The Blue List for 1981

The First Decade

A summary of the first ten years of the annual "early warning list" of declining, threatened, or vulnerable species.

James Tate, Jr.

TEN YEARS AGO *American Birds* started a list that has since become more important than the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Threatened and Endangered List to those who watch the fortunes and misfortunes of North American birds. The original concept was straightforward: "The species named to this list are ones which have recently given or are currently giving indications of non-cyclical population declines or range contractions, either locally or widespread" (Anon. [Arbib] 1971:948). The regional editors were originally encouraged to report their impressions and observer's reports on nominations and deletions for the list (Anon. [Arbib] 1971:948, 1972:932, 1973:943, 1974: 971). Later, Arbib expanded the respondent's list to include the direct comments of birders with special knoweldge of a particular area (Arbib, R. 1975, 1976). This system has continued up to the present list (Arbib, R. 1978, 1979).

At the American Ornithologists' Union meeting in the summer of 1980, Arbib revealed that he was thinking of skipping the publishing of a list for 1981. It had been suggested several times that the list should perhaps be revised biennially or once each three years. Since this was the decade year, and for other reasons, several of us objected. The job fell to me. Not knowing what to expect as the newly appointed editor of the Blue List, I watched as Bob printed the blue response sheet in the July, 1980 issue of *American Birds*. The responses began to come in.

Comments on the blue sheet, letters, and conversations with associates soon revealed great pride in the Blue List, as well as considerable dissatisfaction. I began to separate out the comments, to categorize them and to mentally formulate responses. The two or three most pressing issues are dealt with here. Others are addressed throughout the species accounts which follow.

The comments have had the effect of bringing into focus some long-held concerns of mine. The comments come from those who care the most—the respondents. As one wrote: "I support the concept of the Blue List, and would be quite supportive . . . " It is, of course, the unstated "if" that concerns me.

The dual concerns for qualifications of the observers, and the criteria for inclusion of a species on the list were stated in a variety of ways.

"The Blue List appears to be a poll not based on good field work."

"The definition of what a Blue List species is seems to have changed."

"It seems to rely on seat of the pants impressions."

"To confound things further, we now have a marginal list."

I admit that I was confused about what was expected of me. On what basis did I include or exclude a species? The four criteria and eight causes given to potential respondents did not seem to be mutually exclusive, or especially clear.

I was looking for hard data among the responses—and surprisingly I found more than I expected. Whenever possible, I found respondents were using Christmas Bird Count and Breeding Bird Survey results to support their recommendations. Several respondents were Fish and Wildlife Service or state game department employees. These respondents have access to and utilize hard data sources in the course of their jobs

I have concluded that hard data are of course desirable, but are not the only or perhaps the best source of nominations to the Blue List. Experienced, qualified birders from all walks of life contribute to the Blue List. This often underestimated minority has the potential to contribute more good solid information on birds' populations than the university and museum scientists, or in the case of non-game species, than the State and Federal wildlife people. As an example, a 71-year old birder repeatedly quoted from her 40 years of records to support her observations. In short, I came to believe that the best possible qualified observers are reporting, and are using whatever hard data are available to them.

IN THE END, I found myself preparing the list in much the same way it must have been done before. When clear patterns emerged for a region-wide or multi-state decline of a species, I listed it. Those were the easy ones. In other cases, when conflicting recommendations came from the same area, or few or no respondents gave an opinion, or a single response was especially convincing, I made judgment calls. I also asked many questions and even chided respondents for not giving me more to go on. In this regard the shorthand method of four criteria and eight causes worked to my disadvantage. Most respondents were willing to put a number and a letter after a bird, but failed to give me anything substantive. Those who did write letters and notes will find themselves paraphrased and quoted very often.

Another concern of respondents was

the meaning of the Blue List. What can a list such as this be expected to do? Is it really a substitute for the Federal Threatened and Endangered Lists? Does it provide us with wide ranging and long-term declines and population changes only, or are short-term changes in small areas also to be included and of interest to us? How do we know when a perceived decline in an area will turn out to be short-term, or when it will in fact herald a long-term problem? Is there anything wrong with noting short-term phenomena somewhere in the bird literature? Those phenomena which are often casually signed off to cyclical causes and effects have seldom been shown to be truly cyclical. It seems to me we need to know about these things when they happen. If they later prove to be of short duration, or limited in extent, we can breathe a sigh of relief and retract our note of concern.

Nehls in Oregon gives us a meaningful opinion on this issue:

> "Overall, I feel the use of the Blue List can be very general and that government agencies and other concerned people are placing too much emphasis on it. The data base has considerable room for error. It cannot be stressed strongly enough that this is an early warning list, and not a panic list."

CONCERNED FEDERAL government agencies should put more emphasis on the list in one regard. They should not use the Blue List as a substitute for drawing good solid conclusions of their own. They should get right down to the business of considering species and subspecies for the existing Threatened and Endangered Lists and then initiating recovery programs for the benefit of those species. There appears to be a reluctance to make any change in their existing lists based on data from any source.

