch Yellow Warbler populations everywhere to determine whether a decline is spreading but this need not preclude a more detailed indication of the variations in a species status from region to region. If we ever hope to achieve species management at the local population level, these variations must be delineated so that management (e.g., habitat preservation, nest site erection) and badly needed ecological studies of species requirements can also be carried out at the local level. If these regional variations were identified in the List, then considerably more pressure could be brought to bear on programs to protect selected members on the List whose local status may border on endangered (e.g., Loggerhead Shrike in Northeast).

I am most optimistic about the potential of the Blue List. I would hope that any changes in its format, etc. in the future are geared to increasing its utility as a management guide. It's certainly difficult enough to identify a "significant decline" over a "significant area" but once this arbitrary delineation is made let's insure that it lays the groundwork for significant action." — Douglas P. Kibbe.

"In the Mountain West, cities have grown up where treeless prairies once stretched from horizon to horizon. With the cities have come green plantings; human migrants longed for trees and the green plants they had known in the East. Now cities like Denver, Pueblo, Cheyenne, and Casper offer an entirely new, artificial habitat for birdlife. Mountain Plovers, meadowlarks, Horned Larks, Lark Buntings, shrikes and longspurs have given way to Chimney Swifts, robins, Yellow War-

blers, Red-eyed Vireos, and Blue Jays. Night-hawks have adapted from their prairie nest sites to flat graveled building roofs.

Recently the artificial habitats have come under attack from disease and insects — spruce tussock moth, Dutch elm disease, etc. Man has attacked the diseases with insecticides, some of which harm the new birds in town. Thus the high population of Yellow Warblers, the scattered Red-eyed Vireos have begun declines in these plains cities Blue Jays, and robins, which do not feed on canopy insects, have not suffered.

We see these insect-eaters decline in the city, but do not see the same decline in their natural habitats, like the cottonwood river bottoms. Should we address this as a natural history crisis? Do these birds merit Blue List attention because they are declining? Does the Blue List concept include artificial populations which suffer from pesticide residues? Do the residues have any effect upon the populations in the natural habitats?

Is it more logical to put meadowlarks, Lark Buntings, larks, and shrikes on the list, since their populations drop every time man plows the prairie for a subdivision or an alfalfa field, rather than worry about the artificial populations of warblers and vireos?" — Hugh Kingery.

This year a total of 80 species was nominated or suggested as additions to the Blue List. Only one of these, the Vesper Sparrow, gathered enough support to be formally added to the list. Several others were the recipients of multiple nominations, but none from more than three regions. Ordinarily, strong recommendations from three regions would be cause for listing, but conservatively it is more desirable to publish these nominations tentatively and ask our readers for comments, before final decisions are made. Species of very restricted range might require fewer nominations, if there were unanimity among knowledgeable observers.

The following seven species were suggested by observers in three regions:

Green Heron (H-D, App., NPC); Black Duck (H-D, N-C, App.); Eastern Kingbird (App, NRM-I, MP); Eastern Bluebird (MA, MP, WGL), Western Bluebird (NRM-I, NPC, MW); Yellow-throated Vireo (MA, N-C, App.); Warbling Vireo (App., WGL, NPC).

The following 13 species were nominated by observers in two regions:

Least Bittern (H-D, MPC); Wood Duck (CS, MPC); Sharp-tailed Grouse (NRM-I, MW), Screech Owl (H-D, NGP); Whip-poor-will (H-D, App.); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (H-D, MA), Western Kingbird (WGL-NRM-I); Rough-winged Swallow (F, NRM-I); Short-billed Marsh Wren

(H-D, N-C); Hermit Thrush (NRM-I, NPC); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (NWC, NRM-I); Common Yellowthroat (NRM-I, NPC); Le Conte's Sparrow (WGL, CS).

