

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Our office has been inundated with letters containing comments on the newly reformatted AMERICAN BIRDS, since its publication. We couldn't possibly publish all of the letters, even if we wanted to. However, we want to share with you this representative sample.—S.R.D.

Having not long ago received the Winter 1990 issue of *American Birds*, and having devoured it from cover to cover, I have looked forward to writing this letter. From start to finish, the new format and content has class, interest, and integrity. You and the leadership of the National Audubon Society have provided the birders of the World with a mark of excellence that will be difficult to match....

—**James A. Tucker**  
*Harrisburg, Pennsylvania*

I was most pleasantly surprised at your new format! I'm most pleased at the change, because for the past two years I'd been considering discontinuing my subscription. But, not now! I really like the "Birder of Note" section. Keep it up, and if possible always include the brand of binoculars.

—**Frank T. Keim**  
*Mississauga, Canada*

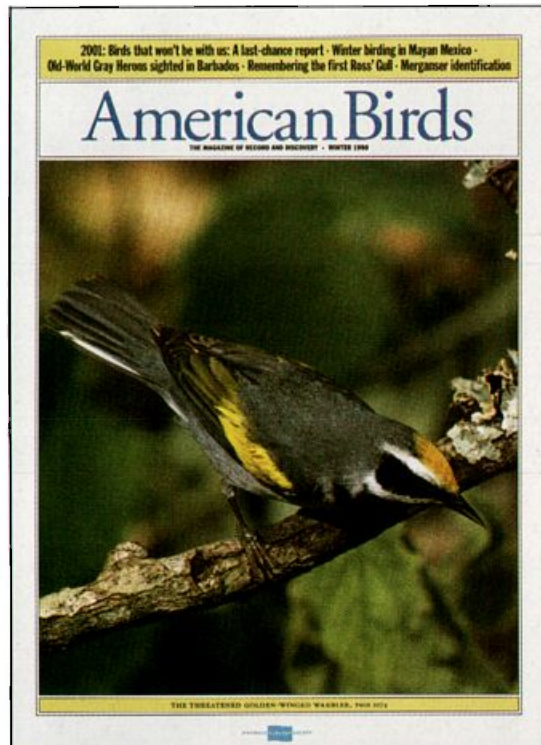
The Winter 1990 issue of *American Birds* arrived recently. I think I like the editorial changes. But, I hope that there are sufficient letters of protest to persuade your layout people to undo some of their changes. The four column layout for the Regional Reports is an abomination and very unpleasant to attempt to read. I find it extremely difficult to

read such narrow columns with often only four or five words in a line.

—**John A. Whittle**  
*Nederland, Texas*

What an impressive improvement in *American Birds*! Sharp, bright, informative, readable, graphic and interesting.

—**Ron Smith**  
*Alpena, Michigan*



The Winter 1990 issue of *American Birds* just arrived, and I was not pleased with what I saw...I understand the urge to expand the market of the publication (cynically, to soak up some of the new birding money; generously, to reach a greater audience). However, I urge you not to lose sight of why this publication is in existence in the first place. Most of the new features actually belong in *Audubon*, not *American Birds*. ...The old *American Birds* has its place, albeit with limited audience. It was the only national (continental) outlet left for reports of the 10th sighting of some species in Nevada (arcane but useful information), and was the best source of information

on changes in bird populations as they happen...I also object to the promotion of "celebrity" birding. The "Birder of Note" section seems only the culmination of a trend that I have noticed (and disapproved of) in this publication over the past few years...creating celebrities in the fields of ornithology and birding plays to the basest levels of our glitz-loving celebrity-worshipping culture. The final page was another shocker, and again, out of place in a serious publication. Fun is fun, but this was People-esque trash.

—**Kevin J. McGowan**  
*Cornell University*  
*Ithaca, New York*

I love the new *American Birds*, especially the Overview section, the top-quality writers, and the fact that the best stuff from the old *American Birds* is still there.

—**Greg Butcher**  
*Cornell Laboratory of*  
*Ornithology*  
*Ithaca, New York*

I loved the new *AB*! It looks great and I hope it helps to increase the readership. I like the "Overview" section a lot, a sort of synopsis of what's going on in the bird world. It's really good....Frank Graham's article about the threatened and endangered birds was wonderfully done and I hope it attracts some attention....The article on birding the Mexican ruins was also great! I love that stuff....

—**Greg W. Lasley**  
*Austin, Texas*

Whoop-ti-doo, it's a doozy! I just got my copy of the new *American Birds*. Can't wait to show it around to the folks out here who haven't looked at one in ages.

—**Jan Burch**  
*Springfield, Missouri*