

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A belated holiday greeting to one and all. By now most of you have been on a Christmas Census or are watching the wintering birds at the feeders. Each winter brings a few surprises to each area. This year a Brazilian Cardinal *Paroaria cristata* has been feeding at trays in Albany – obviously not a voluntary immigrant from his South American home.

Such exotics are certainly escaped cage birds and each year brings more and more such species, most of which cannot survive the north-eastern winters. The Brazilian Cardinal has been known to survive two consecutive winters in New York so this species may become established. We might think such a lovely bird could only be an asset to the avifauna. That's what Floridians thought when escaped Red-whiskered Bulbuls became established in their State – and now they know better. It is far too easy to import cage birds, and too many of these escape careless owners. Our native species are already suffering because of introductions of such aliens as the House Sparrow, Starling, and Rock Dove to chance even one more introduction no matter how attractive the species may seem.

Usually the recorders do not report such escaped cage birds; it seems so obviously not native and not a part of our list that we forget what might happen. It might be of some importance for us to record such events in the future and to mark winter survivors until the day that well enforced laws are passed to prevent any accidental or intentional releases. After all, most of these birds are wild species of some nation where they are trapped for the trade we encourage; we allow no such activity in our own nation.

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