

THE WILSON BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL

The Wilson Bulletin enters upon its thirty-fourth year with a larger page than it has ever had, with the assurance that it will be better illustrated than ever, and with a return to a sixty-four page issue. These advances are made possible by the modest increase of membership dues that were voted at the last annual meeting, and by a somewhat lessened expense in its manufacture. For this increase in membership dues there will be more than a corresponding increase in the amount of printed matter during the year. We feel confident that the wisdom of making this forward step will commend itself to every member.

The new Department of Bird Banding, which begins with this issue, is evidence of a rapid growth of the banding movement. We are glad that it has grown to the point where it can fill a department, because we believe that in this movement there is greater promise of the solution of many of the problems of migration and habits than in any other field. Of course we have not yet reached the end of taxonomy, even in North America, but this field now properly belongs more to the specialist in taxonomy than to the great mass of students of birds. Trapping for the purpose of banding is open to the most of us, and when conducted in the spirit of coöperation, the principle upon which this organization was founded, there are sure to be gratifying results. Let us get into this movement for the sake of the cause itself. There is no field that gives promise of greater results.

On another page of this issue will be found a plea made by the U. S. Biological Survey for volunteers who will resume the bird counts which were interrupted by the war. The importance of the continuance of these bird counts will become clear to anyone who stops to think that it is only by such careful work that we can arrive at anything like a correct estimate of the variations in the number of birds that inhabit any given region, and through the various regions, the whole country. Various efforts have been made, from time to time, and by various persons, to determine what effect the settlement of the country, hunting, general shooting, collecting, and various other agencies, have had upon the birds and mammal population of our country. The reports have not been convincing for the reason that they were largely based upon the impressions of men and women who are somewhat advanced in years, and are probably not now as actively engaged in outdoor pursuits as they used to be. But with a mass of material which is the result of accurate counts of the birds during the nesting season, made from time to time in the same area, there will be reliable material from which to make the estimates. We earnestly urge those who can to do this work this year.