Respondents ask why they have to stand by and watch a bird decline and disappear in their area without any action by the U.S.F.&W.S. If the Federal system were more responsive, then the Blue List could function better as an early warning system. Species could come and go as necessary on the Blue List without concern that we were masking long-term needs of more critical problems.

I believe as does Nehls, that part of our problem is placing an undue emphasis on the Blue List. We have come to expect it to function in the place of a responsive and well-managed Threatened and Endangered List. As a result, we expect it to have hard data sources and scientifically defensible conclusions. If the unresponsiveness of our Government is to blame, we are in some cases equally to blame. As I did the decade list I was surprised at how many species had been listed for ten years. A number of these are birds about which we know a great deal. The provision of nest boxes in a well-managed grassroots program has been shown to influence the populations of such species as the American Kestrel, the Barn Owl and the bluebirds. Changes in agricultural practices are sometimes easy to influence through the efforts of individuals and bird clubs. *It appears that we have been sitting around shaking our heads in sorrow rather than getting out and making a personal contribution.* I was recently told that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be happier if I weren't trying to manipulate the population of a common bird in Wyoming. The agency has legislated responsibility for all migratory birds. But if it won't or can't do something about a problem that sits vividly before it, someone else must.

It is evident to me that an advisory group for the Blue List should be formed and put into action. The group should be asked to resolve questions such as those put before us here and to give the Blue List direction and continuity. Issues, answers, and nominations for an advisory board should be forwarded to the editors of *American Birds* at your earliest convenience.

The decade list that follows includes every species that has ever been on the Blue List proper. Some species that were on secondary lists only are not included. Nor are the "also nominated" lists included. For 1981 retentions, and deletions from the 1980 list, I have included comments and causes where possible.

The Decade List and The 1981 Blue List

[Numbers in parentheses following years are total years listed. Unnumbered species are not Blue-listed for 1981.]

1. Common Loon. 1980, 1981 (2). Blue-listed last year. Continued this year because it bears watching now more than ever. The effects of acid rain on fish populations may have unexpected effects. Power boats swamping nests continues to be a problem in some areas.

____. Red-throated Loon. 1973-1976 (4). Not currently listed. Gained some support in 1981 from n,e. wintering areas.

2. Red-necked Grebe. 1974-1981 (8). Apparently not in trouble in upstate NY or MA. Continued this year because of the problems with the central CA population. No causes given or recent studies cited. Is anyone watching this bird?

Breeding plumaged ♂ Red-necked Grebe, Rainy Lake, Minn. Photo/Wm. J. Bolte.

3. Western Grebe. 1973-1981 (9). Even though it is reportedly increasing on Colorado R., lakes in AZ, Nehls from OR reports increasing numbers from the north are showing up dead on beaches. Mowbray's data from Lake Mead (NV) speak for themselves: "Lake Mead supports a large wintering population of this species which . . . has decreased significantly. The Henderson CBC covers the Las Vegas arm of Lake Mead. Numbers for the last seven counts follow:

1973	15,065	1977	7500
1974	12,500	1978	540
1975	5000	1979	300
1976	4000		

____. Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel. 1973-1975 (3). No recent requests for listing. Usually regarded as abundant. Difficult to census during the breeding season. During those years it was listed, observers offshore reported a decline in totals of birds observed on pelagic trips.

4. White Pelican. 1972-1981 (10). An obvious candidate for Federal listing. Nehls, speaking from Oregon, puts it

succinctly: "As a breeding species this bird is very sensitive to its nesting habitat. At many sites it does not nest every year but must wait for the proper season when all conditions are optimal. Throughout its range it is on a decline and many breeding sites have been abandoned." Requests for retention came from BC, TX, UT, and CO. Only in NM (Hubbard) was it listed as doing well.

____. **Brown Pelican.** 1972 (1). Listed one year only before it became a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species.

5. Double-crested Cormorant. 1972-1981 (10). Clearly on the increase in many areas. The Northeastern states, ON, IN, MN, ID, OR, CO, and s. TX, where birds winter all report recovery of populations. AL and OH acknowledged an increase, but felt the species should still be watched. From c. CA, MO, IL, WI, NM, and UT came votes for retention. Perhaps this is the last year the species will have to be Blue-listed. It appears that the species has increased over a wide area without any human intervention or even greater understanding of the factors that caused its original decline. Do we know what caused the decline and subsequent increase?

6. Great Blue Heron. 1980-1981 (2). Votes for retention came from a contiguous area including MO, IL, IN, OH, IA, MN, Niagara-Champlain and ON. NM also favored retention. Nearby areas in upstate NY, n.e. PA, MA and a few dissenters from OH, IN and MN were adamant against continuation. This is clearly a judgment call. I suspect that something is happening to this species in an arc from southern MN to OH. We request special attention be paid to this bird in this area. Perhaps next year it can be delisted.

