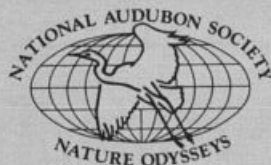


National Audubon Society

Fall 1996 Vol. 50 No. 3

Field Notes





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From the Editor

Partners in Flight is a cooperative effort dedicated to the long-term well being of the birds of this continent and hemisphere. Participants include non-governmental conservation organizations, state and federal agencies, academicians, and private industry. The National Audubon Society takes enormous pride, as a member of Partners in Flight, in publishing the first annual WatchList in this issue of *Field Notes*. We believe that this listing will be the first edition of an increasingly valuable conservation tool. It follows the Partners in Flight prioritization system and is based on the best available information and expert scrutiny by the bird conservation and ornithological communities. It is our intention that this publication of the WatchList is the first step — but a major one — in helping to achieve the lofty goals of Partners in Flight. We can certainly expect that with successive year's refinements of criteria and updates, it will mature and evolve, thereby increasing in stature and authority. Our hope is that this important listing will serve annually as a quick, comprehensive snapshot and a benchmark that will be used and saved by birders, conservationists, journalists, and policy makers.

Compiling the WatchList was a gargantuan feat dependent on the best efforts of many colleagues. To each of them we extend warm and substantial thanks for their fine professional contributions.

The stresses and tensions of the evaluation process are not insignificant, and so we take this opportunity to publicly thank our authors, Mike Carter from the Colorado Bird Observatory, Chuck Hunter from Partners in Flight, David Pashley, George Fenwick, and Jeff Price from the American Bird Conservancy, and Dan Petit and John Trapp from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service

for their countless hours on behalf on the WatchList.

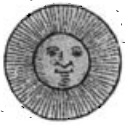
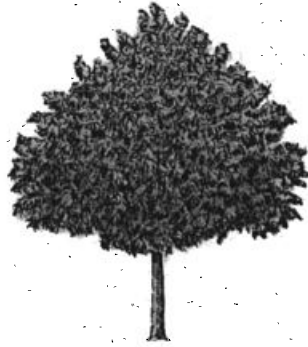
It would be impossible to overemphasize the value of the contributions of the many colleagues whose critical comments helped shape and define the last versions of the list. Notable among those contributors are Jim Corven, Brian Harrington, Linda Leddy, and a strong corps of shorebird scientists from the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network; William T. Everett from the Endangered Species Recovery Council and Craig Harrison who evaluated listed seabirds; Jim Kushlan from the National Biological Service and the Colonial Waterbirds Group; Lloyd Kiff and Mark Fuller from the Peregrine Fund, who commented on raptors; Ken Babcock from the Missouri Department



of Conservation and chair of the IAFWA Committee on Migratory Shore and Upland Game who commented on upland game birds; and, Jeff Nelson, Bruce Batt, and Allen Wenz, and several other biologists from Ducks Unlimited who commented on waterfowl. Additionally, we

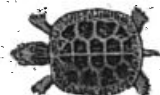
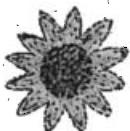
owe a warm vote of gratitude to each of the PIF Coordinators, David Pashley, Carol Beardmore, Jane Fitzgerald, William C. (Chuck) Hunter, and Kenneth V. Rosenberg, for their participation. Warmest thanks to Stan Senner for his overall counsel, and with whom it is always a pleasure to work.

Stay tuned!



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National Audubon Society Field Notes is published five times a year. Editorial and business offices are located at 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003 (212) 979-3000. Subscription, all in U.S. \$: One year, \$25.00. Canada and foreign: \$37.00. Libraries and Institutions: \$35.00. Single copies: Spring Issue (Autumn Migration), Summer Issue (Winter Season), Fall Issue (Spring Migration), Winter Issue (Nesting Season) all \$5.00 each. Christmas Bird Count issue \$15.00. Second class postage paid at New York, NY and additional Post Offices. Copyright 1996 by The National Audubon Society. Postmaster: Send address changes to **National Audubon Society Field Notes**, PO Box 490, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598. ISSN 0004-7686.

