



## The Blue List for 1980

*A new accounting of the annual "early warning list" of declining, threatened, or vulnerable species*

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*Barn Owl — one of the more controversial Blue List species (see p. 833). Young at nest site. Photo/William J. Bolte.*

WHEN, IN THE DECEMBER, 1971 issue of *American Birds*, we announced the first "Blue List," there was no list anywhere of birds species that were in trouble apart from the Endangered Species List. Our idea was to interest observers and government agencies in birds in straits not as dire as those on the Endangered List, but species "recently or currently giving indications of non-cyclical population declines or range contractions, either locally or widespread." We called it an "early warning list" and asked our readers to make special efforts to monitor the welfare of the listed species. Over the years we have expanded the definition of what is a true Blue List species (see *American Birds* 32:405-6, May 1978). But what is truly gratifying is that the Blue List idea has been adopted or adapted by concerned agencies both at Federal and state levels, and now we

have a second category — that of "Threatened" added to the original "Endangered."

This year a completely new procedure was followed for the determination of the Blue List, with some interesting results. In prior years, observers were asked to review the previous year's list, expressing their views as to which species should be deleted and which retained; in addition they were asked to nominate new species to the list. This system resulted in a Blue List that changed relatively little from year to year, as a valid list should. But it was open to the criticism that the presence of the list itself is a factor that might bias the returns, largely limiting the observers' consideration to those species already listed.

This year we started without any list whatsoever. Observers were given a blank sheet of paper, on which to make

their nominations, and they were asked further to evaluate their decisions by listing the factors that supported their nominations. Two predictions could be made about such a procedure. First, that there would be a substantial increase in the number of species nominated, since many observers, correctly reporting on their "home" regions, would be nominating species with strictly local problems and second, that some species deserving of Blue-listing would be ignored or forgotten without some printed reminder. Both of these predictions were fulfilled: a total of 297 species was nominated for the list, and several obvious and undeniably qualified candidates were virtually ignored.

This year, confounding another prediction, we did *not* receive an overwhelming number of ballots, although we received more than ever before. In

part this must be because the form this year required considerable original thinking, it was not simply a checkoff, as in previous years. Several readers complained that asking respondents for a history of 10-year experience in one area was too stringent a restriction; perhaps so. But even though the quantity of returns failed our expectations, the *quality* this year was better than ever, with many reports coming from Regional Editors, Contributing Editors, and others of those whose names are boldfaced in our regional reports; these people above all, we feel, are the real experts on what is happening in their Regions. While the Blue List has been criticized for being based on subjective analysis rather than gathered statistics (actually, it is based on both), it is subjective analysis based on thousands of hours afield by experts, and when we find near unanimity of viewpoint from scores of widespread observers answering only to their own knowledge, as with the Eastern Bluebird, we feel that we are on solid ground indeed to Blue-list the species.

**I**N THE END, the Blue List this year comes to 73 species or races. Of these 55 are repeats from last year's Blue List, the others new, or reinstated. Two species we deemed "ignored or forgotten," were carried over, unsupported this year, from last year's list.

A few final thoughts. The idea that 297 species were nominated by at least one respondent is not to be discarded out of hand. It seems to us that, if anything, the Blue List errs on the side of conservatism. A strong case can be made, we feel certain, that many, many species that are not now Blue-listed have declined or are in fact slowly declining in number as a result of habitat loss or degradation, or other causes as obvious as the ravaging of the Amazonian rainforest or as subtle as the effect of acid rain. Doug Kibbe makes the point about one species, nominated this year by no one.

"For example, the Northern Parula was originally widespread and relatively common as a breeder in the mid-Atlantic and northeastern states. Since the advent of acid rain, *Usnea* lichens have been virtually exterminated over broad areas of the parula's original range and the birds have been nearly extirpated as well . . . they seem unable to adapt to other materials on the East Coast. Needless to say, there are probably 40-50 other species once common in the Northeast which have declined in the face of urbanization. Should these species be listed also?"