____. **Great White Heron.** 1972 (1). Listed one year only before it was lumped with the Great Blue Heron as a color morph. I cannot help but be curious about changes in the ratio of the two color morphs. Probably the Blue List is not the place to detail this curiosity, however.

____. **Reddish Egret.** 1972, 1975-1980 (7). No respondents in 1981. What is happening?

Black-crowned Night Heron carrying a Virginia Rail. Photo/Kenneth W. Gardiner.

7. Black-crowned Night Heron. 1972-1981 (10). Perhaps next year we will see this species removed from the list. MO, IL and IN, ME and CT still are finding their populations in trouble. Once again I am not sure that Blue-listing resulted in any positive action on behalf of this bird in areas where it was in trouble. It appears to have recovered on its own.

8. Least Bittern. 1979-1981 (3). Except for AZ where it was termed abundant, nearly universal support for retention. Habitat loss.

American Bittern. Photo/F.K. Schleicher.

9. American Bittern. 1976-1981 (6). Universal support for retention. Habitat loss. Is there an eager student of birds somewhere who can give us a definitive answer to what is happening to our bitterns?

10. Wood Stork. 1972-1981 (10). Universal support for retention. Herb Kale II correctly asks why this species has not achieved Federal Endangered Species status.

____. **White Ibis.** 1972-1977 (6). Has not been listed since 1977. Was not mentioned by any 1981 respondents.

____. **White-faced Ibis.** 1972-1979 (8). Only Gifford in UT reported this species for listing.

____. **Fulvous Whistling Duck.** 1972-1979 (8). Possibly unreported in 1980. No respondents in 1981 mentioned this species, making it hard to judge its status. Blue-listing means we should pay special attention to a species, not ignore it.

11. Trumpeter Swan. 1980, 1981 (2). Removed from the Federal list. First appeared on the Blue List in 1980. No respondents mentioned it for the 1981 list, so I listed it myself.

12. Black Duck. 1980, 1981 (2). Recognition of genetic swamping by wild and released Mallards qualifies this native duck for retention. Kibbe and others ask how Blue-listing will prevent the genetic swamping of this population out of existence. If the Blue List is an early warning system of notable population changes; we are warning that the Black Duck is undergoing such a change. Isolated populations of Black Duck still occur in habitat relatively unsuited to the Mallard (*i.e.* Barker's

report from ME). Maintenance of these habitats may be critical to continuation of a Black Duck gene pool.

____. **Mexican Duck.** 1972 (1). Thereafter listed as a Federal Endangered Species.

13. Canvasback. 1975-1981 (7). A hunted species that deserves full protection Some respondents have asked why highly managed game species are listed. In this case, Blue-listing verifies population changes obtained by the U.S.F.& W S Appears to be increasing on migration in RI.

____. **Turkey Vulture.** 1972, 1980 (2). Recommended for retention for southern CA, UT, and IN. Many strident voices for deletion. Overall the species seems to be doing well, with scattered problems only.

14. Black Vulture. 1972, 1981 (2). Convincing requests for listing came from LeGrand for the Southern Atlantic Coast Region, and Brown in KY. Something appears to be happening to both species of vulture in parts of their ranges. Can anyone suggest what is happening?

15. Osprey. 1972-1981 (10). The mixed recommendations are very pleasant to read Just a few years ago, before we began to eliminate DDT from the environment, there seemed to be little hope for this species. At that time this bird should have been Federally listed. The U S.F.&W.S. could now reduce its status to threatened and take some credit for it.

____. **Swallow-tailed Kite.** 1972 (1). Has had limited support each year for reinstatement.

16. Marsh Hawk. 1972-1981 (10). Only in AZ (Rosenberg), OR (Nehls) and south TX (Hill-Winter) do the populations appear to warrant delisting. Throughout the rest of its extensive range, the "Hen Harrier" is clearly having trouble.

17. Sharp-shinned Hawk. 1972-1981 (10) Continues to show declines or no change in breeding areas. Some reports from migration or wintering areas show no change. Doing well in NM (Hubbard), IN (Keller), UT (Leppert), and on migration in MA (Emerson) and SC (LeGrand).

18. Cooper's Hawk. 1972-1981 (10). Indications are that it is doing better in some parts of the East and Midwest (Bell, s.w. PA; Peterjohn, OH). In more northern parts of its range, it may be supplanted by the Goshawk (Ridgely, NH, and Wiggin, MA). Reported not in trouble in AZ. Signs are that is improving in many areas. May possibly be delisted soon.

19. Harris' Hawk. 1972-1981 (10). All United States populations of this southern *Parabuteo* are on the northern edge of its range. West from NM favors retention. No other responses. When the AOU Check-list of North American Birds includes Mexico (next edition, due out 1983), many of us will have to revise our thinking about this bird.

20. Red-shouldered Hawk. 1972-1981 (10). Only in upstate NY (Brooks) and IN (Keller) is it doing well. Numerous other areas reported the species "nosedived in 1980" (Ridgely, NH) or is still in trouble.

