

RETORTS, REFLECTIONS, AND THOUGHTFUL REFUTATIONS

Dear Editors:

I am writing to compliment you and Dr. Pete Myers for the article "The World's Most Important Man" published in your Spring 1990 issue. Dr. Myers may have made one of the most important contributions to Peruvian and South American conservation ever made by pointing out the extreme conditions under which developed countries expect Third World countries to make "progress" in protecting the richest biodiversity in the world.

A copy of this article should go to all development banks, United States aid and other such identities that tend to waste billions in half baked development schemes that do nothing but destroy the incredible richness that exists in these countries and contribute nothing to help conserve it

B. Anthony Luscombe
Vice President,
Asociacion de Ecologia y
Conservacion, Lima, Peru

Dear Editor:

I applaud Dr. Myers' essay titled "The World's Most Important Man" (*Am. Birds*, Spring 1990). After serving three years as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Ornithology Section of the Paraguayan National Museum of Natural History, I can appreciate the hardships experienced by biologists, conservationists and educators working in Third World countries. They lack not only funds and equipment, as pointed out by Dr. Myers, but also the

This is your page. To do with as you please. We hope that you will be provoked, excited, energized, and challenged by Pete Myers' column, and we dedicate this space to your insight, opinions, ideas, recommendations, questions, complaints, challenges, and daydreams. Write to Retorts, *American Birds*, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

most basic item necessary to put their limited funds and equipment to work: published information.

Obtaining a quality education is one of the biggest obstacles faced by Third World biologists. The luckier ones get scholarships to study abroad, but once they return home their access to published information is so restricted that their ability to work and publicize their findings is limited.

During my three years in Paraguay, the only current ornithological journal received by the museum was *El Volante Migratorio*, edited by "The World's Most Important Man" himself—Victor Pulido. And it was a freebie. Furthermore, the museum's small collection of bird books paled in comparison with that of a United States government employee stationed in Asunción. If it weren't for the sympathies of ornithologists in developed countries who responded to our requests, Paraguay would not have the large collection (still incomplete) of photocopied articles on Paraguayan ornithology that the museum now possesses.

An increasing number of books and journal articles on Neotropical birds are published each year — even in *American Birds*. Yet the prices of books and subscriptions to these journals are far beyond the means of individual scientists and their institutions in developing countries, where the information is most urgently needed.

As a conservation organization, the National Audubon Society could help alleviate this problem by organizing a volunteer partnership program in which individual members sponsor the subscription of a specific journal to a Third World scientist, or donate old books or journal numbers to the scientist. A concerted effort would be most desirable to avoid duplication of materials. At the very least, *American Birds* could publish a list of institutions to which individuals could voluntarily send materials or inquiries of what is needed.

Floyd E. Hayes
Department of Biology
Loma Linda University
Riverside, California

American Birds is in process of compiling such a list and expects to publish it in 1991. The National Audubon Society, through the International Council for Bird Preservation, donates books, journals, binoculars, and various other field equipment to Third World countries. This, however, does not diminish the cogent comments of Mr. Hayes.

—Susan Roney Drennan

Zeiss binoculars . . . simply the best.

There are many binocular brands out there, but only one can be the best. That one is Zeiss.

Reviews have called the Zeiss 10 x 40 "the binocular of choice among birding's hard core" and "an optical masterpiece." One of our Zeiss customers told us, "I am seeing details which I did not know existed."

Zeiss. The best you can find. Period. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope (85¢ postage) for our free 36-page catalog and discount price list AB covering Zeiss and the more than 100 binoculars and spotting scopes we carry. It will be the best 85¢ you ever invested in birding.



christophers, ltd.

2401 Tee Circle, Suite 106
Norman, OK 73069
(405) 364-0858

Our 12th year.

Toll-free order/question/price quote line: (800) 356-6603

Hours: 10-5:30 CST, Mon. thru Fri. Mastercard, Visa, Amex, Discover, Optima. 3% freight on credit card orders.