
editor's notebook

It's that time of year when we take part in Christmas Bird Counts and other censusing field work designed to remind us that birding is not simply a fair weather avocation. Birds are an active part of our lives year-round, no matter the weather, the geography, or the habitat we share with them. And our *Field Notes* community is one that relishes the changes and challenges each new season brings.

We are facing a new season here at *Field Notes* too. In the past year, our topography has been defined by our superlative editor Kenn Kaufman. One of North America's—or, indeed, the globe's—most astute birders, Kaufman has reshaped our magazine to add significant value to this already worthy publication. He's sought out thought-provoking papers to expand our knowledge of birds in North America and to stretch our ways of thinking about birding. He has quietly and diligently worked to increase the amenities we can offer you, our readers. He has been unstinting in his time and patience, despite an overloaded work schedule that trots him around the map running birding workshops, addressing bird clubs of all size and nature, and continuing his exquisite writing for a number of venues.

He has, in a phrase, brought significant life and light to *Field Notes*. And you our readers have responded. The comments we have received over the past year have been very encouraging, as has the increase in circulation that has come slowly but surely. And for this we owe Kenn great thanks.

But now he has decided it is time to pass the mantle on to a new heir. His current work schedule and commitments to future projects have made it difficult for him to give *Field Notes* the time he feels it so richly deserves. Kenn is a great believer in the skilled birders we have across the continent, and knows that we will be able to find a replacement who is hungry for the challenge of bringing North America's birders that "overview of the changing panorama" of birdlife, from rarities to population trends. And, despite our sadness that Kenn has decided to leave, we here at *Field Notes* also firmly believe that we'll find a wonderful new Editor—we've seen so much of the excellent work going on out there, and have benefitted from the talent that serious birders bring to our table.

Over the next few issues, while the American Birding Association searches for the right candidate, we will have some guest editors fill in. They will be names known from the pages of *Field Notes*—the Winter issue (nesting season reports) will be led by Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin of Albany, New York, co-editors for the New England Region.

The Spring 1999 issue (fall season reports) will be edited by Ned Brinkley, active in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region and a Changing Seasons author. Steve Stedman, regional editor for the Central Southern Region, will edit the Summer 1999 issue, covering the present winter season. We know you can look forward to the insights each of these editors will bring, and we promise there will be no break in our always exciting Regional Reports, feature articles, Changing Seasons column, or Pictorial Highlights.

Even as we settle into the winter and anticipate spring, birding around the continent and in the Caribbean will continue as a dynamic process. If we perhaps proclaim a particular season "boring," there will be nevertheless nuggets that entice us to stay out just a bit longer, to go check one more place, to look over a flock one more time. The rewards for this effort are tangible, and there is no place you'll find them so easily as in the pages of *Field Notes*. In an editorial earlier this year, Kenn Kaufman pointed out how the significant observations made by our network of contributors add to the growing archive of information on birdlife in this part of the world. Having this venue to report those findings is important and adds to our collective knowledge of bird distribution. Thank you, Kenn, for championing this publication—and good luck in your many other endeavors that will no doubt spark more birders to take the plunge and pursue this avocation to its fullest!

—VICTORIA IRWIN
Managing Editor