This year's list is divided into three

parts. The first list, of 53 species, is the list composed of widespread species, such as Loggerhead Shrike, with widespread support from respondents. These are the most obvious candidates of all. The second list, of 20 species, is of those species of more limited range, but strongly supported within that range, such as Roseate Tern. The third, Marginal list, is a catch-all of species that may have been widely supported, such as White-breasted Nuthatch, but by too few respondents, or were simply not strongly enough supported in their more restricted ranges, such as Band-tailed Pigeon. Some or all of these species undoubtedly deserve Blue-listing, but we simply lack the evidence. The total on all three lists is an unplanned 100 species.

One thing is certain: no reader will agree to this list in its entirety. We will receive outraged letters advising us of the local, or regional abundance of one or more listed species, and an equal number advising us of missing candidates. The careful reader will find some apparent contradictions in this issue's seasonal reports; they emphasize the danger in sweeping generalities.

Finally, we want to thank the 210+ respondents whose views, including those of at least 50 additional observers, resulted in what we consider our most solid, defensible list. So many thoughtful, quotable comments were received, along with much documentary evidence, that it is a cause of great regret that we cannot publish a wider selection.

## THE BLUE LIST

### I. Widespread species with widespread support

**1. Common Loon.** Strongly supported for listing in nine reporting regions, mainly from coastal areas but also from the Northern Rocky Mountain - Intermountain Region. Cited reasons for decline include recreational disturbance of nest site lakes, but a possible factor recently revealed is the acid rain that has sterilized hundreds of northeastern lakes. Newly restored to the list.

**2. Red-necked Grebe.** Nine widespread regions across the continent, from the Northeastern Maritime to the Southern Pacific Coast share the view that this never-abundant species is declining in numbers, for reasons as yet obscure. "Destruction of nests by aqua-

planes in many areas of Canada, the Yukon and Alaska." — F. R. Tainter, Calif. In 1979, 81% of those responding favored retention on the list.

**3. Double-crested Cormorant.** In recent years this species has been a borderline case — showing continued declines in some areas, and modest-to-good gains elsewhere. Although much support for listing came from the Middlewestern Prairie Region, a contrary opinion was registered by the Regional Editor for the Western Great Lakes. ". . . doing very well currently. Numbers are up and increasing each year. Most significantly, breeding is up!" — D. D. Tessen, Ill.

**4. Great Blue Heron.** Its addition to the list this year will come as a shock to many in parts of the continent where there has been no noticeable decline, but in ten regions continent-wide has come considerable sentiment for listing. A typical response was ". . . a small colony in Gloucester County was doomed by a beaverdam. Another colony of 500 nests in pines was destroyed in 1979 when the pines were cut." — M. L. Wass., Va. Pesticides and breeding disruptions were often cited.

**5. Black-crowned Night Heron.** Retained on the list again this year, adding one more supporting region, which now totals 13. Habitat destruction, pesticides, and disturbance to nest sites are given as causes for decline. ". . . can hardly be found at all in Alabama." — E. & R. Reid, Jr., Ala. "Dennis Coskren, a competent birder, told me he had not seen one all year." — A. Stamm, Ky. A total of 41 ballots listed this species.

**6. Least Bittern.** Added to the list last year on the basis of support from five regions, this increasingly rare species now is supported for listing by 12 regions from coast to coast. Habitat loss and disturbance are cited as causes. "This species has nearly disappeared as a breeding or wintering species in northern California, undoubtedly due to habitat loss in the Central Valley. Sightings have become almost nonexistent in the last ten years." — D. DeSante, Calif.

**7. American Bittern.** This species won an even stronger endorsement for continuation on the Blue List for 1980. Response was continent-wide, with draining of marshes, disturbance, pesticides, and recent hard winters in the

eastern half of the continent as contributing factors to the decline. Some respondents stressed that although the species is difficult to monitor, the decline was obvious. It actually ranked 7th on our Top 20 list, with 15 regions supporting listing.

**8. Black Duck.** This is a species about which it may be argued that with many thousands shot every year, and many other thousands surviving, it has not yet reached Blue List stage. But in eight regions, observers believe that habitat loss and a gradual genetic swamping through hybridization with the Mallard are causing a gradual decline. Must be closely monitored.

**9. Canvasback.** We have strong misgivings about including all waterfowl species, because they are subject to intensive management efforts and censusing, and are subject to strong fluctuations in abundance. Last year the sentiment for inclusion of Canvasback actually increased in spite of signs of improvement in some areas, but this year observers in no fewer than eleven regions want the species on the list. Their views cannot be ignored.

