

# Accurate recording of seabird positions at sea

by Richard A. Rowlett

**B**IRDERS SEEKING PELAGICS are encouraged to obtain the precise positions of their sightings and to express these in latitude and longitude (geographic coordinates); this is especially important for unusual species, feeding activity, areas of fishing, etc. Analyses of various biological and hydrographic features would make corresponding analysis of seabird distribution more interpretable.

Positions may be readily obtained from the captain of the vessel or by yourself, from an electronic instrument known as a loran (*L*ong *R*ange Navigation) receiver which is standard equipment on all fishing and party boats. Radio pulses are sent at synchronized intervals from stations on the mainland. The difference in time of arrival of the pulses from two stations is measured electronically in microseconds and recorded on modern receivers in digital form as two alternating sets of numbers. Older receivers require adjustment of dials to match the pulses, which appear as waves on an oscilloscope; this requires the time of the captain and should be requested with discretion.

**T**HESE PULSES ARE TRANSMITTED in two forms, Loran-A and Loran-C. To get the "loran fix," copy the two alternating sets of numbers that appear on the receiver, and match them with the intersecting Loran "A" or "C" lines printed on standard navigational charts prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The latitude and longitude can then be determined from the chart. It is not difficult, but to eliminate the possibility of error, you should enlist the aid of the captain to help you until you gain confidence. It is important to know which Loran pulses you are receiving, and to correspond them to the proper navigational chart!

It only takes one or two seconds to jot down the Loran coordinates in a field notebook. The latitude and longitude can be determined later when there is more time and less ship movement. Accurate record keeping will certainly enhance the value of observations made at sea.

Appreciation is extended to Chandler S. Robbins for his helpful critique of this note.  
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## Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) extends its breeding range into upper Eastern Tennessee

by Fred J. Alsop, III

**O**N JUNE 23, 1973 I flushed an adult Savannah Sparrow from a dry hayfield in Hawkins County, Tennessee, as I searched the field for nests of the Grasshopper Sparrow. Savannah Sparrows have the status of migrant and winter visitor in this state and I was most surprised to find the species still present on this late date. Subsequent trips to the field also produced a single bird on June 24th-28th. On the 29th, three adult Savannahs were flushed and observed from close range as they perched on a bordering fence. As I walked through the field

on July 2 a Savannah Sparrow flew from the grasses almost from beneath my feet. A short search produced the nest containing three eggs. I returned to the nest on July 7 and three nestlings two to three days old were present. A blind was set up and the birds were photographed as they were fed by a single parent over a two-day period. The young birds were banded on July 10 by Tom Bowman with U.S.F. & W.S. bands #56-360 25, 26, and 27. On July 17 the nest was empty and the adult chipped excitedly at me as I searched near it for