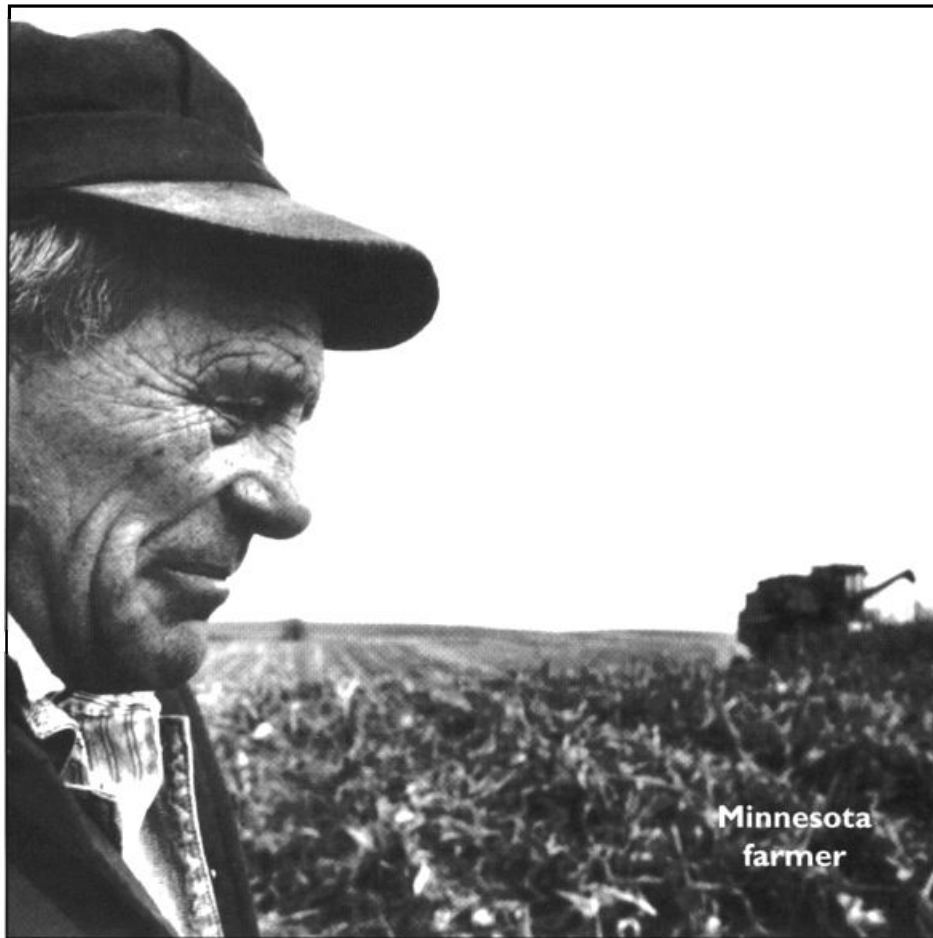
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ON THE COVER: Smith's Longspur.
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How to Read the Regional Reports

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.	video taped
†	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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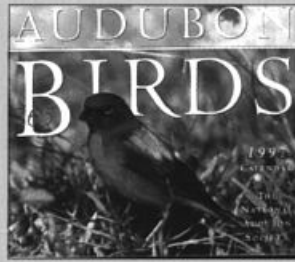
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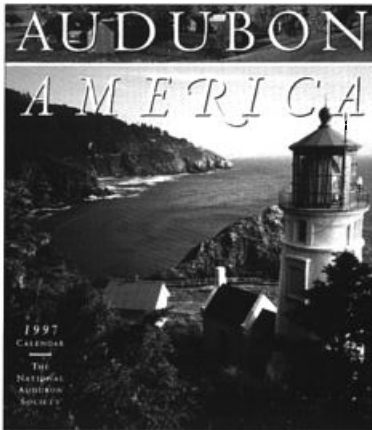
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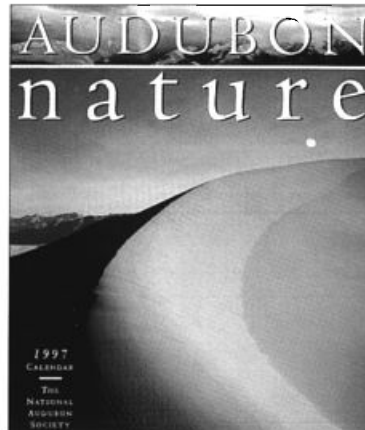


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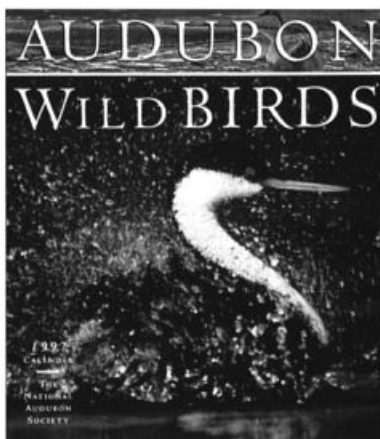