**10. Turkey Vulture.** An example of a species that is still common, perhaps abundant, in certain portions of its range, but declining elsewhere to such an extent that eight of our reporting regions listed it. It is considered a Threatened Species in at least four states: North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Only in the Northeast, where its range seems to be expanding, is there no evidence of decline. "Cattlemen have better disease control, predator numbers are down, giving vultures fewer carcasses." — R. A. Fisher, Jr., N. Mex. Pesticide residues were also mentioned. Similar sentiments, to a lesser degree, were cited in four regions for Black Vulture.

**11. Sharp-shinned Hawk.** Continued on the list, although the thousands reported on hawk watch surveys in recent migration seasons have been impressive. Apparently, in at least 12 of our regions, observers consider this species threatened. Ontario has the species on its Endangered List, while Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Montana, and Georgia list it as Threatened. "Few and far between . . . used to nest in the county, but no longer found." — R. A. Fisher, Jr., N. Mex.

**12. Cooper's Hawk.** Ranks first in the entire list for the support received, with all but one or two regions agreeing on listing. Some uncertainty seems to be evident as to reasons for the decline, with many respondents listing pesticides and disturbance, and many others checking "unknown." On the Threatened List of at least five states. In some areas it seems to be in the process of being supplanted by the larger, more aggressive Goshawk.

**13. Red-shouldered Hawk.** Nominated for continuation on the Blue List by reporters in eleven regions, with over 50 respondents endorsing that view. An opposing minority viewpoint comes from A. Wormington, Ontario, ". . . although extirpated (almost) from farming areas of southern Ontario . . . large numbers at spring hawk lookouts indicate a healthy population in the north, where vast expanses of undisturbed habitat exist." But ". . . slow decline, losing out to Red-tailed Hawk." — H. LeGrand & S. A. Gauthreaux, Jr., S.C. Tied with Upland Sandpiper for 5th place in the Top 20.

**14. Swainson's Hawk.** Almost every region within the normal range of the species supports listing of this declining raptor. ". . . overgrazing of grasslands," — F. Tainter, Calif. "Now reduced to 1-2 breeding pairs in southern California where formerly relatively common summer visitor. Numbers on migration far below those of former years." — G. McCaskie, Calif.

**15. Ferruginous Hawk.** Strongly recommended for continuance on the list, throughout its normal range. ". . . certainly declined substantially in Washington, and increasingly restricted to a small area of the state. Habitat loss, particularly, the replacement of native ecosystems by farmland, may be one of the main reasons . . . definitely in trouble . . . continuing monitoring needed." — W. C. Weber, B.C.

**16. Marsh Hawk.** In the top ten for total regions and total respondents' nominations (actually fourth) with fifteen regions supporting retention on the list. As we reported last year, this is a habitat-sensitive species, and its habitat is diminishing. On the Threatened Lists of Mississippi, Tennessee, Massachusetts, Kentucky, and Montana. "Definitely declining as a breeding bird . . ." — G. McCaskie, Calif. "Even more alarming is its real decline as a wintering bird,

suggesting that northern populations are also in trouble." — D. DeSante, Calif

**17. Osprey.** While signs are increasing every year that this species is making an arduous but steady comeback, it was nominated for Blue-listing in thirteen of our reporting regions, and is listed as Threatened or Endangered in at least eight states. Happily, perhaps, it is down to 14th (tied) on our most-threatened list.

**18. Prairie Falcon.** Retained on the basis of support from six regions of a possible nine. ". . . has probably declined somewhat but decline is far less precipitous than in the Peregrine. Pesticides less of a problem, because Prairie Falcons take mammals as well as birds. Disturbance around nest sites may be a factor." — W. C. Weber, B.C. Listed as Threatened in Washington, Texas, Montana.

**19. American Kestrel.** In ten different regions of the continent, the American Kestrel is reported to be in trouble. As previously noted, the race *F.s. paulus* of Florida is considered to be of especial concern, but throughout the East and South a rather pronounced and prolonged population decline is being witnessed.

**20. Merlin.** Retained on the list, with a near high of 16 regions nominating it, this falcon just makes the "Top 20" in observer nomination totals.