21. Swainson's Hawk. 1972-1981 (10). In central CA, NM, trans-Pecos TX, KS, OR, WA and UT the populations warrant retention. Only in MN (on the edge of its range) does Eckert report an increase over the last 10 years, Nehls in OR gives a succinct probable cause. "Recent studies by Stewart Janes . . . show that the Swainson's Hawk is being replaced by the Red-tailed Hawk over much of its range . . . The invasion of junipers into the grassland habitat of the Swainson's Hawk . . ." may be the cause.

22. Ferruginous Hawk. 1972-1981 (10). OR, WA, NM and UT populations warrant retention. Management by provision of artificial nest sites in proper habitat has caused some northern Great Plains populations to increase. In a few years I would like to report that direct management in these few areas has helped bring the populations back up.

23. Caracara. 1972-1979, 1981 (9). Probably lacking in reporting in 1980. Doing poorly in FL and TX. Frankly, we need to take a much closer look at this species in order to make a decent assessment. All United States populations are on the edge of its range. Reports from Mexico indicate it is doing well. See Harris' Hawk above.

24. American Kestrel. 1972-1981 (10) No other species listing has caused so many strident denials that the bird is in trouble in parts of its range. I cannot refute the pleas for continued listing from southern WI through IL, KY, AL, SC, FL and all of the Southern Atlantic Coast Region. We all know how well this species responds to nest box provision. Why have we not started nest box programs in these areas of population decline?

25. Merlin. 1972-1981 (10). The species has been recommended for deletion from the list only in MA, the Niagara-Champlain Region and MAN. We lack good solid assessments of its status during the breeding season. Clarification of breeding status is needed.

____. **Prairie Falcon.** 1972-1980 (9). Still some scattered reports of population problems (Howie, BC, Gifford, UT), but most observers in the West feel the bird is doing well. Responds quickly to provision of nest sites.

26. Sharp-tailed Grouse. 1972, 1978-1981 (5). Retention is considered warranted in BC (Howie) OR and WA (Nehls) and CO (Brockner). Nehls makes the salient points about this species: "Habitat loss has been given as the primary reason for the decline of this species, but hunting pressure must be considered." The success of this species and some others like it lies in the hands of the State Game and Fish Departments.

27. Sage Grouse. 1972-1981 (10). No respondents this year. Does this mean that the species is doing well, or that respondents have given up on the species? In WA and OR the bird remains in trouble and is retained for that reason only. In the states of CO and WY, increasing habitat losses may show an effect soon The year-to-year decisions of State game agencies will affect the species both through hunting pressure and habitat losses. Criteria for restoration of mined lands to favor this species are being developed. Direct management of habitat will soon be possible.

28. Bobwhite. 1980, 1981 (2). Most areas showing a decline last year, are stable or recovering. MO, OK, KY and IL favor

retention. Admittedly, this is a weather-sensitive species that should make a comeback in reasonable time, but, what if it does not? Then the Blue List is filling the role of an early warning system. When listing is warranted by population problems in a recognizable part of a bird's range, I would rather list it only to delist it in a year or two when it makes the expected recovery.

____. **Mountain Quail.** 1975, 1976 (2). See comments under Bobwhite.

____. **Limpkin.** 1972-1974 (3). Apparently no longer in trouble. No respondents in 1981.

29. King Rail. 1976-1981 (6). Nearly universal concerns from the Northeast and Midwest. A more accurate picture is desirable.

____. **Clapper Rail.** 1972 (1). Was listed only for CA.

____. **American Oystercatcher.** 1972-1979 (8). No respondents in 1981. Status unknown.

30. Piping Plover. 1973-1981 (9). Deserves a long hard look by Federal agencies. Universal requests for retention, including: extirpated in Niagara-Champlain Region (Kibbe); numbers drastically reduced over 60 miles of barrier islands in VA (Williams); extirpated as a breeder in OH (Peterjohn); wiped out in southern ON, owing to gull predation (Currie); last nest found in 1955 in IN (Keller).

31. Snowy Plover. 1972-1981 (10). Clearly having problems at coastal locations in CA, WA and OR. Nehls' comments describe the situation: ". . . A rather strong and healthy population breeding in basins east of the Cascades. The population that breeds along the coastal beaches and in the dunes appears to be in a marked and rapid decline. In many areas of concentrated human disturbance they are gone altogether. The species as a whole is not endangered but the coastal population is in trouble and should be monitored carefully."

32. Long-billed Curlew. 1981 (1). Listed by observers in contiguous areas including BC (Howie), OR and WA (Nehls) ID (Trost), UT (Burns), and CO (Brockner). Agricultural changes are mentioned as the cause.

33. Upland Sandpiper. 1975-1981 (7). Nominated for retention from NH, Niagara-Champlain Region, OH, IL, IN, OR and WA. Why is there a population problem in these areas? Is anyone monitoring actual nests of this bird?