The following 59 species were nominated by one or more respondents in a single region:

Arctic Loon (NWC); Pied-billed Grebe (App.); Gannet (Q); Anhinga (CS); Little Blue Heron (MA), Great Egret (F); Canada Goose (CS); Red-head (N-C); Barrow's Goldeneye (NPC); Turkey Vulture (F); Black Vulture (F); Mississippi Kite (MP); Swallow-tailed Kite (CS); Goshawk (MW); Zone-tailed Hawk (SW); Bobwhite (MP); Clapper Rail (SP); Virginia Rail (MP); Yellow Rail (CS); Common Gallinule (MP); Wilson's Plover (H-D); American Woodcock (CS); Spotted Sandpiper (App); Long-billed Dowitcher (NRM-I); California Gull (MPC); Franklin's Gull (NGP); Forster's Tern (WGL); Common Tern (WGL); Black Tern (NGP); Mourning Dove (NRM-I); Elf Owl (SP); Spotted Owl (NPC); Long-eared Owl (MPC); Chimney Swift (H-D); Belted Kingfisher (MP); Eastern Phoebe (MP); Least Flycatcher (NEM); Willow Flycatcher (MPC); Dusky Flycatcher (NRM-I); Beardless Flycatcher (SW); White-breasted Nuthatch (CS); Gray Catbird (NRM-I); Gray Vireo (SPC); Orange-crowned Warbler (NRM-I); Yellow-throated Warbler (MA); Cerulean Warbler (CS); Louisiana Waterthrush (MA), Kentucky Warbler (MA); MacGillivray's Warbler (NWC); Swainson's Warbler (CS); Hooded Warbler (MA); Bobolink (WGL); Eastern Meadowlark (H-D); Tricolored Blackbird (MPC); Blue Grosbeak (MPC); Purple Finch (H-D); Baird's Sparrow (WGL); Sharp-tailed Sparrow (MA), Lincoln's Sparrow (NGP).

In the N-C Region, the Regional Editor deleted an additional 48 nominations. In the NRM-I Region an additional 24 species were nominated by one observer each.

Key to regions with conflicting initials: MP = Middlewestern Prairie Region, MPC = Middle Pacific Coast Region, MW = Mountain West Region, NWC = Northwestern Canada.

Of the total of 80 nominees, only 41 appear on the list of nominees in 1975. Another 40 species nominated in 1975 fail to appear on any lists this year, suggesting that respondents are either forgetful or more sanguine. Warbling Vireo, listed as declining in three regions this year, was not mentioned last year. Mountain Plover and Ash-throated Flycatcher, nominated by two regions last year, went unmentioned this year.

Some random comments on nominated species follow

Richard A. Forster, Massachusetts: "Least Flycatcher, hitherto unmentioned but a dramatic decline in recent years in Massachusetts, to the

extent that one very active birder missed it on his year list in 1974."

Raymond Blicharz, New Jersey: "Ruby-throated Hummingbird — formerly a regular nester and migrant . . . In the last five years I have been lucky to find one migrant in spring, and no nesting birds. Fall migration drastically reduced."

Maurice Broun, Pennsylvania: "The Eastern Meadowlark becomes more scarce with each passing season."

David Cutler, Pennsylvania: "Ruby-throated Hummingbird now is a nesting rarity and a migratory find."

Douglas Kibbe, Niagara-Champlain: "I have set aside my respondents' desires to list 48 species, but the remaining 24 included on this year's list is an alarming total and must be taken as a clear indication of the degradation to which we have subjected our environment . . . Astonishing that Short-billed Marsh Wren got more votes [for listing] than any other — even more than species listed."

Robert B. Janssen, Minnesota: "Forster's Tern, Western Kingbird, and Bobolink are showing sharp declines."

Robert Reid, Alabama: "Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows and Yellow Rail — all grassland species seem to be in general decline due to loss of habitat."

THE BLUE LIST

Red-throated Loon. Deleted from the Blue List this year; a majority of reporters favored this action, with only dissent coming from inland regions: Appalachian, Niagara-Champlain, and the Western Great Lakes. Should be continued to be watched and reported.

1. **Red-necked Grebe.** The status of this species remains the same as that reported previously. Never common, the Red-necked Grebe is apparently suffering a long, slow period of decline. The only dissenters to this view were reporters from Québec and the Northern Pacific Coast. Eleven regions from Florida to the Middle Pacific Coast concurred in retaining this species.
2. **Western Grebe.** One of those species about which opinions are almost evenly divided. Only three regions report a continuing decline: Mountain West, Northern Great Plains, and Northern Rocky Mountain, and even here reporters are far from unanimous. From the Middle Pacific Coast through the South Pacific Coast and the Southwest Regions, observers favor deletion of the species from the Blue List. "Evidence sug-

gests that the Southwestern breeding population may be increasing." (Kenn Kaufman). Tentatively retained.

