

## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Probably the most widely read part of *The Wilson Bulletin* is the section headed "General Notes." Because the subject matter is varied, we are almost certain to find contributions which interest us in one way or another.

Unfortunately our Editor does not receive for this section, in sufficient quantity, the type of material most greatly desired. The majority of manuscripts submitted are anecdotal or pertain to distributional records, often too local to be either of much ornithological significance or of much reader interest. Greatly needed are concise, factual manuscripts which will serve to augment our knowledge of the biology of birds.

Last year (vol. 61, p. 131) I pointed out several gaps in our knowledge of birdlife, namely, length of incubation periods, length of nestling life, daily activity rhythms, clutch size, location of roosting sites, and water requirements. Observations on these aspects of birdlife are admirably suited to "General Notes." In addition, observations on the following problems are equally well suited.

*Predation upon birds.* Our ornithological literature contains abundant suppositions as to the kinds of predators that destroy nests and adult birds, but relatively few observations of the "predator in the act."

*Nest-building.* In the case of many of our commonest birds, we do not know the actual mechanics of the process, the role of the sexes, and the length of time involved.

*Mating displays.* The mating displays of most small birds, especially passerine birds, have been ignored. Because the mating display of a bird such as the Blue Jay is not as showy as that of a peafowl, no attention has been paid to it.

*Parental defense.* Although an extraordinary number of observations have been made on the "injury-feigning" of parent birds, we have few published descriptions of threat-displays, direct attacks, and warning sounds.

*Multiple-broodedness.* We need to know which species regularly rear two or more broods in a season. Determinations should be based on birds which have been marked (*e.g.*, color-banded) so as to be individually recognized.

More "General Notes" based on the type of information suggested above will serve the dual purpose of contributing to knowledge and increasing reader interest.

OLIN SEWALL PETTINGILL, JR.