

BIRD OBSERVER OF EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

FORMS FIELD STUDIES COMMITTEE

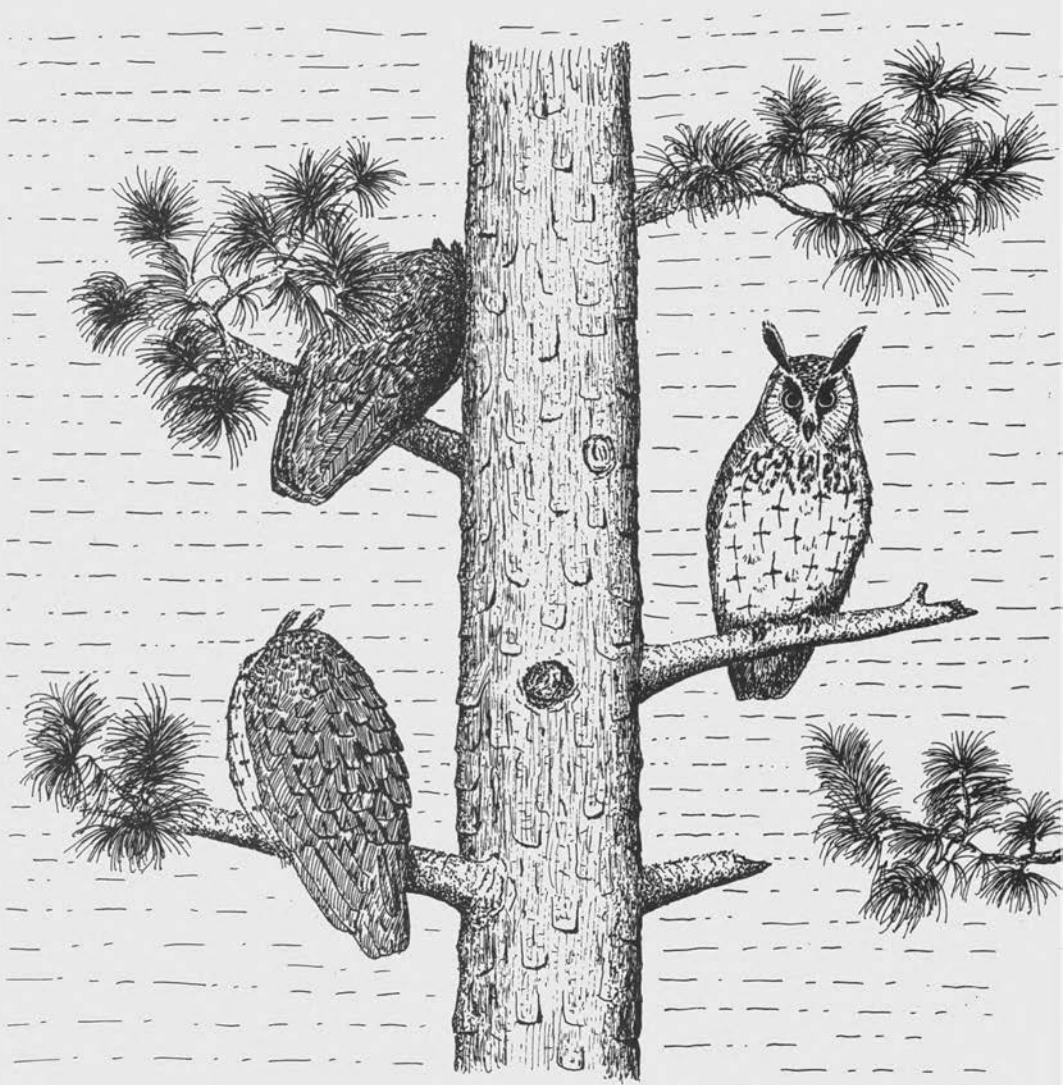
This year BIRD OBSERVER is sponsoring a series of field study projects which will allow active observers to learn more about our Massachusetts birdlife while contributing to worthwhile ornithological research efforts. The studies are being coordinated by a BOEM Field Studies Committee (FSC) which was formed as a result of a BIRD OBSERVER-sponsored meeting of active birders last spring. The Field Studies Committee was asked to address the problem of making BOEM field records more useful with regard to the more common species of birds. The current monthly summaries are of clear value in noting unusual events such as the occurrence of rarities, extreme early or late dates, unusual high counts, or unusual nesting records. But changes in the distribution or relative abundance of the more common species are difficult to deduce from these records. Although many individual birders keep careful notes which could be useful in this regard, their efforts diverge greatly in terms of methodology and recording format. Furthermore, these individual efforts are seldom published in any useful form.

Are amateur birders willing to join together in conducting meaningful data collection efforts? BIRD OBSERVER believes that they are. Participation in organized studies such as the Christmas Bird Counts and the New England Hawk Watch has grown steadily over the years. BOEM has sponsored the Take a Second Look (TASL) series which has conducted a number of surveys focusing on coastal birdlife. Several other efforts have been reported in BOEM such as the spring warbler studies (Andrews and Taylor), the autumn sparrow census (Komar), the lake and pond waterfowl census (Andrews) and the winter raptor survey (Petersen).

The FSC will focus upon those projects for which BOEM will serve as the primary medium for the publication of results. The FSC will attempt to ensure that all such projects are ornithologically useful, well-planned and well-coordinated with other efforts. Each project will have a compiler (or compilers) who will be responsible for defining methodology, directing the study, compiling the data and writing a summary of the results.

Two projects (Screech Owl Survey and Spring Migration Watch) are being organized for this spring. For details, see FSC Announcements on the previous page.

Anyone who would like to suggest additional projects for FSC consideration or would like to assist in the compilation of a project should contact the FSC chairman:
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Three Long-eared Owls on Roost

Illustration by J. W. Andrews