3. **White Pelican.** There seems no doubt that the pelican should remain on the Blue List. From regions such as the Mountain West (13-3) and the Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain (20-4) and Central Southern (10-3) opinion is strongly in favor of retention. Observers in other regions as scattered as Florida, the Northern Great Plains, the Southwest and the Southern Pacific Coast agreed. Dissents came from the Northern Pacific Coast, Western Great Lakes, and Northern Great Plains, but the White Pelican must obviously retain its listing.
4. **Double-crested Cormorant.** More observers, by a 54-46 ratio, now favor delisting the cormorant, an almost exact reversal of last year's form, and a near repeat of the opinions expressed the previous year. For some reason, this is a species on which views shift from year to year, and but this uncertainty is not reflected in regional pattern of the results. There is strong sentiment (75% of respondents) in the midcontinent regions who favor retention, while in coastal regions the view is disputed by 95% of respondents. It seems evident that inland water pesticide pollution has taken its toll whereas marine breeding cormorants are still thriving.
5. **Reddish Egret.** Status unchanged. All but one of our respondents feel that this species, although it has had an excellent nesting season in Florida this year, should continue to be monitored. According to Reid, in Alabama, "Although there are an increasing number of observations of a few birds on the Gulf Coast, this species is present in very small numbers and less than was apparently the case in previous years."
6. **Black-crowned Night Heron.** Once again there is a very slight preponderance of those favoring retention of this species. Opinion is divided along the East Coast, heavily in favor of retention throughout the mid-continent as far west as the mountain states, and almost unanimously against retention on the Pacific Coast. "All indications in Massachusetts are delete," Richard A. Forster. "Except for small colonies at Eufaula N.W.R. and on Dauphin I., this species is no longer found in Alabama in any numbers," Robert R. Reid, Jr. "No signs of decrease in Arizona," Kenn Kaufman.
7. **American Bittern.** Tentatively added last year, this species is apparently rightfully Blue-listed, with 66% of all correspondents favoring. This feeling is widespread, with opposition coming from the two coasts. Opinions in favor of listing in the Middlewestern Prairie Region (9-0) the Northern Rocky Mountain Region (11-4) and the Mountain West (15-3) would seem to indicate that the decline in these areas is real and noticeable
8. **Wood Stork.** In spite of a good breeding season in Florida, the local experts want the stork to remain on the Blue List. Only two dissenters: one in Arizona and one in Southern California.
9. **White-faced Ibis.** Once again, opinion is almost unanimous that this species belongs on the Blue List. Throughout the bird's breeding range observers continue to be concerned for the welfare of this increasingly uncommon bird. The only dissenting comment came from Kenn Kaufman (who voted against all but one species on the Blue List), whose notation reads "difficult to assess, but there are no clear signs of decrease in the Southwest." Other observers there disagreed
10. **White Ibis.** This species is of limited distribution in the United States, therefore it is discussed by relatively few correspondents. In spite of an excellent breeding season in Florida, Floridians are split. Central Southern observers favor deletion; only in the Southern Pacific Coast and South Texas are votes for retention unanimous. Reluctantly retained for one more year.
11. **Fulvous Whistling Duck.** The apparent sudden decline of the species noted in 1975 continues, with observers from all five regions where the bird is normally found in substantial agreement that Blue-listing is appropriate. The only dissent was from the Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana area, where no recent decline has been detected.
12. **Canvasback.** One correspondent, in the most forceful of terms, insists that the Canvasback be deleted from the list, reasoning with some justification that the species is under game management, that it is still found in the thousands in much of its range. "You make a joke of the entire Blue List by including the Canvasback!" he writes. Fortunately, not all our reporters agree, and 63% of a very large sample of reporters favor continuance on the list. Northeastern, Appalachian, and Southwestern areas are the centers of dissent.
13. **Sharp-shinned Hawk.** In spite of some encouragingly large flights this past autumn, especially at Hawk Ridge, Minnesota, most observers favor retention of the small

accipiter, with a ratio of 79:35. In the Mountain West, where observers sense an increase, most observers want to retain the raptors on the list to encourage monitoring. In the Niagara-Champlain area Kibbe notes "migrant still common but in bad shape as a nesting species."

