

Editorial: Anticipation

There are birdwatchers who thoroughly enjoy the literature of ornithology — who, when they cannot be afield, get nearly as much satisfaction from reading about birds. There are birdwatchers who look forward to some publications almost as much as to the spring migration. We (the editors) must admit to being among this happy company of addicts: hooked on words as well as birds, and always ready for the next “wave” of either.

Some publications we look forward to for the sheer pleasure of reading: thus we await any new bird-related essays from such gifted writers as Louis Halle or George Sutton. Some reference works we anticipate for the satisfaction of having accurate information in accessible form: thus we await, for example, Volume 3 of *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*, which will cover in massive detail most of our shorebird, gull and tern species. And some publications we enjoy for the agreeable surprise of seeing what they will contain: thus we await, every month, the arrival of our favorite bird journals.

When we first initiated *Continental Birdlife*, we wondered whether knowing in advance what we were going to publish would detract from our enjoyment of it. Happily, this proves not to be the case. The enjoyment just lasts longer. There is keen excitement each time a new manuscript comes in; pleasure, too, of a special kind, in seeing each article through the editing and printing process. And there is still anticipation, of a different sort, as we look forward (vicariously) to the enjoyment that our readers will derive (hopefully) from each issue.

So far this journal has contained, perhaps, an alarmingly high proportion of material written by the editors . . . but we now look forward to publishing a number of fine papers written by others. One of the world's leading museum ornithologists recently sent a discussion of Black-throated Blue Warbler plumages; it will appear in our next issue. One of the top fieldmen in the Southwest is taking time out from his migration studies to work up for us an article on vireo identification. For Neotropical buffs, we have an upcoming update on recent additions to the Suriname bird list. Other articles in press or in preparation will deal with various waterbirds in the interior Northwest, nesting of Berylline Hummingbirds in Arizona, plumage sequences in gulls, Gyrfalcon records in the Midwest, and other subjects.

Also “in the works” now is our most ambitious project to date: a comprehensive, thoroughly illustrated article on field identification of all the North American pipits (accidentals included). Sometimes secretive in habits, often similar and subtle in pattern, never adequately treated in field guides, the pipits can provide challenges or headaches for the keen field observer. Our article should cast a definitive light on the subject and encourage more birders to look for out-of-range individuals. The authors of this work are Jon Dunn of Encino, California, already well-known for his authoritative writings on field identification, and Theodore G. Tobish of Fairbanks, a talented young Alaskan ornithologist with a growing reputation for skill in the field. We have been working with the authors on this project since last summer: the thoroughness and depth of their research has been impressive. We doubt that anyone else in North America could treat the pipit identification problem as effectively as they will.