

National Audubon Society

Fall 1995 Vol.49 No.3

# FieldNotes



National  Audubon Society

# AUDUBON CALENDARS

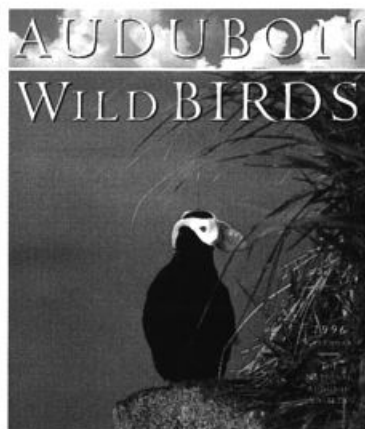
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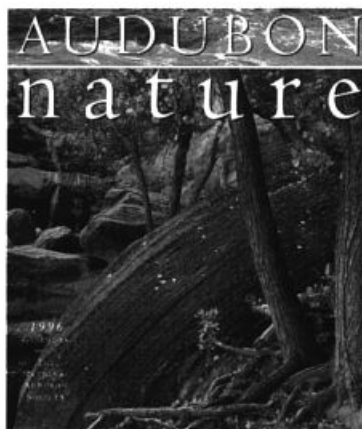
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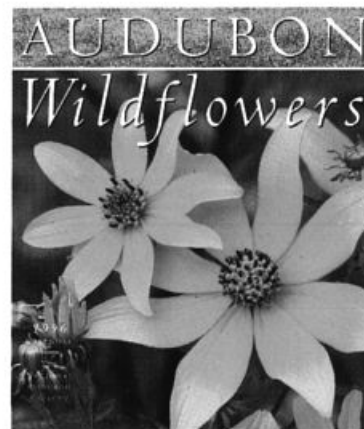
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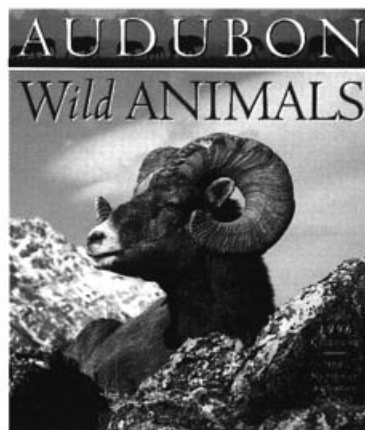
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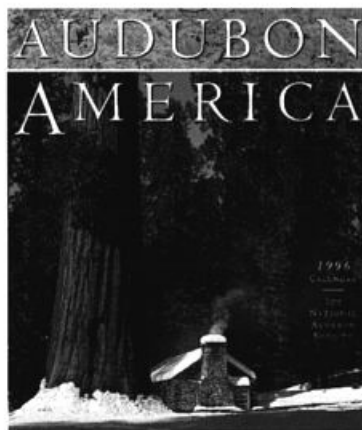
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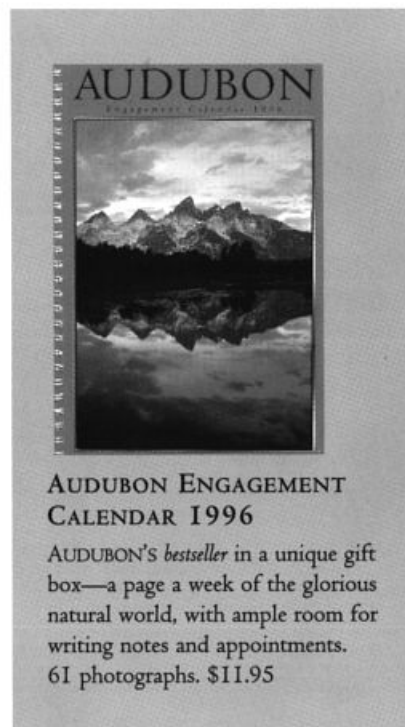
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# From the Editor

Audubon has recently embarked on an exciting undertaking called the Important Bird Areas project. We feel that embracing it will bring a stronger focus to what we Audubon members do at state and local levels.

Identifying areas of special importance to birds is essential to establishing habitat-based priorities in bird conservation. The process of identifying such areas also creates awareness about birds and helps build networks and cooperation among ornithologists, bird watchers, governmental agencies, and nongovernmental organizations.

The International Council for Bird Preservation (now Birdlife International) initiated a project in the late 1980s to identify Important Bird Areas in Europe, and recently completed a similar project in the Middle East. Important Bird Area (IBA) projects are now underway in Africa. To date there have been no comparable efforts in the United States, although the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network has identified sites of special significance to shorebirds in the United States and more broadly in the Western Hemisphere. Several wetlands of international importance also have been designated under the Ramsar Convention, and the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association is compiling an atlas of United States and international sites where raptors concentrate in migration.

Given current high levels of concern about migratory birds and the fact that many states and provinces have completed, or are completing, Breeding Bird Atlases, it is timely to apply the IBA concept in the United States.