**21. Bobwhite.** A surprisingly high total of eight regions and many respondents nominated this gamebird, known to be highly cyclical in abundance. Main reason cited was two recent severe winters, which decimated more northerly birds. It is questionable whether species which are frequently stocked and otherwise managed should be Blue-listed, but the species is currently suffering a major decline almost throughout its range, the Southeast excepted.

**22. King Rail.** Ten regions, and more than a score of respondents suggest continuing this species on the list. While no direct comments are noted, destruction of habitat is blamed for the steady decline of this and many other inhabitants of the freshwater marsh. On the Endangered List for Texas and Ontario. Other rails nominated with less support included Virginia, Sora, Yellow, and Black.

**23. Piping Plover.** A species of great concern throughout its range and nominated by observers in nine regions. "... gradual decline since the 1930s, virtually disappeared as nester." — S. Robbins, Wis Habitat destruction and disturbance by man are the principal causes listed.

**24. Snowy Plover.** Beset by the same problems as are harassing the Piping, Snowy was selected for listing in eight regions, including both races of the species. On the Washington State Threatened list

**25. Upland Sandpiper.** A true Blue List species, fifth (tied) highest vote-getter of all species. The situation with this species seems increasingly critical, a deterioration even from last year, when 92% of all respondents favored retention on the list. It is now on the Ontario Endangered List, but in equally precarious circumstance in at least eleven regions. "... almost gone as breeders because of loss of habitat in northwestern Ohio." — H. W. Hintz, Ohio. "... can be considered critically endangered in this region [Northern Rockies-Intermountain]." — W. C. Weber, B.C.

**26. Common Tern.** In its second year in the Blue List, with nine concerned regions supporting retention, and now in 17th place on our "worst cases" list. Habitat destruction or degradation, nesting disturbance, predation by gulls, etc., all mentioned as causes.

**27. Least Tern.** The plight of the Least Tern in much of its normal North American range is well known. Respondents in 12 regions placed it 13th on our list for Blue List support, and these regions cover a continent's width. "Drastic decline in last three years," — C. R. Brown, Texas. "Continues in very low numbers in coastal California. Severely threatened." — D. DeSante, Calif.

**28. Black Tern.** Added to the list last year on recommendations from three regions, but this year, without prompting, a total of seven regions support listing, four in the East, two in the Midwest, and the Middle Pacific Coast. Habitat loss and nesting disturbance, as expected, are blamed. "Fast vanishing as a breeding bird in the Central Valley." — D. DeSante, Calif. Habitat destruction the problem.

**29. Yellow-billed Cuckoo.** Twelve regions and numerous voices nominate this cuckoo for a repeat appearance on the Blue List. "Nearly gone as a breeding bird in the Central Valley. Loss of riparian forests the reason." — D. DeSante, Calif. "... now rare," — F. Tainter, Calif.

**30. Barn Owl.** Although there seems some controversy about the true status of this species, observers in ten regions continent-wide nominated it for continued listing. Research in northern New Jersey by Leonard Soucy seems to indicate that site scarcity is the limiting factor; where sites are available or prepared, the owls adopt them with alacrity. The true status of the Barn Owl is probably still little known. "... numbers continue unusually low." — A. Stamm, Ky. "Declining." — R. Stallcup, Calif.

**31. Burrowing Owl.** No change in status. Eight regions favor listing, which represent the views in most of the species' normal range. The gradual decline, not always obvious everywhere, seems related, once again, to habitat destruction. In the Great Plains area, shooting of prairie dogs with resultant prey (and nest hole) shortage is reported to be a factor.

**32. Long-eared Owl.** Tentatively added to the list on the basis of nominations from eight regions. The regions include five eastern, one midwestern, and three western, with Ontario the most strongly in favor.

**33. Short-eared Owl.** Only three species garnered more regional support for Blue-listing than this but it was only 16th for the number of total votes. Habitat loss is the reason most often blamed for the obvious decline. "Continues to decrease as a wintering bird in California and virtually gone as a breeding species. Much like the Marsh Hawk but even more seriously threatened." — D. DeSante, Calif.

**34. Whip-poor-will.** A surprising newcomer to the list, but supported for inclusion in seven regions, throughout its eastern continent range, with 21 individual nominations. The reasons for its decline are obscure to most respondents.

