

EDITORIAL — *The Kingbird* of the 90s

It sometimes seems hard to believe that this issue of *The Kingbird* starts the seventh year that I have been Editor. Those years have seen change in Regional editors and in the format of the Regional reports. A new feature, the spring arrival and fall departure dates tables, provides an ever improving data base about one aspect of New York's ornithology. And I have had the pleasure of working with a variety of interesting contributions to New York's ornithology submitted by both amateur and professional ornithologists.

Now, at the start of the 90s, where should *The Kingbird* go next? Although I don't know the answer, I do know from where the answer will come. It will come from those individual members of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs who take the time to share their fascination and enjoyment of New York's birds by preparing and submitting papers to *The Kingbird*. What will these papers describe? New distributional records, unexpected avian behaviors, new insights to avian ecology and conservation are just a few of the old topics that seem never to age.

How many of us remember that, not so long ago, Ring-billed Gull was a rare bird in most of New York? What avian success stories are unfolding now? What is vanishing? We have all heard about "the good old days" of New York birding. Were they really that much better, and how can we prove it? This season marks another in a sequence in mild winters, and some believe this is just a portent of profound changes in climate yet to come. If the future so unfolds, how will New York's bird life change? Real understanding comes only from solid information about the birds around us now, just as today's ornithologists use those classic "birds of..." papers to understand the context of today's birdlife. The Regional reports will be an increasingly valuable resource, especially as more observers contribute to them. Longer contributions, describing the birdlife of that favorite place you visit over and over, with careful assessment of both bird population and habitat changes, can be equally important.

Bird behavior can both entertain and annoy us. The strange event you've never seen before may merit a brief note, if only to encourage others to report similar observations in the same or other species. When the behavior seems likely to be repeated, watch carefully. How often does it occur? How many other birds do it? And under what stimuli and conditions? Simple field notes carefully kept can open a new world of

birding to you, a world which can and should be shared with the rest of the Federation through *The Kingbird*.

But isn't the natural history of New York's birds already known? *The Atlas of Breeding Birds of New York State*, *The Birds of New York* and *The Birders Handbook* are accessible resources for you to learn how much, and how little, is known about so many aspects of New York's birdlife. The missing pieces will come from your insights and, more importantly, from your submissions, which will define *The Kingbird* of the 90s. I'm looking forward to the final result.

The Editor