

Birding in the Venezuelan Llanos · Wood Storks Wading Through the Nuclear Age ·  
Antipredator Strategies in the Bristle-thighed Curlew · Lucifer Hummingbird Identification

# American Birds

THE MAGAZINE OF RECORD AND DISCOVERY · FALL 1992



THE JABIRU STORK LANDS IN VENEZUELA, p. 360

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# American Birds

*The Magazine of Record and Discovery*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

SINCE THE EARLIEST days of the National Audubon Society science has been the bedrock of our work. We have had a significant impact on wildlife and habitat issues because of the scientific work we have done, particularly our ornithological research.

But good science at Audubon does not just happen. We have to plan for it and periodically rethink its direction and focus. Drs. Jan Beyea and Susan Drennan have spent many months in just such an effort and I want to highlight some of their ideas.

Science at Audubon has a two-part mission—to identify emerging issues and to support or lead Audubon programs. We have emerged from the days of wildlife-management research—primarily field biology research—to focus on conservation biology, an evolution in our thinking that parallels events in the scientific community. By conservation biology we mean concern with broad areas of habitat rather than individual species. We are paying more attention to all species, not just the cuddly ones, and we have a sense of urgency about the loss of biological diversity. We want to bring a problem-solving approach to issues, to focus on what works, and use whatever ethical means are neces-

sary to save biological diversity. We want to address threats to biodiversity and explore new alliances and techniques to get the job done.

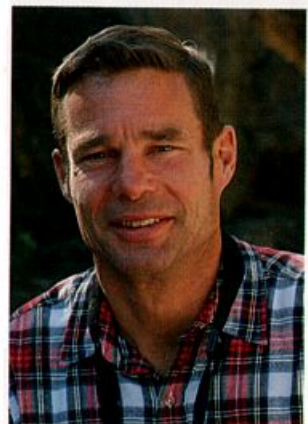
Our work on the Platte River illustrates this conservation biology approach. On the Platte we are concerned about protecting the staging area for the half-million Sandhill Cranes that migrate through this prairie region each spring and fall. We have worked on the effective, traditional ways to protect them—establishing the Rowe Sanctuary, studying the birds' biology, examining their habitat needs, conducting a public-education and political-action program, and going to court to stop new dams that would impede river flow. But to have an impact, we have had to do much more, and science has been the basis for our winning strategy. We have looked at the total biological system that supports the cranes, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic; have done computer modeling of the Platte River water flow, which enabled us to find errors in the programs used by regulators; and have focused our work on the need for water conservation to protect and restore the crane's habitat.

Birds are the ideal indicator species in conservation biology issues, which is why, from a scientific perspective, Audubon will and must maintain its heavy concentration in ornithology. We are now on a new science path, developing a professional staff who are active

and committed conservationists, in addition to being good scientists. They understand the need to explain their work to a broader public. Audubon's science department is on the leading edge in marine conservation, and on the Platte and James Bay issues and is also making major contributions in forest protection, recycling and composting solid waste. We will soon be leading in saving migratory birds, in saving and restoring the Everglades, and in promoting environmentally-superior buildings. And we are beginning to make a contribution to the emerging fields of biomass energy and biotechnology.

Audubon's science department must constantly ask: "How is what we are doing related to Audubon goals to protect and restore wildlife habitat worldwide?" That approach is now guiding all the scientific work we do at Audubon.

*Peter A.A. Berle*



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**Front Cover: A Jabiru Stork descends to his nest in the Venezuelan Llanos. Photograph by Kevin Schafer.**

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# FROM THE EDITOR

Throughout the Americas birds are a familiar part of everyday life. Their shapes and colors, behaviors, and songs enrich our landscapes; their migrations between continents intrigue and inspire us, and their diversity and numbers mirror the health of the global environment. Although most species of migratory birds are still common, even abundant in some cases, the evidence is in and clear that several species are declining and many populations are showing signs of distress. For many still-common species, there are danger signs not only on the distant horizon, but so close that we can recognize them without binoculars. Degradation and loss of habitat in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, appear to be the primary agents of decline. Problems in bird conservation must be addressed now, through national and international cooperative efforts to change policies and actions that bear on the quality and extent of avian habitats.