An Important Bird Area is a site that supplies essential habitats for one or more species of birds and which, on some basis, can be distinguished from surrounding lands. Some examples of IBAs are wetlands harboring large numbers of wintering waterfowl, ocean cliffs with nesting seabirds, woodlands that contain breeding endangered species, and agricultural areas that maintain habitat for grassland birds with limited distributions. Sites can range in size from a few to thousands of hectares.

These areas are chosen on the basis of simple, scientifically credible, and mostly objective criteria. For example: Does a site support a globally threatened species? Do seabirds or waterfowl congregate in significant numbers? Is there an

avian community associated with representative, rare, threatened, or unique habitats? These criteria are adapted to the United States but are consonant with those being used internationally.

Important Bird Areas may or may not be protected at the time they are designated. In fact, a key purpose of the project is to determine whether areas of importance to birds are protected or not, and to provide a basis for obtaining some degree of protection or management emphasis for unprotected areas.

Launching an Important Bird Areas project in the United States was a great opportunity for Audubon to share the leadership role in a high-profile bird initiative with a clear habitat message. The American Bird Conservancy and National Audubon have formed a partnership, in which ABC will identify the Important Bird Areas of national and global significance and the National Audubon Society will designate state areas of significance.

The IBA project offers all birders the opportunity to participate in a large-scale citizen-science endeavor that combines the lure of birds and birdwatching with the need to accomplish habitat protection. There is no better organization than Audubon to organize such an effort.

The goal of the project is to foster the conservation of bird habitats by identifying IBAs in all 50 states. National Audubon will provide the protocol, materials, technical assistance, and coordination in the states.

This goal requires cooperation with the American Bird Conservancy, the American Birding Association, The Nature Conservancy, and other conservation organizations, as well as state and federal wildlife agencies. Not only will this cooperation spread the work load, but it will also enhance the credibility of the results.

The initial product in each state will be a book of IBAs that will be distributed widely to public officials, land managers, industry, and the news media. This will publicly establish an agenda for habitat protection that decision makers should consider advancing with acquisition priorities, management objectives, and ecotourism.

Birding groups will be encouraged to adopt IBAs within their territory and use these as a basis to guide protection and advocacy efforts, public education, and outreach projects. With respect to private land, identification of IBAs will help establish a dialogue with landowners and create cooperative opportunities for managing or enhancing bird habitats.

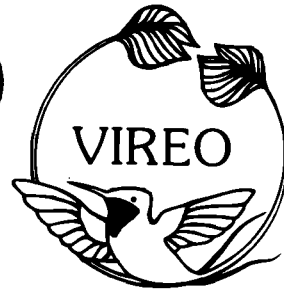
We invite your active participation in both the designation and protection of Important Bird Areas.

Stay tuned!!!



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- ON THE COVER: Northern Parula.  
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PETER BERTHOLD

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# 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:

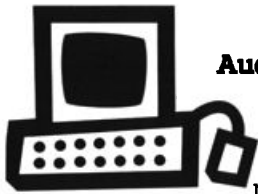
Cr.	Creek
Ft.	Fort
Hwy	Highway
I.	Island or Isle
Is.	Islands or Isles
Jct.	Junction
km	kilometer(s)
L.	Lake
mi	mile(s)
Mt.	Mountain or Mount
Mts.	Mountains
N.F.	National Forest
N.M.	National Monument
N.P.	National Park
N.W.R.	National Wildlife Refuge
P.P.	Provincial Park
Pen.	Peninsula
Pt.	Point (not 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
v.t.	videotaped
†	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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• The Audubon Home Page on the Internet's World Wide Web is the complete online directory of the National Audubon Society's programs and its legislative agenda! You can find us at <http://www.audubon.org/audubon/>

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### Our Home Page

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### Welcome

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- Your local chapter
- News from the National Audubon Society
- A walk in the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary
- About the National Audubon Society



For questions about our communication tools contact

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### The Audubon Activist

If you would really like to play a more integrated role in our advocacy work on behalf of birds, other wildlife and their habitats, consider joining our ACTIVIST network. Your involvement at this level will make you a part of our network of dedicated Audubon citizen-activists. You'll get Activist tools and information via e-mail, voice-mail, or regular mail depending on your preference **or by participating in our national FaxAlert Network!** By joining us you are making an important commitment to write letters or make telephone calls on behalf of the environment. With the current climate in Washington nothing less than the future of a healthy planet is at stake!

To join our activist network send your name, address, phone, fax, and e-mail address to Activist, NAS, NY. [activist@audubon.org](mailto:activist@audubon.org).

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- ◆ High quality photo application (optional)
- ◆ Eight interchangeable eyepieces
- ◆ Bayonet Mount

*High Performance Series available in:*

*TSN-1, 45° Offset, Multi-Coated*

*TSN-2, Straight, Multi-Coated*

*TSN-3, 45° Offset, Multi-Coated  
Fluorite Lens*

*TSN-4, Straight, Multi-Coated  
Fluorite Lens*



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