

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

For the 75th anniversary volume of *The Wilson Bulletin*, I compiled a checklist of the species of birds that had been portrayed on colored plates in our journal through 1962, as well as a list of the artists and photographers whose work had been so reproduced (Wilson Bull., 75:289-294, 1963). Whoever prepares a supplement to this list for our centennial volume in 1988 will have an exciting task. In the volumes from 1963 through 1973, we published fifteen paintings and five photographs in color. Now, through the generous gift of Dr. George Miksch Sutton as announced in the December 1973 issue, we have an endowment that will enable us to publish as many as four colored plates each year.

In my 1963 article I emphasized the high cost of color reproduction and the limited budgets of journals in advocating severe selectivity in choosing paintings or photographs. The fact that Dr. Sutton's endowment has freed us from the financial strictures should not warrant any relaxation of our standards of selectivity. As I wrote in 1963, "[A colored plate] should not be published merely as an attractive picture, but should make some point; it should illustrate something that *needs* illustration. . ." There is now very little justification for our publishing more photographs, much less paintings, of familiar North American birds unless they make some biological point: a little-known plumage stage, for instance, or a display posture. The traditional parent-at-the-nest photograph is, of course, still welcome if the subject is as unfamiliar to most of us (at least on the breeding grounds) as the Smith's Longspur and Stilt Sandpiper, two species that have figured in recent photographic frontispieces.

Especially exciting for both authors and readers is the prospect, now feasible, of *commissioning* colored plates to accompany articles that virtually cry out for such illustration. The frontispiece in this issue is an example; unlike the Blue-winged/Golden-winged Warblers, the Baltimore/Bullock's Orioles, or the Indigo/Lazuli Buntings, the intermediate phenotypes of the Rose-breasted/Black-headed Grosbeaks had never been figured in color. It was obvious to the Editor that Dr. Anderson's paper would be even more valuable if accompanied by a colored plate, so Mr. Sandström was provided with selected specimens from which to paint. Other such commissioned plates are already in prospect.

If readers of *The Wilson Bulletin* have been fortunate enough to obtain really good photographs of little-known species that have seldom (or never) been illustrated in color, they should consider submitting one or more of these as potential frontispiece plates. If the photographer's field experience with the species has been limited, the editor can solicit a brief article to accompany the photograph from an author who knows the bird well. Just such a photograph/article combination will appear later this year in *The Wilson Bulletin*, the subject being the endemic ibis of Madagascar, *Lophotibis cristata*.

I am happy to report that Don R. Eckelberry and Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. have agreed to act as advisors to assist the Editor in finding suitable paintings and photographs, respectively, and in evaluating those submitted for possible publication. We hope that authors, artists and photographers will keep in mind the opportunities to enhance our journal opened up to all of us through Dr. Sutton's devotion to the Wilson Ornithological Society.—KENNETH C. PARKES