

## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A year or so ago the presidential address at the annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science was titled "Ten Million Scientists." This was a plea for full use of our scientific potential, and made specific mention of bird watchers as an important and promising segment in the mass of possible scientific observers. I often think of this when I see the wealth of enthusiasm among members of local bird groups. Such zeal and energy needs only good leadership to be productive of sound scientific results.

There are many types of studies which a local bird club may profitably undertake. Nearly every community has a "pet" bird species, one which is particularly abundant or peculiarly a favorite among club members. I know of one club which has made a group study of Swainson's Warbler, to the benefit of its members and to the advantage of ornithology. Individual members keep careful notes on arrival and departure times, search for nests, spend many hours in observation at the nests, and record all observed items of life history and behavior. Attention is paid to the environments and communities which the birds occupy. Data are pooled, and the result is a mine of information on this somewhat elusive species.

Another local group has systematically conducted forays into significant areas, and in each one has made carefully planned breeding bird censuses. In some cases smaller groups have returned in later years for a repetition of these census studies. As a result of such planning and direction, these forays have genuine meaning and purpose for participating members, and for other bird students as well.

It is axiomatic that bird habitats in every community are changing constantly, and that bird populations fluctuate with these changes. Local students, continuously working in an area, have real opportunities for noting and recording such fluctuations. Gradually but surely data accumulate for a significant ecological study. Witmer Stone's "Bird Studies at Old Cape May" is a classic among such studies. It was made possible through the systematic, and carefully directed, efforts of many workers in the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, and in other local bird groups.

Field trips to interesting spots, "Century Days," and such like activities are fun for all of us, and certainly have their place in local club programs. The same amount of time and energy, well directed, can be much more productive than such efforts usually are. Furthermore, a well-planned program, looking toward attainable results, is much more likely to hold the continuing interest of members.

If the work of local groups is often rather diffuse and meaningless, the fault may lie with professional students and trained amateurs who feel that such activities are beneath their dignity. Yet it is safe to say that many serious workers got their first ornithological inspiration from local bird clubs. Perhaps we might remember that Roger Tory Peterson began his career as a member of a Junior Audubon Club.

MAURICE BROOKS