The National Audubon Society's newest major endeavor is its Migratory Bird Conservation Program; the goal of which is to maintain and restore bird populations throughout their ranges, by effecting wise public policy that emphasizes the protection and management of avian habitats in the Americas. The theme underlying the program is that the time to save a species is while it is still common. After all, that course is more biologically sound, more effective, less expensive, and certainly less controversial.



*Birds in the Balance* is the name of the first campaign of the Migratory Bird Conservation Program. Through it, Audubon will undertake and foster international actions to save habitats for migratory and resident landbirds in North America, in Latin America and the Caribbean. Initially, the campaign will identify and protect a network of stopover areas of importance to migratory birds and bird watchers alike. The areas will be evaluated as to

existing or needed protection and the capabilities of local Audubon and other constituencies to provide it. Protection efforts will extend to spots that are not presently preserved publicly or privately. Initially, a few spots will be chosen as "pilot" areas. This project will be coordinated with Partners-

In-Flight, an already existing, Federal-State-Nongovernmental alliance of organizations gathering migratory bird information. Audubon plans to use knowledge garnered from this initial project to strengthen implementation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and develop national legislation to benefit migratory birds.

Let us know if you want to work with us on *Birds in the Balance*.

Stay tuned !!

—S.R.Drennan

Answers to *That's Bird & Jazz Entertainment*, Volume 46, No.2, Summer 1992 American Birds

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Coleman "The Hawk" Hawkins   | 6. Skylark, Baltimore Oriole, Bobwhite (with Johnny Mercer) |
| 2. Ornithology, Bird Feathers, Yardbird Suite, Chasin' the Bird, Bird Gets the Worm, Bird of Paradise, Bird's Nest. | 7. "Bye Bye Blackbird"                                      |
| 3. Steve Swallow  | 8. "Lullaby of Birdland"                                    |
| 4. RCA Bluebird, Cardinal, Grey Gull, Oriole, Owl, Peacock's Progressive Jazz                                       | 9. The Eagle Band   |
| 5. "Bluebird of Delhi (Myna)"   | 10. Canyon Wren   |
|   | 11. "The Peacocks"  |
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|   | 13. "Where Flamingos Fly"                                   |
|   | 14. Wingy Manone  |
|   | 15. "The Buzzard Song"                                      |

# American Birds

# AUTUMN GUIDE

## October - December 1992

Too quickly the summer has fled; fall is quickly closing in. Gone are the terns and shorebirds but, if you're lucky, you've already seen an early migrant. If not, don't despair—just get ready for the influx of birds in the fall season.

Bushes may teem with warblers, gannets may migrate offshore and cormorants, gulls and sea ducks are sure to come your way if you venture toward the water. So on your way out the door grab a camera, your binoculars and a light jacket and revel in the beauty of the changing leaves and avian life overhead.

**Recommended location guides and further references are included at the end of each site.**

### 1. EAST POINT

#### Prince Edward Island

The eastern end of Canada's smallest province is a good place to watch migrating hawks in mid-autumn. It is also a fine vantage point for viewing birds of the coast, including gulls, cormorants, gannets, scoters, eiders, and occasionally more surprising pelagics. Also see: *Bird-finding Guide to Canada*, J. Cam Finlay, publ. 1984.

### 2. CAP-TOURMENTE

#### Quebec

Easily reached from Quebec City, the flats here host a big buildup of geese in October—mostly Greater Snow Geese, but sometimes with

rarities mixed in. The area also has good general birding in fall, and the Canadian Wildlife Service runs an interpretive center here. Also see: *Bird-finding Guide to Canada*, J. Cam Finlay, publ. 1984.

### 3. HAMPTON BEACH STATE PARK

#### New Hampshire

For prime birding on New Hampshire's short coastline, this area is a good bet. Marsh ducks and sea ducks can be found in numbers, shorebirds usually linger late into the fall, and gull flocks often include species like Iceland Gull and Common Black-headed Gull

### 4. MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

#### New York

Extensive freshwater marshes at the upper end of Lake Cayuga are the main attractions of this refuge. Big concentrations of waterfowl are found throughout the fall, with lingering herons and shorebirds through much of the season. Bald Eagles may be seen at any time of year. Also see: *Where to Find Birds in New York State: Top 500 Sites*, Susan Roney Drennan, publ. 1981.