____. **Gull-billed Tern.** 1973-1980 (8). No respondents in 1981. We have no data for a current statement.

34. Common Tern. 1978-1981 (4). An area including southeastern ON, Niagara-Champlain, and OH (also CT) still has a problem. In most of the rest of the breeding range observers did not report or recommend deletion. Human and domestic animal intrusion and gull predation are most often blamed.

35. Roseate Tern. 1972, 1979-1981 (4). Mentioned in 1972 as in trouble on the Gulf Coast. Recent reponses list the bird in trouble in ME (Vickery) and CT (Proctor) where there is only one major colony left. Recommend that the Federal agency pay this species special attention. Human and domestic animal intrusions and gull predation reported as problems. On Great Gull I., NY, predation was by night herons.

36. Least Tern. 1972-1981 (10). Always breeding in low numbers along sand bars of major streams inland. Was once common at sea beach locations. Nearly universal recommendation for retention both coastally and inland.

____. **Royal Tern.** 1973, 1979 (2). Insufficient respondents in 1981 to assess. What's going on?

37. Black Tern. 1978-1981 (4). Eastern coastal locations report migrants at normal levels. Brown reports a two-year decline of migrants in TX. Migrant and a few breeding reports show breeding problems may be occurring at the eastern end of its breeding range.

____. **Ancient Murrelet.** 1973-1976 (4). Like the Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, this species was probably listed because of trend counts made at sea away from the breeding grounds. Putting these data to such a use is highly suspect.

____. **Common Puffin.** 1978-1979 (2). No respondents in 1981. First listed in 1978 for PQ. Studies by Steve Kress in ME appear encouraging for direct manipulation of populations. What good will this do if the environment is becoming unsuitable in the major breeding areas of Canada? Please, what is the current status?

38. Yellow-billed Cuckoo. 1972-1981 (10). Retained once again on the basis of long-term population lows in southern CA. May be declining in AZ and UT on a long-term basis as well. Rosenberg (AZ) blames loss of riparian habitat Throughout most of its range it is cyclical and responsive to caterpillar populations. As long as it continues to recover from its low points it is not of concern over most of its range.

____. **Black-billed Cuckoo.** 1979 (1) Generally agreed not to be of current concern owing to its normally widely fluctuating populations.

39. Barn Owl. 1972-1981 (10). Only in AZ was it listed by one respondent as common. Generally agreed to be of continuing interest. Hugh Kingery reports that the bird responds to nest box programs (60 pairs in boxes near Provo and Ogden, UT). Soucie has had notable success in northern NJ. Why have we waited so long to establish more nest box programs where this bird is reduced in numbers?

40. Screech Owl. 1981 (1). New to the list. Thomas Davis reports it has disappeared from New York City in recent years. Pitzrick (also NY) reports it is almost unknown. Scattered reports for addition to the list from elsewhere including OH, KY, NH, MA, ON, BC, NM and UT. These widely scattered reports only serve to alert us all that we must systematically report on this species.

____. **Elf Owl.** 1979 (1). Listed only on the Restricted Area list. NM (Hubbard) and AZ (Rosenberg) report it is doing well in the core of its United States range.

41. Burrowing Owl. 1972-1981 (10) A call for retention comes from CO (Kingery) and central CA (Parmeter) only. AZ and western KS reported high populations. The fate of the species may rely on the continued welfare of Black-tailed Prairie Dog colonies, in whose burrows

the owl often lives.

42. Spotted Owl. 1980, 1981 (2). Nehls clearly describes the concern for both races of this species in his note: "Studies conducted by Eric Forsman in recent years indicate that this subspecies is restricted to old-growth coniferous forests throughout its range. This type habitat is rapidly being destroyed as it does not fit into modern day forestry practices. The southern range of this species is somewhat less restricted in its preference of habitat and appears to be less threatened. The recent expansion of the range of the Barred Owl into the Spotted Owl range may bring further competition to this species. The species is definitely in trouble. All State and Federal wildlife agencies are conducting studies on this species."

____. **Long-eared Owl.** 1980 (1). Most respondents found it to be present in good numbers. Breeding range respondents gave little hard data on which to postulate a decline.

43. Short-eared Owl. 1976-1981 (6). In the area bounded by ON, the Niagara-Champlain Region, OH and IN, there appears to be a problem. Also in trouble in central CA and IA. OR and west KS experienced high populations. What is happening farther north in the eastern range of this species?

44. Whip-poor-will. 1980-1981 (2). Habitat loss through regrowth of fields adjacent to woodlands would seem to be the probable cause for declines. Ridgely (NH) suggests loss of large moths and other food supplies may be causal. In any case, from the Niagara-Champlain Region, MAN, ON, MN and WI to GA, KY, MO and OK many observers have sensed a decline over the last ten years.

45. Common Nighthawk. 1975-1977, 1979-1981 (6). Far from being a temporary or cyclic decline, areas from central CA to WA and UT to CO report serious declines. Other areas voted for retention including IN, OK, ON, WI, and MO. Causes and patterns have not emerged.

