

APPENDIX II

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP FOR THE REVISION OF CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT PROCEDURES

ROBERT S. ARBIB, JR.¹ AND CARL E. BOCK²

As a sequel to the paper "The Christmas Bird Count: constructing an 'Ideal Model,'" a workshop was held during the symposium. Robert S. Arbib, Jr., chaired the workshop. Approximately 15 participants were present, and several others submitted comments and proposals subsequent to the meeting. Present or otherwise participating were C. E. Bock, D. Bystrak, B. Carlson, H. Cogswell, S. R. Drennan, D. James, D. Johnson, H. Kale, Jr., V. Kleen, R. LeValley, C. S. Robbins, K. Smith, W. Tucker, R. Tweit, W. Weber and S. Wilbur.

Discussions centered around the recommendations proposed in the paper. Among the topics of discussion, in an unstructured format, were: Would the proposed changes in procedure and reporting practice invalidate or antiquate data published in prior years? Were there alternate and more accurate ways by which to evaluate observer reliability? Could a standard be devised for the separate reporting of after-dark "owling" hours, and for bird feeder-watcher

hours? What disposition is made of the original documentation of unusual observations? Would it not be useful to offer it for storage within the states in which they were recorded? Count costs, publishing costs, and participant fee structures were considered. It was agreed that various improved forms of observer training would be useful, such as club programs with slide quizzes on the estimation of flock numbers, difficult identifications, and even quizzes on difficult call notes.

The Chairman expressed hope that those present and other interested persons form a Christmas Bird Count Advisory Committee to the National Audubon Society to consider all such ways of refining and improving CBC data without forsaking the popular attractions that encourage participation, and to make further proposals concerning all aspects of the CBC. It was agreed that such a committee be formed, and that the persons present and those subsequently expressing interest would be invited to join. The Chairman expressed the hope that the form of an experimental "Ideal Model" be ready for the 1981-82 season, and that this be tested in a selected sample of counts.

It was understood by the participants that the committee would be, for the present, advisory only.

¹ National Audubon Society, 950 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022.

² Department of Environmental Population and Organismic Biology, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309.