### 5. BARNEGAT LIGHT

#### New Jersey

At the north end of Long Beach Island, this is a concentration point for landbird migrants in fall. Especially after west winds, the bushes may teem with warblers, while Merlins and Peregrines pass overhead. In late fall it is a great vantage point to watch for sea ducks in Barnegat Inlet and for migrating gannets offshore. Also see: *Bird-finding Guide to New Jersey*, William J. Boyle, Jr., Rev. 1989.

### 6. CAPE HENLOPEN STATE PARK

#### Delaware

The park has brushy woodlands that are productive for landbird migrants, but most visiting birders head for the outer cape to look for waterbirds. Migrating cormorants, mixed groups of gulls, and sea ducks (especially scoters) just offshore are reliable, and stray eiders sometimes turn up.

### 7. SANTEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

#### South Carolina

On the edge of Lake Marion, this refuge has a variety of waterbird habitats that host herons, marsh birds, and large numbers of wintering ducks. Forested areas nearby are good for typical southern woodland

birds, including Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Also see: *Birds of the Carolinas*, E. F. Potter, J. F. Parnell & R. F. Teulings, publ. 1980.

### 8. LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

#### Florida

Trails near the refuge headquarters are excellent for marsh birds like Limpkin, Least Bittern and other herons, Purple Gallinule, rails, and sometimes Fulvous Whistling-Duck; even Snail Kites are often present. Also see: *Birder's Guide to Florida* (Lane Series), James A. Lane, rev. by Harold R. Holt, 1989.

### 9. PYMATUNING RESERVOIR

#### Pennsylvania / Ohio

This inland body of water seems to be a magnet for waterbirds. Fall migration brings great concentrations of waterfowl, including Tundra Swans and Common Goldeneyes; gulls are often abundant in late fall. The surrounding area may produce Short-eared Owls and other birds of open country.

### 10. WHEELER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

#### Alabama

Some of the best birding in northern Alabama can be found in the woods, marshes, fields, and lakes of this refuge at all times of year. In fall, the arrival of thousands of ducks and geese adds a spectacular element that persists through the winter.

### 11. MARATHON

#### Ontario

The forests here are good anytime for northern residents like Spruce Grouse and Boreal Chickadee. During the fall, Marathon's location on the north shore of Lake Superior makes for a concentration of migrants such as hawks, shorebirds, sparrows, warblers, and





"winter finches." Strays from the west or south often turn up here. Also see: *Bird-finding Guide to Canada*, J. Cam Finlay, publ. 1984, *Bird-finding Guide to Ontario*, Clive E. Goodwin, publ. 1982.

**12. HARRINGTON BEACH STATE PARK**  
Wisconsin

Autumn hawk migration along the west shore of Lake Michigan can be impressive. This park is a particularly good vantage point for viewing the migrants, especially after winds from the west have concentrated the raptors at the lakeshore. On days when the hawk flight is minor, there are still waterbirds to be seen on the lake. Also see: *Wisconsin Birdlife*, Samuel D. Robbins, Jr., publ. 1991. *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts*, Daryl D Tessen, rev 1989

**13. MUSCATATUCK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
Indiana

While many units of the federal refuge system are mainly duck factories, this one has a pleasing variety of habitats, with lakes, woodlands, and brushy fields. The resident bird-life (including Wild Turkeys and Pileated Woodpeckers) is augmented by many migrants in fall.

**14. BONNET CARRE SPILLWAY**  
Louisiana

One of the best landbird areas near New Orleans, the spillway has a variety of habitats including woodlands, marshes, and brushy fields. Late fall and winter are particularly good times here, with choice birds like Le Conte's Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird, and American Woodcock

**15. CHENEY RESERVOIR**  
Kansas

This big reservoir just west of Wichita is a stopover for lots of shorebirds, hordes of Franklin's Gulls, and other migrants in fall. Later in the season there are big concentrations of waterfowl, many hawks over the surrounding prairies, and notable numbers of Bald Eagles. Also see: *A Guide to Bird Finding in Kansas and Western Missouri*, John L. Zimmerman & Sebastian T. Patti, publ. 1988.

