

## MEET OUR COVER ARTIST

**JOHN SILL**, award-winning wildlife artist from North Carolina and a graduate in wildlife biology of North Carolina State University, is also a birdwatcher. When Sill and his wife Cathy came north last December (1987) for an exhibition of his works to benefit Massachusetts Audubon Society (MAS), they arrived early to do some birding. To their great satisfaction, a December day in the north spent in the field with Peter Alden netted these southerners a number of life birds. At a luncheon in his honor the next day, John recalled how he had been "discovered" as a bird artist by the world outside his home state when tour leader Alden strode into his studio a number of years ago in a "flurry of birdwatchers." John also acknowledged the great value of his relationship with James Baird of MAS, a person uniquely qualified both as art expert and ornithologist, who helped John to attain the remarkable degree of biological accuracy that characterizes his bird paintings.

John's watercolors have been acclaimed both for their delicate beauty and precision and for the way the personality of the individual bird or species comes through. His work is now familiar throughout the country through his paintings for the *Bird Identification Calendar*, and he regards his paintings as a way of bringing home the beauty of nature to the viewer, so that those who see his work, though they may never see the birds he so vibrantly depicts, will be positively oriented toward conservation of the natural world.

John now paints exclusively in transparent watercolor and received his training in that medium from his father Charles Sill, a well-known artist and teacher in the South. John and wife Cathy live in Franklin, North Carolina, where his work is displayed in the family gallery. The handsome Eastern Kingbird on our April 1988 cover was painted for *The Bird Identification Calendar*, published each year by the Stephen Greene Press (15 Muzzey Street, Lexington, MA 02173). John Sill and the Stephen Greene Press generously gave *Bird Observer* permission to print this illustration in black and white.

Dorothy R. Arvidson