

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Editor George Hall has suggested reinstitution of "The President's Page," a feature of some of the past volumes of *The Wilson Bulletin*. John Hubbard, who becomes Editor in 1974, has joined Dr. Hall in inviting me to contribute such a page, and I am happy to accept. The "Page" will not necessarily appear in every issue; its nature will vary, but I visualize it as a sort of "editorial" by the President rather than by the Editor.

There are three principal ornithological societies in North America: the American Ornithologists' Union (A.O.U.), the Wilson Ornithological Society (W.O.S.), and the Cooper Ornithological Society (C.O.S.). Each publishes a journal. The question is sometimes raised as to whether the existence of three journals (or even three organizations) can be justified. This is a valid question, and if there were no essential differences among the societies, there would *not* be any justification for the existence of three. The A.O.U. is unique in that it is the "official" professional society for ornithology in North America; if any "official" voice is needed, the A.O.U. provides it (such as the recently formed committee to advise the National Science Foundation on relative importance of the various bird collections in U.S. museums). The A.O.U.'s journal, *The Auk*, should reflect *everything* that is going on in ornithology. With a limited number of pages per year, however, *The Auk* can only be a sampler. I believe the other two journals should continue to publish a broad range of papers, but each should have an "angle" such that an author would think of a manuscript as especially appropriate for *The Wilson Bulletin* (or *The Condor* or *American Birds* or *Bird-Banding* or a state journal). The C.O.S. is still primarily a western organization, and during most of its history *The Condor* emphasized western North America, Middle America, and the Pacific. Although still the repository for many papers on this regional basis, *The Condor* now publishes many more with general or even eastern subject matter.

Although the W.O.S. had its origins in the midwest, only the oldest ornithologists still have any tendency to think of it as a midwestern organization. Its meetings have been held from the Colorado mountains to the coast of Maine, from Ontario to the Gulf coast of Alabama. The emphasis in *The Wilson Bulletin*, except in its earliest years, has not been regional. In W.O.S. Council discussions in recent years, the prevailing opinion has been that *The Wilson Bulletin* should emphasize the publication of *field-based* studies. This leaves plenty of scope for variety, but reduces the amount of space available for (although we continue to publish papers on) anatomy, experimental (i.e., lab-based) physiology, some kinds of systematics, synthetic and theoretical ecology based on other people's field work, etc. The W.O.S. has a higher proportion of non-professional ornithologists among its members than is true of the A.O.U. and C.O.S., and the kinds of contributions to ornithology most often made by non-professionals lie primarily in field-based studies. The term "non-professional," incidentally, is used here without any implications concerning relative competence. As editors in particular are aware, there are "non-professionals" among our best and most prolific ornithologists, and there are some real duds among the "professionals."

With respect to the contents of *The Wilson Bulletin*, George Hall has pointed out to me correctly that the professional or experienced non-professional is quite content if there are one or two good papers per issue that touch on his or her own field, and will generally read at least the abstracts of the rest of the papers. An interesting abstract often "hooks" the reader, stimulating the tackling of the entire paper even if it is in an unfamiliar field. On the other hand, some Wilson Society members, of less experience and less understanding of what a scientific journal is all about, feel cheated of dues money if *all* of

the articles are not of immediate interest and comprehensibility. I have consistently maintained in Council discussions that the W.O.S. cannot cater to this group. There is a "Birding" magazine for people who are interested in nothing more than that. The serious amateur should expect to use *The Wilson Bulletin* as a means of *learning* what is going on in the study of birds outside of his or her own immediate interest. To that end, the Editor and the editorial board are mandated to see to it that all papers published in *The Wilson Bulletin* are well written and readable without diminishing in any way their scientific merit.

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ORNITHOLOGICAL NEWS

The A.O.U. Committee on Classification and Nomenclature has recently published *The Thirty-second Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds* (*Auk*, 90:411-419, 1973). Beginning with the December issue the names of birds used in papers in *The Bulletin* should conform to this new list.

Members will notice the long list of Resolutions voted at the Annual Meeting. This shows an encouraging awareness on the part of the membership in current conservation problems. As mentioned earlier on this page (85:88, 1973) all too often this opportunity for the Society to take a stand is lost. It is hoped that even more problems will come to the attention of the Committee on Resolutions in 1974.

The frontispiece to this issue shows, and a paper in the "General Notes" section discusses an exotic form which has apparently become established in some parts of the East. It seems likely that most people at inland locations or otherwise distant from the places involved have little idea of the magnitude of the imported bird industry in this country, and of the number of exotic species that, at least temporarily, have established themselves. The December issue will feature a three-part invited symposium on the exotic avifauna of three key areas in the United States.

Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. has retired as director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, being succeeded by Douglas A. Lancaster. Our understanding is that retirement will mean little change in former President Pettingill's active schedule.

A recent study carried out by Joseph J. Hickey, President of the A.O.U. has shown that the membership in the three major American Ornithological Societies has remained constant for a number of years. In the face of increasing population, and increasing interest in nature in general and birds in particular such a result is difficult to understand. At the recent meeting the members of the Executive Council resisted the temptation to raise dues in the face of rising costs, but all agreed that one way out of this dilemma was an increased membership. It would seem reasonable that almost every member of the Society would know at least one person whom he might nominate for membership in the Society, and so it is earnestly hoped that all members will make use of the nomination forms enclosed in the front of this issue of *The Bulletin*.