46. Ruby-throated Hummingbird. 1978-1981 (4). Guy Tudor refers to it as a mystery. Despite raucous objections from observers where it is doing well, there are some areas of serious decline. From the Northeast to the Southern Atlantic Coast Region, observers report only tiny breeding populations and reduced numbers of migrants. A second area, including KS, MO, IA, IN and WI report numbers are down dramatically.

____. **Red-shafted Flicker.** 1972 (1). Listed only for southern CA and the central Rockies. One vote for addition came in 1981 from Hicks for OK.

____. **Gila Woodpecker.** 1972 (1). In 1981, Hubbard requested it be listed for NM.

47. Red-headed Woodpecker. 1972, 1976-1981 (7). Nearly equal requests for retention and deletion. Comments such as Kibbe's and Goodwin's suggest that increased firewood cutting and habitat loss cause this species to warrant special attention.

48. Lewis' Woodpecker. 1975-1981 (7). Only in NM (Hubbard) is the bird apparently doing well. Observers report an obvious decline beginning in the 1960s. Most blame Starling competition for nest holes. Nehls' comments for OR and WA are typical: "Formerly widespread and fairly common nesting species over most of OR and WA. The nesting population is now in serious condition and getting worse."

49. Hairy Woodpecker. 1975-1981 (7). Reports of declines from two areas: WI, IL and MO; and WA and OR qualify this species for continued listing. UT (Gifford) also favors retention. Through much of the rest of its range it is increasing or holding steady.

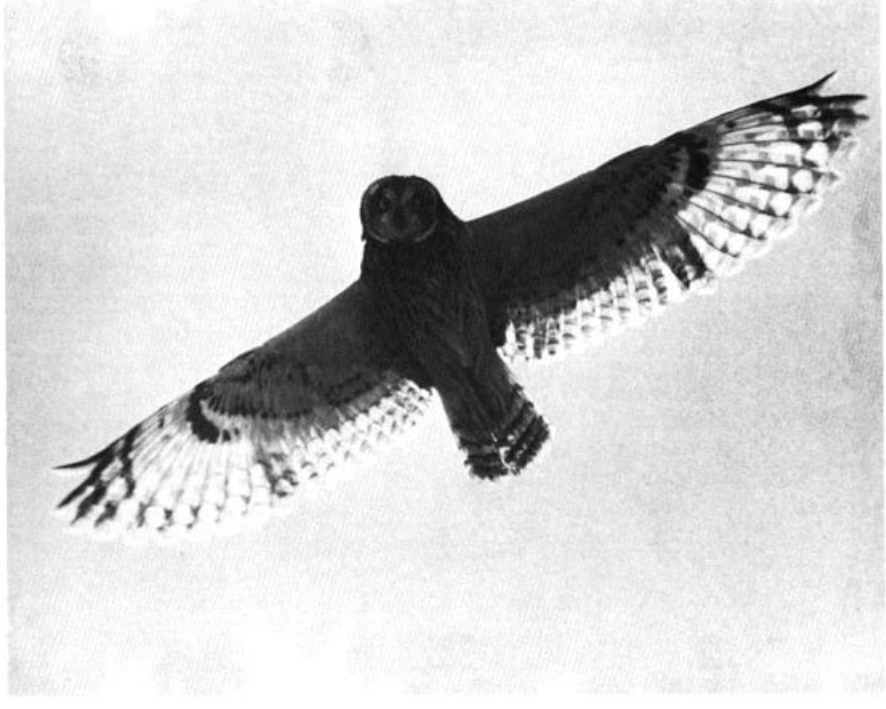
____. **Red-cockaded Woodpecker.** 1972 (1). After 1972 it was placed on the Endangered Species List.

____. **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.** 1972 (1). In 1972 it was reported to have a decline in the Southern Plains. In 1981, West (NM) requested listing since it was down 75 per cent in the last 15 years.

____. **Eastern Phoebe.** 1980 (1). Requests for continuance came from KY, IN and WI. In most areas the declines seen previously had been replaced by normal levels.

50. Willow Flycatcher. 1980-1981 (2). In the West, UT, AZ and NM, declining sufficiently to qualify for listing. Rosenberg reports that in AZ only a remnant of former range remains occupied. Doing well elsewhere.

____. **Least Flycatcher.** 1980 (1). Two widely separate areas reported declines for 1981, MA (Wiggin) and WI (Hoffman). Normal numbers everywhere else.



Short-eared Owl. Photo/Kenneth W. Gardiner.

51. Cliff Swallow. 1976-1977, 1981 (3). In an area bounded by CT, NJ, and upstate NY, there appears to be a noticeable decline. Wade Wunder (NJ) blames it on nest usurpation by House Sparrows and painting of vertical surfaces.

