

**The simple fact is that we lack a critical mass of elected officials who understand how the world works...how the leg bone is connected to the thigh bone, the river to the watershed, ocean to the air, economy to the environment, and human prosperity to the earth's biological riches.**

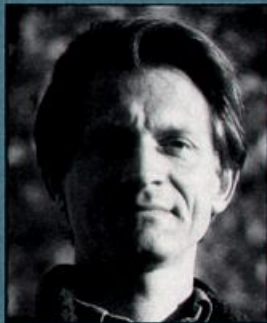
**I**N THE LAST ISSUE I argued that migration itself is at risk—that the immense migration events now dominating our birdscapes during spring and fall will diminish beyond recognition, if not to outright elimination. Climate change, massive habitat disruption and systemic chemical contamination are driving these changes, abetted by a myriad of other environmental perturbations. They will prevail, unless you act.

Far more than bird migration is at stake. Think about how this decade, the 1990s, will unfold: by 2000 another three-quarters of a billion people will be added to the planet...several additional percentage points of stratospheric ozone will be shaved off the UV-B shield over temperate North America in mid-summer...the global warming trend may emerge out of climate's natural variability...more fires in California...more storms battering Kennebunkport.

U.S. domestic politics as it stands is ill-prepared to face these global environmental crises, let alone solve them. While all sorts of subtle arguments could be made about the disconnects between environmental law, regulation, and enforcement, the simple fact is that we lack a critical mass of elected officials who understand how the world works...how the leg bone is connected to the thigh bone, the river to the watershed, ocean to air, economy to environ-

J. P. Myers

## **FACTS, INFERENCES AND SHAMELESS SPECULATIONS**



**Vote with  
your wings**

*Illustration by  
Vincent Inconiglios*

ment, and human prosperity to the earth's biological riches. Their ignorance leaves us all vulnerable.

Not that this can't be fixed. As the decade waltzes by, Americans will experience three presidential elections, five Congressional campaigns and countless other contests in which environment should play a vital role, but probably won't. In another era these elections might be pitons for hope. They still can be—despite Thomas/Hill, despite Duke/Edwards, despite Willie Horton, Elliot Abrams, Rush Limbaugh, Philip Morris, Inc., and Jimmy Swaggart, despite the untruths and dissembling that have come to characterize American public life—but only if people translate their commitment for the environment into votes.

The argument to be made is straight-forward and compelling. We need better environmental protection. We need it now. Some of our elected representatives are working to accomplish what is needed. Many are not. Support the ones that both understand and act accordingly. Throw the rest out. *Vote with your wings.*

What that doesn't mean is third-party green candidates. They will lose and carry the environment down with them. Third parties, at least in American politics, do not have a history of success. Instead they come into being, sting, and die. We can't afford that now. And it isn't as if we aren't close to achieving significant

victories within the two-party system. Head counts in the Senate regularly bring us to within 8 or 10 votes of victory; in the House to within 20%. It would take a third party a very long time to lose that strongly, and then move beyond to win—and time is something the environment doesn't have.

Nor does it mean supporting only those candidates whose voting record on environmental issues is absolutely

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pure. There aren't enough of them to win what must be won, yet, and there will be even fewer if the environmental community walks away from its allies over small differences. Politics is compromise. If you don't deal, you not only won't win, you'll lose.

Whom do you support and how? Vote, of course, but in most counties you get to do that only once per election. The best thing going now is what the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) is doing to organize environmental political money. Chaired by former Governor Bruce Babbitt, directed by politico Jim Maddy, LCV is enlarging the impact of green politics by using (legal) funding strategies now commonplace in politics to elect pro-environment candidates. Party affiliation doesn't matter. LCV will support Republicans or Democrats. What does matter is what the candidate is prepared to do for environmental protection.

LCV does a scorecard for each member of Congress. Get it. Look at your delegation's ranking. Put yourself on LCV's list to receive their analysis of the candidates running in the



1992 elections.

Then here's a suggestion. Contact the League. Tell them you've organized 20 birding buddies who are

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willing to put up \$100 or more each to assist a political candidate the League says must win. It might be in your local district. It might be in another state. Each of you writes a check made out to the candidate. Each of you is limited to the maximum amount set by law, \$1,000 per candidate. But LCV can deliver yours

to the candidate along with as many similar checks as it has received—no ceiling on the sum—and use them to punctuate a strong message: "Here is money for your campaign from people who want you to protect the environment."

The candidate will listen. And with your support, he or she might even win. So might migration.

*For more information contact:  
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