**35. Common Nighthawk.** A repeater from last year's list, showing a decline, according to our observers, from the

Northeastern Maritime to the Middle Pacific Coast. Nineteenth on our most-threatened list, nighthawk support has gone from none to six to eleven regions in three years. "A definite decline in local nesters, but fall migrants still in good numbers," — H. W. Connor, Ohio. "At Lake Tahoe I found 4 birds per 5 miles where I recorded 12-20 in the early 1960s. The same seems true all along the Great Basin east of the Sierras." — M. L. Mans, Calif. "Doing very poorly in southern Ontario cities." — R. Curry, Ont.

**36. Ruby-throated Hummingbird.** Support for inclusion on the list has gone in three years from three, to seven, to nine regions. Most respondents cannot assign a specific cause for the present scarcity, but several venture that pesticides may be blamed for the problem. Surely, in the East, it is absent as a breeding bird from hundreds of thousands of sites that would appear to be ideal nesting habitat.

**37. Red-headed Woodpecker.** A new high of 13 regions supports the continuance of this species on the list. In rank, it is tied for fourteenth on our Top 20 widespread-range declining species. A relatively recent factor that will affect all hole nesters is "... the greatly intensified effort directed at the harvesting of firewood. In some forests dead trees are disappearing at a rate far in excess of that at which they can be replenished." — R. P. Yunich, N.Y.

**38. Hairy Woodpecker.** Ten regions support Blue-listing this still not uncommon (in parts of its range) woodpecker. The support is continent-wide. "Main reason is the destruction of dead trees in our area for firewood." — S. Sturts, Ida But the decline of this species and that of the Red-headed were noted before the recent fuel-cost rises, so there may be more to it than that. Should be closely monitored. Dissenting voice from upstate New York: "Status locally is up, up, up!" — D. B. Freeland.

**39. Eastern Phoebe.** Added to the list this year on the basis of support from seven regions all the way across the north-east half of the continent, excepting for the New England and the Atlantic Provinces, from Hudson-Delaware and Ontario to the Western Great Lakes. No opinions are expressed as to cause. The prairie regions see no threat.

**40. Willow Flycatcher.** A new addition on the basis of earnest pleas from five regions, Ontario, Southwest, Northern, Middle, and Southern Pacific Coasts. No fewer than 16 respondents noted this trend. "Nearly extirpated as a breeding species in Southern California (one nesting pair located in 1979), whereas formerly it was considered relatively common." — G. McCaskie, Calif. Loss of habitat and cowbird parasitism are blamed.

**41. Purple Martin.** Number 12 on our Top 20 list, with 12 regions concurring on the listing of this species. Almost all parts of the martin's range are involved in the decline, with the exception of the South. This year there is more mid-continent support, with observers in the Middlewestern Prairie, Western Great Lakes and Northern Great Plains noting declines.

**42. Eastern Bluebird.** Apparently its situation is worsening, in the view of our respondents, every year. This year's constituency places it Number 2 in our 20 most blue species; fifteen regions contribute to a powerful consensus. Reasons cited include hard winters, cold springs, and the usurpation of nesting holes by Starlings, Tree Swallows, House Sparrows, and other species. "1979 was the first year when no nestboxes or postholes in this area were utilized, although many were available." — J. H. Ginns, Qué. "... declined greatly in the 50s and never recovered . . . may be more nesting Bald Eagles than bluebirds in the Delmarva Peninsula," — H. T. Armistead, Pa. "... declined drastically over the last several decades." — D. W. Lambeth, N.D.

**43-44. Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet.** Both kinglets garner about the same number of regions (10-9) opting for listing, but the Golden-crowned amasses twice the individual respondents' votes. In both instances, reasons cited were two recent, very hard winters, with massive kinglet mortality. May not truly belong on the list.

**45. Loggerhead Shrike.** Eighth in order of support on our list this year, the Loggerhead is truly in trouble throughout much of its range; nominations come from 12 regions, "... virtually disappeared as a migrant in fall in eastern Massachusetts," — R. S. Heil, Mass. "Almost completely gone as a breeding species and very few now seen at other seasons," — C. S. Robbins, Md., "...

drastic decline," — H. LeGrand & S. A. Gauthreaux, Jr., S C, "... declined markedly," — D. W. Lambeth, N.D., "... breeding almost nonexistent this summer," — E. Delap, Tex. But note "... holding its own in this area," — W. Pulich, Tex.