52. Purple Martin. 1975-1981 (7). In TX, OK, MO and KY observers report declines continue. Brown blames nest site competition by House Sparrows and Starlings. Ridgely reports "very serious decline" in NH and RI. Parmeter reports the species no longer nests in forests in central CA. Nehls reports similar problems in WA and OR, plus places emphasis on the disjunct unstable nature of colonies in the West. I believe that a certain amount of social stimulus may be necessary for successful reproduction. The high level of social structure within the Passenger Pigeon has been cited as detrimental to its success near man. Manipulation of this species through the use of well-managed multi-compartment houses is well known. Poorly managed houses may be more of a detriment than a help, however.

53. Scrub Jay. 1973-1981 (9). Possibly competition with the more adaptable Blue Jay and orange-grove development are affecting the Florida population (Tudor). The western population is unaffected. A prime candidate for Federal listing of the Florida population.

54. Short-billed Marsh Wren. 1979, 1981 (2). OH, IN, IL form a discrete area in which this small sedge-loving wren has experienced a poor year. Also reports from CT and MA indicate reduced populations. Clean farming of wet fields is partly to blame, reports Chapel from IL

____. Winter Wren. 1980 (1). No clear pattern develops for 1981. Respondents from diverse areas recommended retention (IL, WA, KS, UT). In CT, WI, MN it appears a "decline has been reversed" and that it is "doing better this year."

____. House Wren. 1972 (1). In that year it was listed for the Southern Atlantic Coast, Middlewestern and Northern Rockies Regions. In 1981, Howie of BC asked for its listing.

55. Bewick's Wren. 1972-1981 (10). While a number of respondents suggested delisting, an apparent long-term problem remains in OK and KS. Others favored retention in AL, KY, IL, UT and OR. Perhaps this is a candidate for delisting soon.

56. Carolina Wren. 1980, 1981 (2). In the Northeast, it is spreading (Tudor). In CT numbers are still up (Rosgen). In PA it is coming back after two years. But in TN it is still not back to normal. MO, KY, IL, and IN all suggest it be retained. Brown reports that in TX it is in bad shape. No comments about possible causes. Amelia Betts (KS) tells it all: "The Carolina Wren situation is dismal. None again this winter for the second year in a row . . . My chart on them shows none for our first five years of counting (1942-6); a high of 33 in 1953 and lows down to zero in the early '60s. Then up to 16 in 1970. Back down to zero now—which is roughly a 20-year cycle—except that we had another zero in 1967."

57. Eastern Bluebird. 1972, 1978-1981 (5). We probably know more about the management of the breeding biology of the Eastern Bluebird than almost any other passerine. Yet somehow, the early warning provided by the Blue List has not resulted in a coordinated recovery plan for this bird. I am not sure where the lead should come from, but the need and the means are both clear. Amelia Betts (KS) shows us the way: "Bluebirds were much more numerous, perhaps due in part to many more nesting boxes around here and also around Clinton Lake near Lawrence—both Baldwin Bird Club member projects . . . As long as we provide nest boxes—and keep the mice and sparrows out—bluebirds will survive."

58. Western Bluebird. 1972, 1978-1981 (5). BC, OR, WA and UT want this species retained. Hubbard (NM) reports it is doing well. Nehls' report for OR and WA repeats the Eastern Bluebird story above. "Without the addition of artificial nesting boxes placed in many sections of Oregon and Washington, this species would be now to the point of extinction in both States. It is now very difficult to locate a pair nesting in a natural situation. This species is subject to great mortality during severe winters. It is not able to maintain sufficient populations to offset these losses. A particularly bad winter or marked reduction of artificial nesting sites and the species will be in dire straits."

____.Mountain Bluebird. 1972, 1975-1977 (4). It may be inconsistent not to list this bluebird after listing the other two. Requests for listing came only from Howie in BC and Gifford in UT I suspect that a careful look at populations will soon reveal trouble elsewhere as well.

59. Golden-crowned Kinglet. 1980-1981 (2). Has not made the universally good comeback of the Ruby-crowned Recommended for retention from TX (Brown), UT (Gifford), IN (Parker) and part of ON (Speirs). Providing remaining reduced populations return to normal, is a candidate for early removal from the list.

____.Ruby-crowned Kinglet. 1980 (1). All areas report it is increasing and making a good comeback.

60. Loggerhead Shrike. 1972-1981 (10) All reporting regions report declining numbers. Proctor (CT) says it is down 70 per cent in ten years. Reid and Imhof say it is increasingly difficult to find in AL. Parks reports it almost gone in MD In Trans-Pecos, far western and central TX declined. Increasing on the TX prairie (Gallucci) and very common in winter in southern TX (Hill). Why?

61. Bell's Vireo. 1972 for southern CA, 1973-1981 (10). Reported to be in such serious condition that Weaver (southern CA) and Gifford (UT) suggest the Federal agency place it on the Threatened/Endangered List. Cowbirds are blamed in those reports that place a cause.

