

National Audubon Society

Fall 1994 Volume 48 No.3

FieldNotes



National Audubon Society



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From the Editor

BIRDS—with no other animal has man's relationship been so constant, varied, and enriched by symbol, myth, art, music, literature, sculpture, and science. They command our imagination because of their diversity, flight, and song.

They are conspicuous and found everywhere—from the Arctic Circle to Antarctic seas, and everywhere in between. Birds figure largely in most cultures and in many religions. They appear in Paleolithic cave paintings in Spain and France as early as 14,000 BC, and in Neolithic cave paintings in Eastern Turkey 8000 years later. Aristotle observed that birds are fatter in migration. Linnaeus, in his treatise on the migration of birds in 1775, propagated the delusion that swallows hibernate at the bottom of lakes.

During his Atlantic voyage, Columbus and his crew witnessed a night during which they continually heard calls from overflying bird flocks approximately midway between Bermuda and Puerto Rico. Carrier pigeons were used as messengers as far back as Roman times and continued until the invention of radio, telegraph, and telephone. We are the recipients of such a rich and wonderful heritage!!

Although most species of migratory birds are still common, even abundant in some cases, several species are declining and many populations are showing signs of distress. Degradation and loss of habitat, both in North America and Latin America and the Caribbean, appear to be the primary causes of declines.

The time to save a species is while it is still common—not after it is critically endangered. 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.

Above all, migratory birds are the

common property and common responsibility of many nations, and are therefore of extreme value in forging bonds of interest between nations.

That is why, two years ago, the National Audubon Society initiated its Migratory Bird Conservation Program and the program's first campaign, **Birds in the Balance**. In its full dimensions, it is a science-based campaign that integrates national and international policy initiatives with efforts to promote public awareness of birds and local efforts to conserve their habitats in the Americas.

Building on National Audubon's historical commitment to bird conservation, **Birds in the Balance** saves habitat for those hundreds of conspicuous, common bird species that command our imaginations and are today in a statistical and regulatory no-man's land.



Some of us (Kenn Kaufman, Stan Senner, Geoff LeBaron, and I) who work on **Birds in the Balance** are proud to include in this second issue of *National Audubon Society Field Notes* a pull-out poster that illustrates some of our most wonderful and colorful migratory birds, their status, and concerns about their populations. We were

happy to work with Jonathan Alderfer, an extremely talented bird artist, and José Ortega, the artist whose imaginative abstraction of migratory flyways appears on the supplement. Tom Kluepfel of Drenntel Doyle Partners created the stellar design of NO PLACE TO LAND.

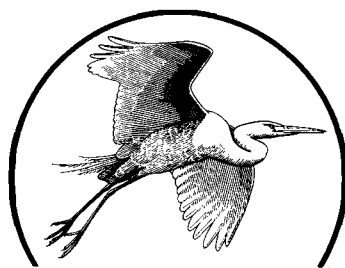
We hope you enjoy it and also hope you continue to support **Birds in the Balance**.

Stay tuned!!

Don't Forget!

The 95th Christmas Bird Count

is just over the horizon



**National
Audubon
Society**

The dates for the upcoming

95th National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count

are

Saturday, December 17, 1994

through

Monday, January 2, 1995

*For information,
contact your nearest local Audubon Chapter,
nature center, bird club, or write:*

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ON THE COVER: Snow Geese at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico. By Doug Wechsler/VIREO.

How to Read the Regional Reports

Birds have no respect for range maps. Bird distribution in North America is constantly changing, as birds expand their ranges into new areas, disappear from former strongholds, or alter their patterns of migration.

Our knowledge of bird distribution is also changing constantly, as discoveries continue to come in. Keeping up with all these developments is a challenge for ornithologists, conservationists, and birders.

The Regional Reports, published four times a year, contain a wealth of information about our dynamic birdlife. To those seeing the reports for the first time, they might appear difficult or technical, but they are not; anyone with any birding experience will find the reports easy to understand. We invite you to read the report from your area of the continent; we predict that the information there will alternately surprise you and confirm your ideas about birdlife in your region. To help you get started, here are answers to some questions that may occur to first-time readers.

What kind of information is included, and do the Regional Editors report everything that's reported to them?

Regional Editors do not report every sighting of every bird. Such a list would be huge, unwieldy, and not very useful. Instead, they solicit reports from as many observers as possible, screen the records for accuracy, choose those that are most significant, look for trends and patterns of occurrence, connect scattered bits of information, and ultimately come up with a concise, readable summary of the real bird news—the important avian events and trends of the season throughout their region.

Why are there abbreviations in the text?

We abbreviate some frequently used words and phrases to save space. Most are easy to understand and remember. (See the following list of abbreviations.) In addition, some Regional Editors use shortened versions of the names of birding hot spots; they list these local abbreviations in a separate paragraph, just after the introductory comments and just before their main species accounts.

What do the initials in parentheses mean?

Most records published in each report will be followed by initials, to indicate the source, the person(s) who found or reported the bird(s) mentioned. The initials may be followed by *et al.* (short for *et alia*, meaning “and others”), or preceded by *fide* (literally, “by the faith of”—meaning that this is a second-hand report, and the person cited is the one who passed it to the Regional Editor).

There are good reasons for giving credit to the observers involved. Readers may be reassured about the accuracy of surprising sightings if they know who the observers were; researchers who want to know more about a certain record may be able to contact the observers directly.

Who sends in their sightings?

All observers are invited to send in notes to their Regional Editors: details on rare sightings, species that were scarcer or more numerous than usual during the season, unusual concentrations on migration, and so on. Reading the reports for your region for a few seasons is the best way to find out what kinds of information are desired. Although the Regional Editors cannot cite every record that they receive, every contributor helps them to produce a more thorough and accurate summary.