14. **Cooper's Hawk.** More correspondents — 121 — singled out this species for Blue-listing than any other on the list. Even then, there were 20 dissents, mostly from the Pacific Coast and Southwestern areas. This is almost identical to the response reported in 1975, when the same percentage (85%) favored retention. Apparently, the status of the Cooper's Hawk, as perceived by our reporters, is unchanged — still declining.
15. **Red-shouldered Hawk.** There is a slight decline this year in the percentage of those favoring listing from 80% last year to 76% this year, but the consensus still heavily favors retention. There seems to be no regional pattern to the dissent: Québec registers two votes, Northeastern Maritime one, Florida one, and Middle Pacific Coast four, and Niagara-Champlain six. Forster, in New England, notes "Strong evidence of increase but retain."
16. **Swainson's Hawk.** Last year, those in favor of listing amounted to 75% of those reporting; this year that percentage has grown to an impressive, disturbing 89%. Scattered "votes" in the Southwest and the Mountain West represent the only observers who see no decline of this species. In the Northern Rocky Mountain Region, the "vote" is 17-1!
17. **Ferruginous Hawk.** There seems to be little question that inclusion of this raptor is appropriate; it meets with the approval of 85% of those who voiced an opinion. There was, in fact, a favorable majority in every region that reported: all six of them. Kingery reports "The majority of observers said to retain all hawks except kestrel."
18. **Harris' Hawk.** There is no encouraging news this year about the Harris' Hawk and this prime target of the falconer is retained on the early warning list, almost unanimously. This year, Frances Williams of Texas, who cast a dissenting vote last year, has switched to the ranks of the affirmatives. Only two negatives were recorded, both from the Southwest.
19. **Marsh Hawk.** There is no evidence, in the returns for 1976, that the harrier should be removed from the Blue List. Last year's percentage in favor of retaining was 67%, this year, with an even larger electorate, the percentage is 74%. Areas where there is sentiment for de-listing include Québec, the Middle Atlantic states, the Northern Prairies, and the Northern Rocky Mountain region. In the Middle Pacific, Central Southern, and Mountain West regions, sentiment is strongly pro-listing. "Seen much less than formerly," — Reid.
20. **Osprey.** In spite of encouraging news of successful breeding in the Northeast, Osprey is the second most heavily supported species for retention on the list. With continuance of the ban on DDT and other harmful pesticides, and with useful protection, research, and close monitoring continued, the day may not be far off that this species is happily retired from the list, but not this year.
21. **Caracara.** Opinions were sparse on this species, reflecting its restricted range in our coverage area. In the Southwest, opinions were divided, but Kaufman notes "The Arizona distribution of this species is less extensive now than in the 19th century, but the observable contraction of range occurred more than fifty years ago. During the last few decades, the population has been holding steady in the southwest-central edge of the state." Observers in Texas, Florida and the Central South favor retention.
22. **Prairie Falcon.** There seems to be slightly more sentiment this year than last that the Prairie Falcon is holding its own, with observers in the Southwest, and a minority in the Mountain West and Northern Rockies optimistic about the future of this falcon. Throughout its range, however, the prevailing viewpoint, by an 82-18% proportion, favors retention.
23. **Merlin.** Once again a continent-wide preponderance of correspondents leaves no doubt that the Merlin belongs, for the present, on the Blue List. From the point of view of raw numbers of observers in favor, Merlin placed third highest of all species listed, and 89% of those responding, from almost every region, agreed. Dissenters included those from Québec, the Hudson-Delaware and the Middle Atlantic Regions, whose autumn flights have been improving.
24. **American Kestrel.** This species garnered the strongest and most widespread sentiment for deletion from the list, with almost 70% of all responses negative. Normally, this would be cause enough for deletion, but the kestrel had no less than 44 respondents who favor retention, scattered among twelve different regions. The species seems to be declining in

Florida especially, and the Central Southern Region, where all eleven correspondents favored retention. But for the Niagara-Champlain Region, Kibbe says "Take it off," an illustration of how situations vary from region to region. If we were to limit the list to species decreasing everywhere, we would have a very short list.