____.Gray Vireo. 1972-1974 (3).

____.Warbling Vireo. 1978-1980 (3) Only two scattered suggestions it be retained on the list for 1981.

62. Golden-winged Warbler. 1981 (1) New to the list this year. Two factors seem to be working on this warbler at once: habitat maturation is working against the Golden-winged Warbler and genetic swamping by the expanding Blue-winged Warbler is breeding it out of existence. This is an ongoing phenomenon as demonstrated by Paul Hess in southwestern PA: "For years I watched while observers from other regions told of the species' displacement

by the Blue-winged Warbler, wondering why it didn't seem to be happening here. Now I join the chorus. This year, two traditional nesting stations for at least a decade were occupied by Blue-winged after Golden-wingeds were observed singing for only a short time in the spring." The search for the controlling habitat differences should continue. John Confer and Kristine Knapp have made progress toward this goal with a paper recently accepted by *Auk*. Details of the expansion of the Blue-winged Warbler appear in Frank Gill's article in *Auk* 97:1-18, 1980.

63. Yellow Warbler. 1973-1981 (9). Despite the cacophony of objection from areas where it is doing very well, we must respect the opinions of qualified observers who report a serious problem in southern CA (Weaver), central CA (Parmeter) and WA. Cowbird parasitism is often mentioned as a cause.

____.Common Yellowthroat. 1973-1974 (2). Only OK and UT respondents asked for relisting in 1981.

____.Yellow-breasted Chat. 1976-1981 (6) Two respondents from UT and one from central CA wanted the species retained. Unless the decine becomes more widespread, it should be delisted for now

64. Eastern Meadowlark. 1980-1981 (2). Throughout a five-state area (WI, IL, IA, IN, KY), and in parts of MA and upstate NY, this species is doing poorly, reportedly owing to habitat loss. However, as Wiggin reports from MA, many fields look suitable but lack meadowlarks.

65. Dickcissel. 1978-1981 (4). In an arc across the heart of its range (IL, MO, KS, CO), this midland species continues to decline. In AL, IA, and MN, reports are that the species is doing well.

____.Lesser Goldfinch. 1975-1976 (2).

66. Grasshopper Sparrow. 1974-1981 (8). Many respondents from scattered areas (southern ON, Niagara-Champlain, TN, MD, IL, NM, central TX) indicate widespread declines. The scattered nature of the retentions may predict delisting soon.

67. Baird's Sparrow. 1981 (1). Nominated for listing by a group of ten respondents from MAN, where the species breeds. Also nominated by Hubbard in the heart of the winter range (NM).

68. Henslow's Sparrow. 1974-1981 (8). One vote for deletion came from IN where it is reportedly doing quite well. Nearly all other respondents favored retention. LeGrand, reporting for the Southern Atlantic Coast Region, recommended Federal listing.

____.Le Conte's Sparrow. 1972 (1). On the Gulf Coast only.

____.Vesper Sparrow. 1978-1980 (4). Respondents from most areas recommend delisting. Scattered respondents strongly favored retention ("disappearing from NH"—Ridgely, "breeding off 90 per cent in CT"—Proctor, also listed in WI, UT).

69. Bachman's Sparrow. 1972-1981 (10). Peterjohn (OH) reports that the bird has virtually disappeared. Barksdale (MO) and others favor retention. Limited response. What is really happening to this bird?

____.Fox Sparrow. 1972 (1). In the northern Rockies only.

The following species were nominated by two or more respondents in adjacent areas, or in some cases by one respondent who nominated a species with limited range. Some species are limited by habitat or by their colonial nature, and were nominated by scattered respondents. In any case each species is a candidate for likely inclusion in future lists should its population continue to decline over a wider area.

Green Heron; upstate NY, ON.
Snowy Egret; MA, MO, ID.
White-winged Scoter; decline noted in boreal SAS.
Spruce Grouse; ME, upstate NY, OR.
Ring-necked Pheasant; IN, ON, BC.
Band-tailed Pigeon; UT, CO.
Barred Owl; OH, KY.
Chimney Swift; three Midwestern respondents.
Eastern Kingbird; OH two respondents.
Great Crested Flycatcher; OH, KY.
Horned Lark; KY, OH, S.W. PA.
Bank Swallow; breeding colonies in some northern states and IA.
Tufted Titmouse; KY, IL, MN.
Mockingbird, IL, IN.
White-eyed Vireo; IL, IN.
Bobolink: IA, IN.
Orchard Oriole; OH, MO, OK, MAN
Varied Bunting: NM.
Rufous-sided Towhee; MO, IN, TX in winter.
Seaside Sparrow; FL and Gulf of Mexico.
Savannah Sparrow; three northeastern respondents, WA, UT.
Chipping Sparrow; upstate NY, ON
Field Sparrow; AL, MO, IA.

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[Most readers of the Blue List find one or more listings or absence of listings with which their own records disagree. Obviously, the more voluminous and widespread the response by experienced observers to our annual appeal, the more valid our published list, and the less valid its criticism. If you failed to submit a blue sheet last year, or any year, start reviewing your records now, and be prepared to document and submit your recommendations for the 1982 list. The Blue List is one of the most important and meaningful ways in which the field observer can impact state and Federal research and protection policies.—Ed.]