

EDITOR'S PAGE

Letters to the Editor

Sir:

I was delighted to see in the July-August issue of Bird Observer the impressively long roster of individuals who maintained daily watches at specific locations to assess last spring's migration. That such data has "remarkable similarity" is especially encouraging. This result also nicely supports the correlation Bob Stymeist found in 1975 (BOEM, 3, 4, 129) for data taken at Mt. Auburn, Manomet Bird Observatory, and Weston. Clearly, day-to-day efforts by scattered individuals can yield a consistent picture of migration.

Yet, which method of counting birds is best? Will one technique serve for both migrants and for residents? Do inland techniques work along the coast--or at sea? Perhaps the jury ought to stay out for a year or so, permitting the compilers to assess various methods as they are tried by different observers. Perhaps the only guiding precept should be that the technique be capable of yielding quantitatively comparable results from year to year.

These questions of methodology are not trivial. Not only do they hint at good science, they may well offer important alternatives for birders in the near future. As gas becomes more expensive (or something worse), it is certain that more birders will chose to survey areas close to home or convenient on the way to work.

Yet, birders do not have to focus on numbers alone. For a variety of projects that can be conducted on a small plot or a particular species, I recommend Joseph Hickey's A Guide to Bird Watching, first published in 1943. Now generally forgotten, this classic treasure house of ideas is still amazingly relevant and important today.

Leif J. Robinson  
Wellesley

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The Greater Boston Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 18, 1977. This annual event is sponsored by the National Audubon Society, as well as 20 other counts within Massachusetts. If you are interested in participating in the Greater Boston Count, please contact: Robert H. Stymeist, 46 Beaver Street, Waltham, Mass. 02154.

FOR SALE: L. L. Bean Rubber Moccasins, size 10D. Leather is full grain, elk-tanned cowhide. The featherweight rubber bottoms are light and unusually flexible. Waterproof and ozone resistant they have durable crepe soles and treads. Great for birding Monomoy or walking through wet grassy fields for Short-billed Marsh Wrens. Only used once. Current Bean Fall Catalog price is \$21.00, will sell for \$16.00. Contact Bob Stymeist, 46 Beaver Street, Waltham, Mass. 02154