

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

It is with mixed feelings of regret and relief that I approach the end of my term of office as your President. My service began two and one half years ago in sad circumstances, but with high hopes and resolves. Thrust into the Presidency prematurely, without the counsel and guidance of my predecessor, and with a small nest of loose ends to ravel up, the first months were confused and uncertain. But gradually, with the willing assistance and advice of officers and members from all parts of the state, the problems began to ease and solutions appear.

In these months we have seen some of these hopes and goals reached, others come close to fruition, while still others, regretfully, remain for my successor; I suspect it shall always be thus.

The Federation has prospered and grown in individual membership, in member clubs, and in total membership as our clubs themselves grow larger. We now number 38 clubs, and few indeed are the areas of the state unwatched by members of a Federation club. Ideally, every square mile of New York State and its waters should be under ornithological surveillance, and every club joined with us in mutual endeavor. We failed to induce the one club in the state which has remained a "holdout," after a long colloquy, but perhaps some day it too will join the fold. Individual membership has not grown as swiftly as we had hoped. With our fine quarterly journal and our many worthwhile activities, there would seem to be only one reason why: not enough recruitment activity. With more individual memberships, we will be able to afford a much more ambitious program of publication and research. Surely one thousand members is not beyond the realm of possibility for the near future.

We are delighted with the development of the *Kingbird*. Transition to the new editor was smooth and efficient, and in Dorothy McIlroy we have a dedicated and capable editor. We have a streamlined editorial board, brimming with ideas, and an active, efficient Kingbird Business Manager. A minor triumph was acquiring a second-class mailing permit for the *Kingbird*, an appreciable economy. A new printer has been engaged, and the handsome appearance of this issue is evidence of our progress. In brief, we are well on the way to producing the finest regional journal in American ornithology. Its success, however, continues to depend on the quality and quantity of the manuscripts submitted by the membership. Finally, we have recently revised our advertising rates to a more realistic, and profitable, scale. We are still in need of someone to solicit advertising.

During our term the John J. Elliott Memorial Fund was established to provide an annual award for the best paper published in the *Kingbird* during the previous year. The first recipient (of a \$40 cash award and a

handsome scroll) was Stephen W. Eaton, for his paper on the status of the Wild Turkey in New York State. We believe this prize will be a lasting memorial to our late President, and an added stimulus to would-be authors. The fund, now over \$1000, remains open for further contributions.

In the field of conservation, we have been extremely active; successfully in some of our causes, less so in others. Eternal vigilance is the requirement of the conservationist these days. There are so many attacks upon our areas of interest that all of us could devote full time to these activities, this journal could be filled with this subject alone, and still we would not do them all justice. We need a Conservation Committee of far more widespread participation; the Chairman no matter how diligent, cannot do it all himself.

Our most important project, the State Book, has progressed slowly. For the work to begin in earnest, we must find funds to sponsor our editor, John Bull, during his period of authorship. We may be prematurely optimistic, but as these words are written we appear to be close to that long-awaited day. A sponsor of great resources and prestige is actively interested, and we will be making presentations to its officials soon. Meanwhile two books which will be of assistance in the preparation of the state book have been published in New York State. Both are by our members, and while neither was sponsored by the Federation, many Federation members gave assistance in their preparation. They are John Bull's *Birds of the New York Area*, and *Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region*, by Clark S. Beardslee and Harold D. Mitchell.

Your Federation has progressed in other ways. A needed dues increase, while it may not seem to be progress, will put our finances on a sound footing again, and seems assured of ratification this fall.

The site of the 1966 Annual Meeting has been confirmed, and we are hopeful that the location for 1967 will be announced soon.

A book of standard practice for officers and chairmen is in preparation, and will make for continuity in all our operations.

The nest card program which we initiated has been turned over to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, where it has grown into a national effort. Our annual waterfowl count has continued to flourish.

One thing the Federation badly needs is more active participation by its members. Attendance at recent annual meetings has been disappointing considering the interest and value of these meetings, and the considerable preparation they entail. Most of our committees, although they are composed of long lists of names, are actually the dedicated work of the chairman alone, except for a single meeting each year. One of the biggest problems we face is that of communications. A letter or communication from your President or a committee chairman, intended to be disseminated among all the members of our member clubs, often

is seen only by the addressee—the President or Secretary—and is never passed along. The *Kingbird* itself, where announcements are made and bulletins issued, is seen by only a fraction of our members. This is another reason why an increase in individual memberships would be worthwhile.

Looking to the future, I am tempted to restate our hopes and goals for the Federation. But a capable new President, Allen Benton of Fredonia, is about to take over, and we will leave the course of our good ship for him to determine henceforth. We wish him and his administration, and the Federation, every success.

I take this opportunity to thank all those officers, chairmen of committees, club officers, and members who have helped make these years fruitful and rewarding. It has been a most pleasurable experience.

Robert S. Arbib, Jr., 226 Guion Drive, Mamaroneck, N.Y. 10543

JANUARY 1966 WATERFOWL CENSUS DATES

In the hope of increasing participation by member clubs, the dates of the Federation's annual waterfowl census have been set far enough in advance so that it can be scheduled as a regular field trip. The census will be taken January 15–23, 1966. If the weather is good on Sunday January 16, as many as possible should make their counts that day. If the weather is very bad, the preferred alternate is January 23. If neither date is possible for your club, the census may be taken any time during the period. Please send the report, giving the date the census was made, area covered, and number of individuals of each species of waterfowl seen, as soon as possible after the census to John L. Mitchell, 345 Conrad Avenue, Rochester. He will again compile the summary and the comparison with the Conservation Department's aerial census for publication in the *Kingbird*.



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Recommended by Roger Tory Peterson