**16. LAKE O' THE PINES**  
Texas

Although this very large reservoir can be difficult to cover, Texas birders are now making the necessary effort, especially in late fall when a surprising variety of waterbirds can turn up. Last year the reservoir made history by hosting four species of loons,

as well as an assortment of grebes, scoters, and gulls. Also see: *Birder's Guide to Texas*, Edward A. Kutac, rev. 1989; *Birder's Guide to Texas Coast* (Lane Series), James A. Lane & Harold R. Holt, rev. 1988.

**17. HUECO TANKS STATE PARK**  
Texas

Even when the ponds are dry, this is a good place to study Chihuahuan Desert birds, including Crissal Thrasher and Scaled Quail. In late fall and winter the park often hosts a good variety of sparrows, including Sage and Black-chinned, as well as Green-tailed Towhee and Sage Thrasher. Also see: *Birder's Guide to Texas*, Edward A. Kutac, rev. 1989; *Birder's Guide to Texas Coast* (Lane Series), James A. Lane & Harold R. Holt, rev. 1988

**18. YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK**  
Wyoming

After Labor Day, when the crowds disperse, Yellowstone becomes a fine birding area. Trumpeter Swans and other waterbirds remain easily visible through the fall. In areas affected by the big fires a couple of years ago, where good regeneration of plants is occurring, populations of woodpeckers and other birds are on the increase. Also see: *Wyoming Birds*, Jane L. Dorn & Robert D. Dorn, publ. 1990; *Birds of Grand Teton National Park and Area*, Bert Raynes, publ. 1984.

**19. SAN LUIS VALLEY**  
Colorado

This broad intermontane valley is a good area for birds of prey and other high desert species at all seasons. In late fall it is also a major stopover for Sandhill Cranes (and a few Whooping Cranes) on their way south, as well as waterfowl and shorebirds, mainly around the Monte Vista and Alamosa refuges.

**20. UPPER SAN PEDRO RIVER**  
Arizona

Throughout the fall, the cottonwoods and willows along the San Pedro are filled with southbound migrants and resident birds. Local specialties like Abert's Towhee and Green Kingfisher add interest. The Bureau of Land Management, administering this area, has helped to make it a mecca for birders.

Also see: *Birders' Guide to Southeastern Arizona* (Lane Series), Harold R. Holt, rev. 1989; *Birds in Southeastern Arizona*, William A. Davis & Stephen M. Russell, rev. 1990.

**21. WALKER LAKE**  
Nevada

Easily accessed from Highway 95, this big lake

often holds big numbers of birds during the fall. Record inland counts of loons have been made here, and shorebirds and waterfowl are often abundant. Coastal species sometimes turn up here, far from their normal haunts.

**22. DELTA**  
British Columbia

Just south of Vancouver, this area offers great birding in late fall and winter. The Reifel Bird Sanctuary is the center of interest for waterfowl, including geese and Eurasian Wigeon, and it also attracts many shorebirds (often including Sharp-tailed Sandpiper). The surrounding area usually produces Gyrfalcon and other birds of prey in late fall.

**23. SOUTH JETTY OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER**  
Oregon

A perennial favorite with Oregon observers, this area has turned up many rare visitors over the years. Shorebirds often make the headlines here in fall, but it is also a good place for gulls and terns; notable sightings over the years have included everything from loons and seabirds to sparrows and Snow Buntings.

**24. MERCED NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
California

This refuge can be good for shorebirds, wading birds, and ducks all autumn, but the excitement picks up in October with the arrival of big concentrations of wintering birds. Snow Geese, Ross' Geese, and Sandhill Cranes put on the biggest show. The surrounding open country is good for birds of prey. Also see: *Where Birders Go in Southern California*, Henry E. Childs, publ. 1990.



**INVALUABLE TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Although coverage and information varies from place to place, rare bird alert telephone services that use taped messages are a real boon for peregrinating birders. These detail current rare or unusual birds sighted and how to get to the place where last reported. Use this listing when visiting the places on our Fall birding map.