25. **Sage Grouse.** No change in status. This year 74% of those responding are concerned with the welfare of the grouse. In the Mountain West, non-game biologists favor retention, even though the species is legal game in that area, as it is in the Southern Pacific Coast area. In the Middle Pacific Coast, however, opinion is unanimous that the species should be retained on the list.

Mountain Quail. Deleted on the basis that those few regions reporting, except for the Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain Region, detect no decrease. In the latter region, however, the species obviously has a problem, with a ratio of 10:1 favoring retention.

26. **King Rail.** Added to the Blue List last year, there is even stronger sentiment in favor of retention of this rail in 1976. Regions favoring listing include Hudson-Delaware, Niagara-Champlain, Florida, Middlewestern Prairie, Western Great Lakes, Central Southern and South Texas. In the Middle Atlantic Coast region opinions are divided, but Fred Scott notes that "My delete votes on the King Rail (and Short-eared Owl) are based on a lack of any evidence supporting a decline." Kibbe adds "Officially endangered in Ohio, any areas where it is found in the N-C Region deserve protection."

27. **American Oystercatcher.** The "voting" is light on this species, with seven regions participating. In the northernmost reaches of its breeding range, the species is apparently increasing. Forster: "First nesting in Massachusetts in the late '60s, now about 12-15 pairs. Nothing but increase in our area." But in more southerly regions — in Florida, Central Southern, and South Texas, observers are almost unanimous in noting a continuing decline. The apparent increase in the Northeast is hard to understand, because the species nests in the same vulnerable habitat where other breeding species are declining.

28. **Piping Plover.** Overwhelming majority of opinion favors retention of the plover — with 89% of those reporting in agreement. The only question marks come from the Northeastern Maritime Region, from one reporter

in the Middle Atlantic Region and one in western Missouri. Normand David pinpoints the problem: "Our most-threatened species No longer found on the south shore of the Gaspé Peninsula, and on the Magdalen Islands dunebuggies are more and more popular, with access to the beaches; there is not a single protected strip of sand dunes."

29. **Snowy Plover.** This species picks up additional support in behalf of retention on the Blue List, with 83% of those reporting in favor. This year the Southwest is alone among regions in which the plover is not deemed to be declining in numbers. Kenn Kaufman comments: "Breeding distribution in the Southwest not precisely known — partly because the bird is opportunistic and has been known to nest in temporary habitat created by fluctuating water levels in reservoirs. All Arizona breeding records have occurred since 1972, in man-influenced habitats. There is certainly no evidence that the species is declining here." Reid, in Alabama, reports "Reduced numbers due to habitat destruction . . ."

30. **Upland Sandpiper.** Continued on the list with the support of 80% of those responding. This opinion was widespread, and comes from twelve regions. Dissenting voices are heard from Québec, Ontario, the Northern Great Plains, and one reporter (Blicharz) in New Jersey.

31. **Gull-billed Tern.** Only five regions were involved in submitting opinions on this species, and the ratio of retains to deletes is 14:1. No comment was forthcoming, but this species, most obviously suffer from the same habitat vulnerability that affects other salt marsh species.

32. **Least Tern.** Retained on the list with slightly more dissent than in previous years, mostly from the Central Southern Region. ("Abundant on the Alabama Gulf Coast" — Reid), and in Florida. Elsewhere, especially in mid-continent, the Least Tern is in considerable trouble. Vernon Kleen comments from the Middlewestern Prairie Region, "should be considered an endangered species (the interior race *S.a. athalassos*)."

Habitat disruption is everywhere cited as the most important factor. Ancient Murrelet. Deleted this year after balancing on the brink previously. We simply do not know enough about the distribution and population of this species. Five voices for retention, three against, but no elucidating comments were received. Obviously, more data should be sought

33. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo.** A controversial bird, about whose status everyone has an opinion. Of these better than two-thirds favor retention on the list. Thirteen regions are represented by "yea" views, while in ten there are substantial negatives in varying opposition. There seems little pattern to the regional distribution of the opinions, except that in the West — from the Northern Rockies through the Mountain West and the Pacific Coast regions, a decline seems real and noteworthy. Except for Québec and Alabama, observers from the Appalachians east note no problems. This species has population cycles that must be carefully studied.
34. **Barn Owl.** The cosmopolitan Barn Owl is, in the opinion of 71% of our respondents, a declining species. No less than 15 of our regions discern declines, with especially positive opinions in the Northeast, Appalachia, the Middlewestern Prairie Region, Southern Great Plains, Central Southern, Northern Rockies, and Mountain West. The Southwestern and Pacific Coast regions see no difficulties.
35. **Burrowing Owl.** Retained on the list as a result of a 4:1 ratio of respondents who favor, over those who oppose. Of the ten regions reporting, eight favored retention by varying but substantial margins, while only two, Florida and the Southwest, held opposite views. In the Northern Rocky Mountain region, for example, the "vote" was 17-1 in favor of retention, indicating strongly that something must be amiss.
36. **Short-eared Owl.** This is another species with reports from many observers in no less than 18 of our regions. Of these, 71%, and a majority in 14 regions, believe that this owl is declining.
37. **Common Nighthawk.** Although those who note decreases in the abundance of this species are in a minority continent-wide, by a 45:55 ratio of a very large sample, this represents a substantial increase in the "keep" vote over that of 1975. It is hard to discern regional trends but in general the Middlewestern Prairies, and the Mountain West are for de-listing, the East is split.
38. **Red-headed Woodpecker.** A bird we would like to remove from the list, but a majority of our correspondents disagree. The consensus is not overwhelming: 57% favor retention. Last year four regions supported inclusion; this year it is ten. The only regions unanimously opposed, where the species is still common, are the Middlewestern Prairie, Ontario, and the Western Great Lakes.
39. **Lewis' Woodpecker.** More observers favor de-listing of this species, by 56% to 44%, a considerable change from the 60% who favored retention last year. The Mountain West Region, strongly favoring retention last year, has swung the other way, joining with observers in the Southwest and Middle Pacific Coast regions. The Northern Rocky Mountain region is evenly divided. We repeat: quantitative studies are badly needed.
40. **Hairy Woodpecker.** With 71% of a very large sample favoring de-listing, this species is a serious candidate for dropping from the list. But there remains that stubborn 29% (33% in 1975) who see population declines in their regions. These regions include Middle Atlantic, Florida, Appalachian, Western Great Lakes, Southern Great Plains, South Texas, Central Southern (by 10-1), Northwest Canada. There is simply too much evidence of widespread decline here to be ignored.
41. **Cliff Swallow.** Another candidate for delisting, with exactly two-thirds of all correspondents favoring this alternative. But the dissenting voices are substantial, encompassing the Hudson-Delaware, Middle Atlantic, Appalachian, Middlewestern Prairie, and Central Southern Regions. This breakdown almost parallels the views expressed in 1975, with the Central Southern Region added. West of the Mississippi, the Cliff Swallow is in excellent health.
42. **Purple Martin.** Feelings run strong among the majority of reporters (63%) who urge removal of this species, abundant in major parts of its range. But in the Hudson-Delaware, Middle Atlantic, Ontario, and the Pacific Coast regions, observers are concerned for the future of martin, Kaufman comments "*P.s. subis*, the breeding race in Arizona of the Arizona mountains, appears to be in no difficulties. *P.s. hesperia*, of the southern Arizona deserts, should be watched; it apparently is dependent on saguaros for nest sites, and the theory has been advanced that saguaros are not reproducing at the moment."
43. **Bewick's Wren.** The situation is as described last year: almost all respondents east of the Rocky Mountains favor continuance of the species on the list, those west of the Rockies (except for the Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain area), see no evidence of a decline. Blue-listing should probably be restricted to the three eastern races, *T b*

bewickii, *altus*, and possibly *cryptus*. More study required.

