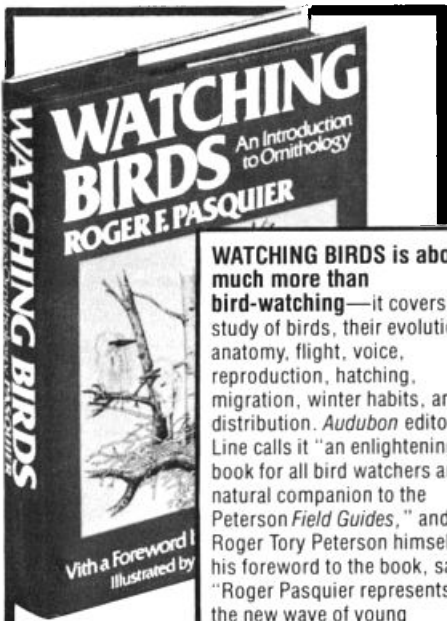


William E. Southern, Department of Biological Sciences, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115. Data will be gathered for a 2-year period beginning September 1, 1977.

For each observation, please provide the following information: list of species present, approximate number of each species, precise locality description, dates observed, any information about causes for concentrations (e.g. sanitary landfill operation), and any details about the frequency of such concentrations in the respective areas. Information is sought from inland as well as coastal localities. Thank you for your cooperation.

### Martin Bibliography

A comprehensive bibliography of the North and South American martins (*Progne* spp.) is currently in preparation. It will include all papers dealing solely or partly with martins, except local annotated checklists. Authors wishing to have material included should send an abstract or reprint to Charles R. Brown, Box 1309, Austin College, Sherman, Texas 75090.



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## The Last Word

Recently, *American Birds* has published articles which might not have been published in other journals, because they are more speculative in their approach than reportorial. Banks' recent paper (*Am. Birds* 31:127) on possible causes of the near extinction of the Eskimo Curlew was one such piece; it argued a theory that cannot be proved at this late date, but we found it original and stimulating, and worthy of dissemination through our pages. Another paper that might be included in this category is Fretwell's discussion of Dickcissel population problems in this issue. We are well aware that from a strictly scientific viewpoint, Fretwell's theories are based on less than ideal (some would say less than adequate) statistics. Another editor might have said "Go back and do some more measuring before you resubmit this paper." But Fretwell is an original and imaginative theorist, and we believe that even if he is eventually proved (or proves himself) mistaken, his theory is interesting and deserves exposure. Perhaps, hopefully, it will result in some very interesting controversy.

\* \* \* \*

Letters received from readers following the March and May issues were extravagant in their praise of our effort to upgrade the



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content and appearance of *American Birds*. Such dissent as was expressed was mainly directed at the recent increase in subscription and single copy rates (a few), and at the small size of type now used in the seasonal regional reports (more than a few). We regret both these recent moves; from the looks of our current costs and income, we doubt that much can be done about the rates. As for the smaller type size, we agree with those of you who said it is not only difficult to read, but also discourages full readership, and is derogatory of this most important content. We will return to a more readable type size in the next issue. Let it be noted that the seasonal report in this issue is 79 pages in length, even with strict word quotas imposed on Regional Editors who are increasingly inundated with material, and with some good photographs omitted.

\* \* \* \*

For some years now, as the year-end balance sheet of *American Birds* finances came closer and closer to breaking even, we have looked upon a subscription goal of 15,000 as a point at which we might move from red ink to black. Our recent May issue, in fact, had a print order of 14,600, although not every copy represented a paid subscriber (we have a small complimentary list, we have considerable in-house distribution, and we keep several hundred copies in an inventory for future requests). But with all our costs continually escalating—most of them beyond our control—the break-even point seems as elusive as ever. Everything we pay for: rent, overhead, telephones, supplies, typography, artwork, printing, mailing, postage and the rest, seem on a never-ending rise that is, of course, part of a worldwide inflation. We thought the \$8 subscription price was fair; we liked the \$6 price even better. We thought the \$1 participation fee for Christmas Bird Counts would last forever. It hasn't, and we hate it. But this year's July issue was a 528-page, 500,000 word book, and it too will not break even. There is an alternative, obviously, and that would be to return to the *Audubon Field Notes* format of ten years ago, with about 675 pages a year, no articles, no features, no color. We don't believe for a moment that our present readership would settle for this, and we have no intention of retrogressing in this way.—R.A

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP  
MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION  
(Act of August 12, 1970, Section 3685, Title 39,  
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(signed) Robert S. Arbib, Jr., Editor