<b>Alabama</b> (205) 987-2730	<b>Indiana</b> (317) 259-0911	<b>Nevada</b> (702) 649-1516
<b>Arizona</b> Phoenix (602) 832-8745 Tucson (602) 798-1005	<b>Kansas</b> (913) 329-4499 Kansas City (913) 342-2473	<b>Ontario</b> Provincewide (519) 586-3959
<b>British Columbia</b> Vancouver (604) 737-9910 Victoria (604) 592-3381	<b>Louisiana</b> Baton Rouge (504) 293-2473 New Orleans (504) 246-2473	<b>Oregon</b> Statewide (503) 292-0661
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		<b>Wisconsin</b> Statewide (414) 352-3857 Madison (608) 255-2476 except 9am-3pm weekdays
		<b>Wyoming</b> (307) 265-2473

**25. HUNTINGTON CENTRAL PARK**  
California

Although surrounded by urban Orange County, this city park is a great place for viewing migrant songbirds in fall. It has stands of

pinus, willows, and various other trees, shrubby areas, and a couple of small lakes. Well over 200 species of birds have been recorded here, including many eastern warblers



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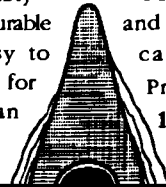
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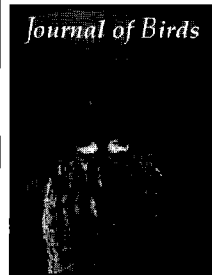
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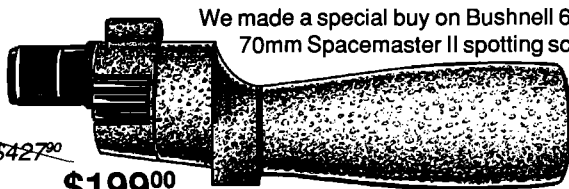
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Due to an unfortunate oversight on our part, *American Birds* printed the illustration to the left on page 196 of the Summer 1992 issue without giving credit to Dimitry Schidlovsky, the illustrator. We apologize for this omission, and thank him for his work.

Don't forget—  
**THE 93RD  
CHRISTMAS  
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is just over  
the horizon

The dates for the upcoming 93rd National Audubon Society—Leica Christmas Bird Count are Thursday, December 17, 1992 through Sunday, January 3, 1993 inclusive.

For information, contact your nearest Leica Christmas Bird Count Center, local Audubon Chapter, nature center, bird club or write:

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**93rd National Audubon Society—Leica Christmas Bird Count**

**For this issue,** “That’s Bird Entertainment” migrates to Liverpool to ask some musical questions about the “Fab Four”—John, Paul, George, and Ringo. So, rip off your jacket collar, throw on your Beatle Boots and play.

# THAT'S BIRD & BEATLES ENTERTAINMENT

1. In which 1968 Beatles' song does Paul implore one of Europe's most abundant birds to “learn to fly?”
2. What longtime Beatles' producer occasionally found their innovations hard to swallow?
3. What bird sings *Hare Krishna* in “I am the Walrus?”
4. Which soaring instrumental on the *Magical Mystery Tour* was written by the entire group?
5. What do Richard Starkey and woodpeckers have in common?

7. You're old enough to know better if you can finish: “...voices out of nowhere put on specially by the children for a \_\_\_\_\_.”

8. Which song title from The Beatles' psychedelic period sounds like a fundraiser for a bird of prey?

9. “*Soon will be the break of day*” on what corvid-named street?

10. What is the only avian song title on *Yesterday* and *Today*?

11. The raucous cry of what bird introduces “Good Morning, Good Morning?”

12. In a melodic love song by Meredith Willson, there were “\_\_\_\_\_” but Paul “never saw them winging”.

13. What carpentry term was used in “Glass Onion?”

14. The mop tops recorded for what record label before Capitol?

15. Which bird's behavior appears in “Run for Your Life” and “Getting Better?”

16. Name the secondary title of a 1965 Beatles song that evokes an image of a disappointed Scandinavian ornithologist?

17. Which bird song occurs at the beginning of “Across the Universe” from the *Rarities* album?

18. During a bus sing-along in the *Magical Mystery Tour* movie, the Beatles and passengers sing a few lines from which old standard?