44. **Florida Scrub Jay.** One opinion was received on this species, without comment. It favored retention.
45. **Mountain Bluebird.** Those supporting retention of this species gained from 33% to 43%, but they are concentrated in the northwestern regions, with a strong minority in the Mountain West. Elsewhere no trouble is seen with this species.
46. **Loggerhead Shrike.** Our cover bird gained somewhat in strength on the "keep" side, moving from a 60:40 ratio last year to a 68:32 this year. The entire Northeast finds cause for serious alarm, as does the northern tier and the Midwest, south to the Central Southern Region. Florida, the Southern Great Plains, and the western regions report that the Loggerhead seems to be thriving, or at least holding its own. To be carefully monitored.
47. **Bell's Vireo.** Favored for retention on the Blue List by a 69:31 ratio, with a regional pattern that suggests a paucity of solid information. Regions noting declines include Northern Great Plains, Western Great Lakes (Minnesota), South Texas, Mountain West, Middle and Southern Pacific coasts, and the Southwest. Less concern is expressed in the Western Great Lakes (Wisconsin), Middlewestern Prairies and the southern Great Plains.
48. **Yellow Warbler.** Response was almost identical to that of 1975, with only 30% of those responding placing this species, so abundant in many areas, on their Blue Lists. Those favoring listing were primarily from the West Coast, with scattered support from the prairie states and the Southern Great Plains.
49. **Yellow-breasted Chat.** This new addition to the list last year, on the basis of requests from three regions, gained the support this year of 31% of all respondents from the appropriate areas. Centers of support, even where they were a minority opinion, included Hudson-Delaware, Appalachian, Western Great Lakes, Northern Great Plains, Northern Rockies, Mountain West, Mid-Pacific, and Northern Pacific. Another species to be critically monitored.
Lesser Goldfinch. Removed from the Blue List. Only in the Mountain West was there any substantial sentiment for listing, but even here from a minority of reporters.
50. **Grasshopper Sparrow.** Widespread support for continued listing of this and other grassland species was received. This support increased in 1976 from 68% to 73% of those

reporting, with the only area in substantial disagreement, as might be expected from the prevailing habitat, was the Middlewestern Prairie Region. "Premised on a small breeding colony between Eugene and Corvallis (Ore.) of several years ago which no longer exists," John B. Crowell, Jr., "Retain, all has been said before — diminution of habitat" (New England), Richard A. Forster. "The Breeding Bird Survey shows a highly significant decline at the continental level," Reid. "*A.s. floridanus* (peninsular Florida), seems to be nearing extinction," Henry Stevenson.

51. **Henslow's Sparrow.** Almost unanimous in expressing concern for this meadowland species, no single region expressed dissent, and only six lonely voices (four of them in the Niagara-Champlain Region), held for deletion.
52. **Vesper Sparrow.** Added to the list on the basis of requests from six regions, including Hudson-Delaware, Middle Atlantic, Niagara-Champlain, Appalachian, Northern Rocky Mountain, and Northern Pacific. Next year we will have, we hope, far more information on the situation of this grassland species
53. **Bachman's Sparrow.** A single disagreeing viewpoint prevents this species from being our only unanimous Blue List selection. It was registered by Stevenson from Northwest Florida, without comment.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS AND CORRESPONDENTS — Jackson M. Abbott, Pierre N. Allaire, Richard Anderson, Lois P. Archer, Keith Arnold, Larry Balch, Raymond J. Blicharz, H. David Bohlen, Maurice Broun, P. A. Buckley, Charles T. Clark, John B. Crowell, Jr., David Cutler, Normand David, Ella Delap, J. L. Dorm, David Easterla, Davis W. Finch, Richard A. Forster, Mary A. Gaillard (for 6), Clive E. Goodwin, Michel Gosselin, George A. Hall, Nicholas Halmi, Robert B. Hamilton, Ralph W. Howard, Thomas A. Imhof (for 5), Robert B. Janssen, Kenn Kaufman, Charles Keller, Alice H. Kelley, Douglas P. Kibbe (for 21), Hugh E. Kingery (for 23), Helen A. Kittinger, Vernon M. Kleen (for 11), Paul Lehman, Guy McCaskie, Margaret E. Miller, Burt Monroe, Jr., Wayne Neily, John C. Ogden, Brent Ortego, Robert O. Paxton, James V. Peavy, Peter Petersen, Elberta Reid, Robert R. Reid, Jr., Thomas H. Rogers (for 27), Jean Schulenberg, Fred R. Scott, Esther Serr, Ken Seyffert, Anne Stamm, Henry M. Stevenson, Doug Stotz, Daryl D. Tessen (for Board of Directors, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology), Lib R. Toenes, Livingston J. Wayne, Fred S. Webster, Jr., Frances Williams, Jon Winter (for 7), Janet Witzeman, Robert Witzeman