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New York, NY 10017. *PRBO*, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA 94970. *RR*, Roadrunner Nature Tours, 3820 Hanover, Dallas, TX 75225. *TOC*, The Oceanic Society, Building 240, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123. *VENT*, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, 1603 West Clay, Houston, TX 77019. *WNT*, World Nature Tours, Inc., P.O. Box 693, Woodmor Sta., Silver Springs, MD 20901 N.A. = Not available.

The following tour sponsors, with multiple listings during this period, are not represented on the calendar above: Ornitholidays, 44 Aldwyck Rd., Bognor Regis, Sussex, England (worldwide), Ontario Nature Tours, 511-71 Thorncliffe Park Drive, Toronto, Ontario, M4H, 1L3; (Canada, worldwide), and Wilderness Southeast, Inc., Route 3, Box 619, Savannah, GA 31406 (Southeast, Central America).

The Last Word

This is the second issue of *American Birds* in succession that has been slimmer than usual, with the major emphasis on the detailed population studies of representative tracts of land that we call Winter Bird-Population Studies and Breeding Bird Censuses. We hasten to assure our readers, particularly new subscribers, that these issues are not typical of what they will find in our pages in the months to come.

There are many ornithologists, particularly those who are primarily ecologists concerned with populations and the environments that sustain them, who believe that these studies are the most important of all the field work that we publish. They point to the increasing use of such studies in environmental impact statements, and the steady growth in numbers of institutions and of census-takers who are involved with this work. It is by means of such studies that we are beginning to understand where our continent's bird populations are, and more importantly, why.

There is no doubt, however, that a great majority of our readers consider that the issues featuring these studies are the least readable issues of the year. We suspect that numbers of readers simply will not make the (not inconsiderable) effort it takes to pore over page after page of detailed floristic analyses, long lists of bird species mealed

with figures, and a format so standardized as to be almost hypnotic. We have been told that studies such as these — no matter how valuable — are of such limited general interest that they should be published in much smaller editions — somewhere else.

Be that as it may — for this year at least we are continuing publication: this is the fortieth anniversary of the Breeding Bird Census. It will reward the serious (and determined) reader with insights not easily gained anywhere else. What kind of bird associations breed in a weedy field in Colorado (Censuses 104-7), or a Maple Thicket in Utah (Census 114), or a Mixed Hardwood Forest in Alabama (Census 50), or in a residential neighborhood in Ontario (Census 167)? How life-supportive is an Urban Park in California (Census 133) as compared to an Alaskan tundra (Censuses 141-2), or a marsh in the Florida Everglades (Census 144)? Each of the 170 censuses printed here tell us something not only about habitats, but the species that inhabit them.

Now that these two catch-up issues (December, 1976, and January, 1977) are behind us, *American Birds* will begin to give evidence of the promised improvement in content and appearance promised earlier. Our next, March issue, will assuredly be the finest we have yet published, and those that

follow will be evidence of continued effort in the same direction.

It is, incidentally, with great pride that we present the three part article by Whitcomb *et al.*, that is featured in this issue. We have worked with the authors for more than a year in preparing it for publication, and its length alone is evidence that we feel it to be a most important study. With so much emphasis today on the acquisition and protection of tracts of forest for refuges and sanctuaries, public and private, it is vital to know exactly what makes a tract of land viable, how large it must be, and where it must be located in order to maintain its breeding population. The warning herein that we are silently losing an important share of our forest-interior, migratory insectivores cannot be overemphasized. If you skipped over it, go back and read it carefully.

Please note. About half the Christmas Bird Count compilers who received acknowledgment

cards were given an incorrect count period for the coming years. The correct dates are **December 17, 1977 - January 2, 1978**, not January 1, as they were informed. The extra day is a Monday which will undoubtedly be widely taken as a holiday. The total count period is of 17 days.

We regret most sincerely the current rise in subscription rates, which we predicted and strove valiantly to avoid for many months. We are confident that our readers will feel that an improved magazine will be well worth the added \$2, which is about the price of three gallons of gasoline. The higher rates for Canadian and foreign subscriptions are entirely the result of a postage differential: we have been losing money on both these categories for several years. Please note that two-year subscriptions are now reinstated, and represent a certain saving to us and to the subscriber.

— The Editor

RUSSIA

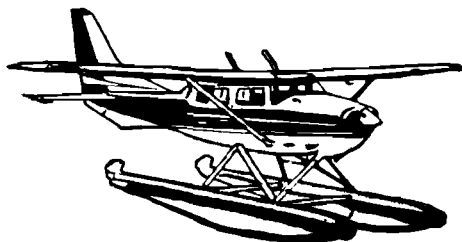
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