Why are some bird names in heavier type?

We use boldface type to draw attention to outstanding records of rare birds. General categories of birds that the Regional Editors would place in boldface would include: any species that has been recorded fewer than 10 times previously in a given state or province; any new breeding record for a state or province; or any bird totally outside established patterns of seasonal occurrence. (For the most part, records are not boldfaced unless they are backed up with solid details or photographs.) Birders who like to know about rare birds (and most of us do) can get a complete rundown of the season's outstanding rarities by scanning all the Regional Reports for those boldfaced birds.

What are the sections marked “S.A.”?

“S.A.” stands for “Special Attention” (and, by coincidence, is pronounced “essay”). The purpose of the essays is to draw attention to noteworthy phenomena or trends.

Likely topics include new population trends or new patterns of bird distribution, unusual invasions or migration events, field research projects that have yielded new data, specific conservation problems that have an impact on birdlife, or detailed discussion of some outstanding (or perplexing) rare bird record. Experienced readers make it a point to flip through all the reports and read all the S.A.s, even in regions where they do not read the rest of the text.

Standard Abbreviations used in the Regional Reports

Abbreviations used in place names:

In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Other abbreviations:

Cr.	Creek
Ft.	Fort
Hwy	Highway
I.	Island or Isle
Is.	Islands or Isles
Jct.	Junction
km	kilometer(s)
L.	Lake
mi	mile(s)
Mt.	Mountain or Mount
Mts.	Mountains
N.F.	National Forest
N.M.	National Monument
N.P.	National Park
N.W.R.	National Wildlife Refuge
P.P.	Provincial Park
Pen.	Peninsula
Pt.	Point (not Port)
R.	River
Ref.	Refuge
Res.	Reservoir (not Reservation)
S.P.	State Park
W.M.A.	Wildlife Management Area

Abbreviations used in the names of birds:

Am.	American
Com.	Common
E.	Eastern
Eur.	European or Eurasian
Mt.	Mountain
N.	Northern
S.	Southern
W.	Western

Other abbreviations and symbols referring to birds:

ad.	adult
imm.	immature
juv.	juvenile or juvenile
sp.	species
†	means that written details were submitted for a sighting
*	means that a specimen was collected
♂	male
♀	female
CBC	Christmas Bird Count



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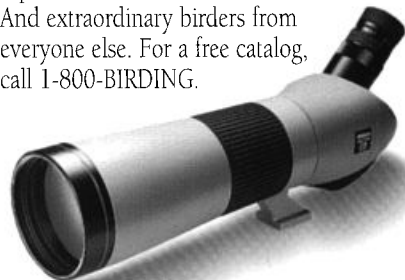
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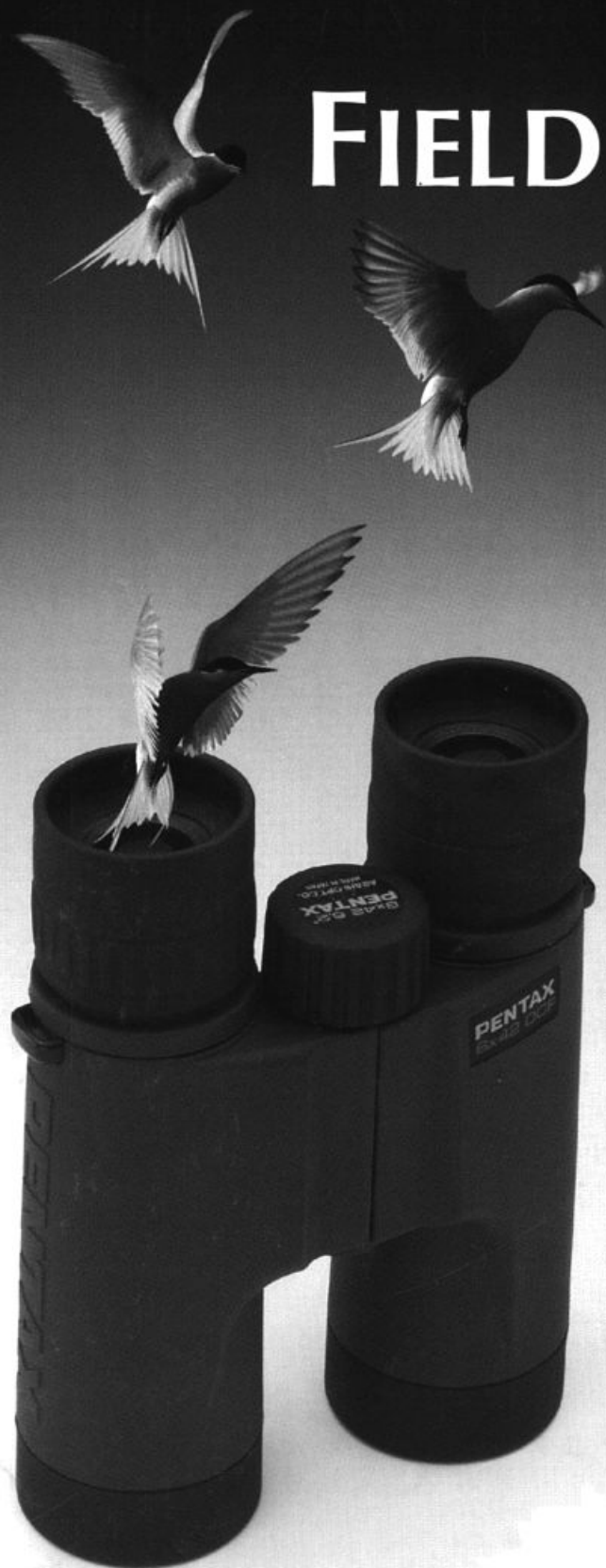
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