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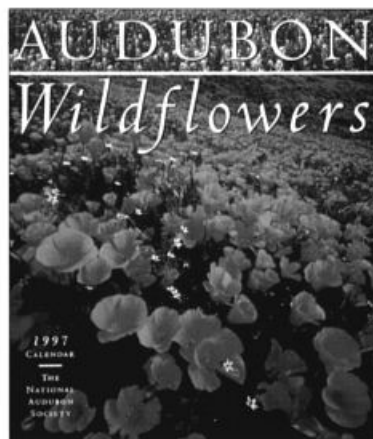
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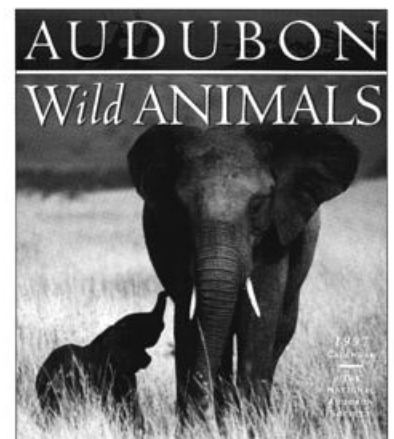
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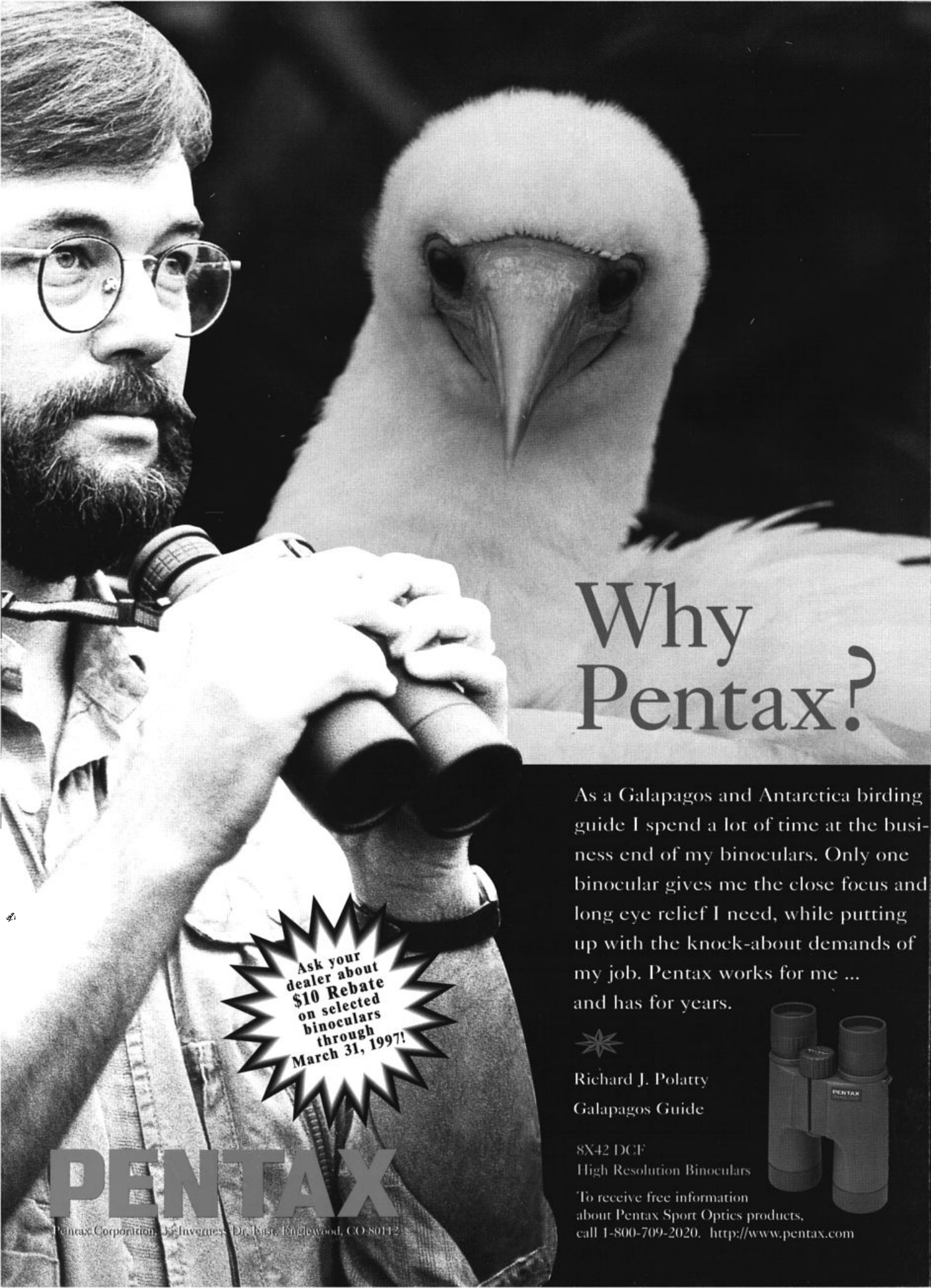
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