

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Donald A. Windsor
PO Box 604, Norwich NY 13815

Your new editor approaches this challenge with trepidation, but also with a clear vision of what *The Kingbird* should become. Let me introduce myself. I am a zoologist by training, specializing in protozoology, comparative physiology, and parasitology, with an overriding obsession for theoretical biology. However, for the past three decades I worked as an information scientist in a pharmaceutical research and development facility. Some of my most creative publications deal with bibliometrics, the statistical study of information structures. I do have a number of publications, so I am no stranger to the editorial process. Consequently, I approach this editorship with a dual background, zoology and information science. When confronted with data, I look for information, that is, meaning. When confronted with a nice story, I look for supporting data.

Let me state my strongest belief and firmest bias. Journal articles do not stand alone. They are woven into the fabric of the literature that has already been published. An article without references to the literature is unfinished. It needs to tell the reader how it fits into the body of knowledge that has already been accumulated on the subject. This is a responsibility of the author, not the reader. My job as editor is to enable authors to communicate with readers - both present and future. A journal publishes for posterity. Authors of journal articles write for the future, for readers who will be reading us long after we are no longer able to write. We are writing about birds that some of our readers might never get a chance to see. We are recording the demise of some species and the rise of others. Profound changes are occurring to our planet and we are documenting them. No one can predict the future but some trends are too obvious to ignore. The constant destruction of natural habitat and its replacement by a human centered one is a certainty. Birds that prosper because of human activity deserve at least as much coverage as those who suffer. Rare birds may be important to listers, but common birds may be more important to biology. The fact that a distant bird blew into New York is definitely worth recording, but the rise of urban birds may be much more important. As editor, I will actively seek out articles which deal with these new developments. You will notice

that articles now have terse abstracts, which should facilitate both reading and retrospective searching. Author's names and addresses have been united as part of a goal of presenting all bibliographic data on the first pages, where they belong. The inclusion of keywords is now optional. Guidelines are being formulated for their use.

However, before making too many changes I have to learn the ropes. Although I have been a newsletter editor for over a decade, this is my first experience editing a journal. Already, it is more overwhelming than I expected. Paul DeBenedictis and Manny Levine are great role models and I will try to draw upon their wisdom. Bob Spahn will be editing the Regional Reports so my concern will be focused on the front end of the journal. I also hope to draw upon the insights of the authors and the readers. Please tell me what you like and dislike, what you want to read. Reader feedback is essential. When your issue of *The Kingbird* arrives, do you read it? Do you intend to read it, but cannot seem to get to it? Or, do you toss it aside? I want you to read it. Tell me what I have to do to get you hooked.

Although I have been a Christmas Count Compiler (Sherburne) for over a decade, I must confess that I am not a conventional birder. I have tried to be, but (alas) never seemed to make it. My interest in birds dwells on their biology, not on my life list. Driving somewhere just to see a bird is something I cannot fathom. Nevertheless, I do enjoy birding and manage to do some almost every day. My reason for mentioning this handicap is that I may need some tutorial guidance from those of you who are real birders. If you feel compelled to set me straight, please be encouraged to do so.

One final venality. I am fascinated by controversy and the hammering out of ideas. I would encourage a point-counterpoint dialog dealing with the big issues in New York birding. These are turbulent times and we are faced with many. Can't think of any? That proves we need such a feature! Here is a sample what I mean. In a natural ecosystem, large predators (wolves, cougars, bears) regulate the smaller predators (skunks, raccoons, foxes, coyotes). It is these smaller predators which prey upon birds, especially nesting birds. Does the Federation have an interest in the reestablishment of large predators in New York? What about regulation of cats, cowbirds, or crows? Birding ethics and tape recorders or trespass? Biocides? Captive breeding? The list of issues is virtually endless. If you want to participate in these discussions let me know. Short arguments, one page or less, are sought.

In conclusion, I want *The Kingbird* to be read by birders. I welcome your suggestions and comments.