**46. Bell's Vireo.** Supported for a repeat on the Blue List by eight regions.

**47. Warbling Vireo.** A high eleven regions sent in 1980 nominations for this species. In 1978 it was three regions, in 1979 six regions.

**48. Yellow Warbler.** A species whose presence on the list is often derided by those in areas where it is still common. But this year this species makes the top 30, with nine nominating regions. "Numbers on Breeding Bird Surveys showing a marked decline," — E. & R. Reid, Jr., Ala. "... on the decline in Southern California, the race occurring in the southeastern portion of the state (Colorado River Valley) now probably extinct." — G. McCaskie, Calif. Loss of habitat is widely cited.

**49. Yellow-breasted Chat.** Discussion of this species could be almost a repeat of that of the previous species, except that an ever higher 13 regions join in the chorus of "ayes." There are only seven species on our list with wider regional support. Last year's report also listed 13 regions.

**50. Dickcissel.** Once again this year seven regions support inclusion on the list, a sign of welcome consistency, if not welcome implications. Loss of habitat seems to be the major cause of decline.

**51. Grasshopper Sparrow.** In third place among the Top 20 candidates for the list, with 17 regions and scores of observers putting it near the top of their regional lists. Loss of grassland habitat, with changing farming practices and land development are given as major causes for the decline of this, the Savannah, Henslow's, Vesper, and Field sparrows, the Bobolink, meadowlarks, Upland Sandpiper, and other grassland species. All should undoubtedly be Blue-listed, but not all had enough support from the "grass roots."

**52. Henslow's Sparrow.** Retained on the list with strong support in 10 regions, making it our number 10 candidate. See above.

**53. Vesper Sparrow.** Again, as in the 1979 list, Vesper Sparrow finds strong support in 13 regions, resulting in moving it up to ninth place in support for the entire list. There seems no longer any doubt that this sparrow, like the two listed above, rightfully belongs on the list.

## II Species with more restricted ranges

**54. Western Grebe.** Nominated in the Northern Great Plains, Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain, and Middle Pacific Coast Regions. Habitat loss is blamed for a current decline, with more drastic losses predicted in the future

**55. White Pelican.** In five regions, Prairie Provinces, Northern Rockies, and the three Pacific coast regions, support is strong for listing this pelican "Now extirpated as a breeding species in southern California," — G. McCaskie, Calif. In Saskatchewan and Ontario breeding disruption is cited as a cause for the decline.

**56. Reddish Egret.** Although it is reported to be slowly gaining in numbers, and new breeding sites are occasionally found, this species is in such relatively low total numbers that observers in its range recommend that it remain on the list.

**57. Wood Stork.** Continued on the list this year. Status unchanged.

**58. Trumpeter Swan.** Strongly recommended for listing in the Northwest. Cited as possible causes for concern "Combined loss of habitat and high potential for disease in its wintering areas . . . increased competition for breeding territories with feral Mute Swans . . . possible depletion of preferred food in congregation areas," — R. E. Shea, *vide* D. K. Weaver, The Trumpeter Swan Society, Mont.

**59. Sharp-tailed Grouse.** Four regions gave evidence that this species is suffering a gradual, non-cyclical decline. "The replacement of native grassland (preferred Sharp-tailed habitat) by farmland may be the reason for the decline, at least in eastern Washington." — W. C. Weber, B.C.

**60. Sage Grouse.** Four regions report a decline in this species. "Has declined seriously in the Great Basin of California

owing to habitat loss and overgrazing" — D. DeSante, Calif. "Under great stress from changes in agricultural practices. . . . good numbers until recent years." — B. Dowdy, Wash.

**61. Gull-billed Tern.** Nominated to continue on the Blue list by the Central Southern, Hudson-Delaware, Middle Atlantic, and Southern Atlantic Coast regions.

**62. Roseate Tern.** Only three regions, Northeastern Maritime, Hudson-Delaware, and Florida, nominate this species, but it is strongly supported there, as a species of limited population, all of whose colonies are stressed. "Should be Endangered." — B. Nikula, Mass.