6. Which raptor attacked John in a blue tune from *The White Album*?

*If you answered fewer than 10 correctly, you're too young to remember. If you answered 10–15 correctly, you've probably got the haircut to prove it. Sixteen or more right is odd, because you remember a little too much to have lived through it. Congratulations! Send us your answers and you may win a prize.*





Greg Homel

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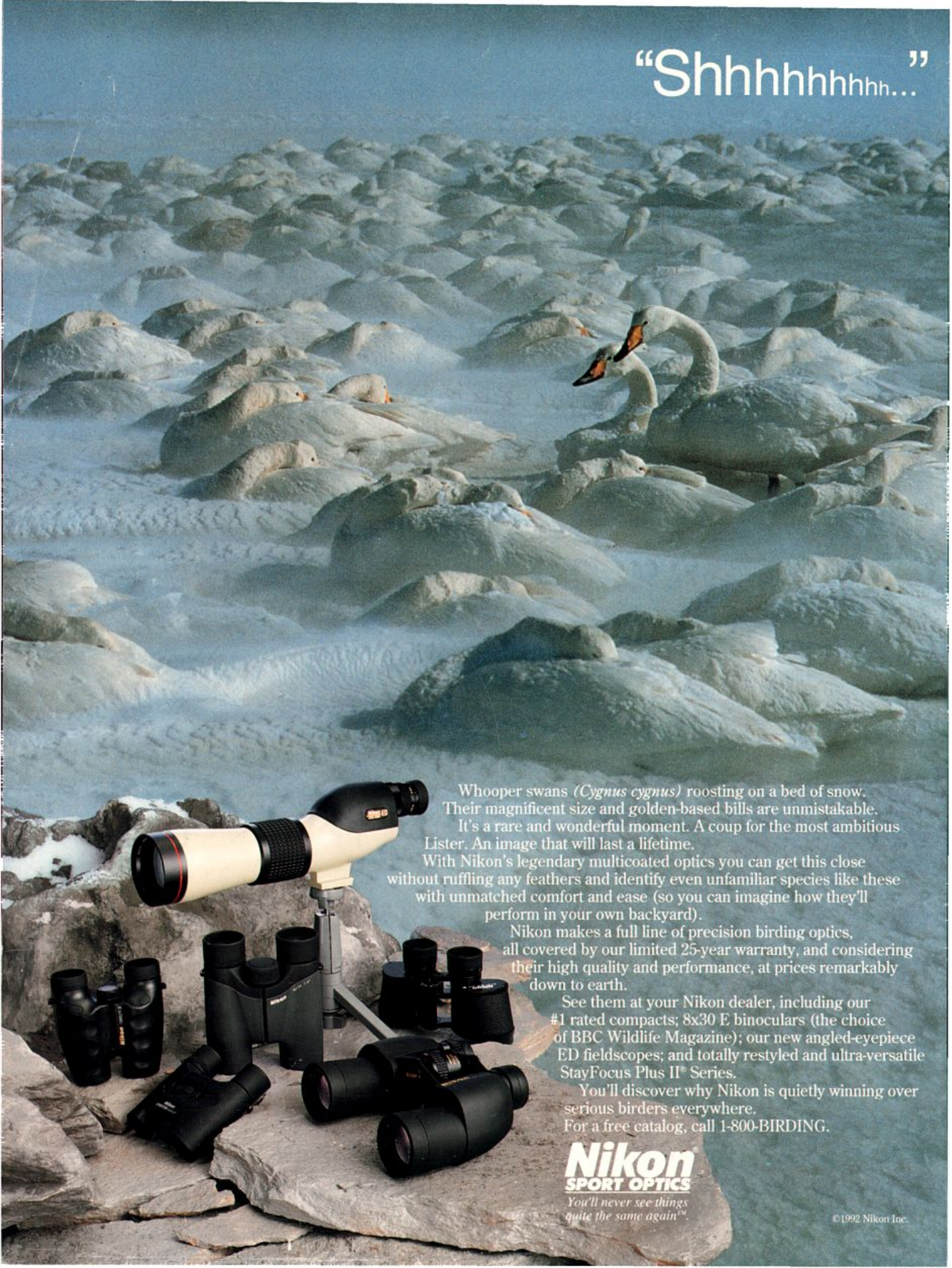
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