**63. (Northern) Spotted Owl, *Strix occidentalis caurinus*.** Two regions, and numerous respondents cited timbering operations in mature growth forests as a serious threat to this species. After an intensive 3-year survey of 70 square miles of Lane County, Oregon, F. Wagner reported ". . . a population decline of 80-90% has occurred since the early 1950s in western Oregon." ". . . probably still declining as old growth forests are cut" — D. DeSante, Calif.

**64. Elf Owl.** "Now reduced to fewer than half a dozen breeding pairs in California. Will be extirpated in the near future if habitat destruction continues along the Colorado River Valley." — G. McCaskie, Calif. "Loss of nesting trees in Gila and San Francisco river valleys, the few that nested there are becoming even scarcer." — R. A. Fisher, Jr., N. Mex

**65. Lewis' Woodpecker.** Reported as declining from five of the regions in which it is found, mostly without elucidating comment. Twelve individual respondents nominated it.

**66. (Florida) Scrub Jay, *A.c. coerulescens*** Continued on the list although no update was received from Florida. We assume that there has been no radical change in its status.

**67. Least Flycatcher.** A widespread species, but markedly down in numbers in at least five of its range regions, all in the North and East: Ontario, Northeastern Maritime, Hudson-Delaware, Niagara-Champlain, and Appalachia. "An absolute disaster. Formerly common to abun-

dant An observer who had 300 species in Massachusetts in 1978 missed Least Flycatcher." — H. T. Wiggin, Mass. ". . . call was a familiar sound in summer. Haven't heard one in 1978 or 1979." — R. W. Keyes, N. Y.

**68. Winter Wren.** Perceived decrease in the abundance of this species, as a result of recent severe winters, may be a short-term phenomenon, but ten regions from Québec to the Northern Pacific Coast (where winters have not been severe) profess concern, and so we add it provisionally to the Blue List.

**69. Bewick's Wren.** This year only five regions report on this species, but opinions are strong that this is indeed a species of growing scarcity. Again, severe winters may have been the major cause. All but one supporting regions are mid-continent — from: Middlewestern Prairie, Western Great Lakes, Central Southern, Southern Great Plains, and Mountain West. "Endangered in the East!" — H. LeGrand & S. A. Gauthreaux, Jr., S.C. On the Threatened Lists of Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Mississippi.

**70. Carolina Wren.** Precisely the same as the Winter Wren. Fewer regions, but more respondents, nominate the Carolina Wren for the list. As with the Winter Wren, declines may be the temporary result of two recent disastrous winters; it may be, too, that recent pioneering northward by this species may have placed it in a more vulnerable position in these areas.

**71. Western Bluebird.** Four western regions strongly favor Blue-listing of this species. "Tremendous decline since early 1900s in western Washington. Very few nesting pairs left west of the Cascades." — E. Hunn, Wash. "Declining," — R. Stallcup, Calif.

**72. Eastern Meadowlark.** A continuing victim of the disappearance of its favored habitat, the same problem that faces Grasshopper, Henslow's, Vesper, and Field Sparrows. Five regions support listing, with many individual nominations.

**73. Bachman's Sparrow.** Continued on the list this year, although only ten respondents in five regions nominated it.

### III Marginal List

Some or many of the following species may well be *bona fide* Blue List birds. They are segregated here because the evidence, although often convincingly presented, comes from too few respondents to qualify. These are species that require special attention so that their status may be clarified. Some were previously Blue-listed, but lacked sufficient support this year.\*

Eared Grebe  
Gannet  
Yellow-crowned Night Heron  
Snowy Egret  
White-faced Ibis\*  
Hooded Merganser  
Spruce Grouse  
Wilson's Plover  
Long-billed Curlew  
Band-tailed Pigeon  
Black-billed Cuckoo\*  
Screech Owl  
Chimney Swift  
Belted Kingfisher  
Eastern Kingbird  
Bank Swallow  
Cliff Swallow  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Short-billed Marsh Wren\*  
Mountain Bluebird  
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher  
Gray Vireo  
Golden-winged Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Orchard Oriole  
Savannah Sparrow  
Field Sparrow

At least another 25 species were supported by strong evidence by one or more respondents. Space limitations will not allow listing all nominees this year.

—950 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

