

EDITORIAL — FEEDBACK

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The Federation is an organization run entirely by volunteers. We are not omniscient, nor are we mind readers. We rely on information passed to us by the members we serve. We need feedback!!!

The subscriber base to *The Kingbird* consists mostly of individual memberships in the Federation. As Editor I am often exposed to various expressions of dissatisfaction, not only with this journal, but extending to the Federation itself. Most of these criticisms are well founded and deserve to be considered and resolved. However, criticism often engenders disagreement, because different folks with diverse backgrounds see things differently. Such opposing views can lead to substantial improvements.

Regional Reports. In last month's editorial, Regional Reports Editor Bob Spahn presented his views on the Regional Reports. Another view, expressed by former Region 10 Editor Tony Lauro, is printed in the Letters section. The Regional Reports are a very important Federation activity. As such, they deserve to be well thought out and discussed.

Steve Kelling in Region 3 is pioneering a new format for reporting species, each on its own line. What do you think? Would you want all Regions to report this way? The upside is easier location of species. The downside is that we have to use a smaller font (8 point) in order to offset the additional space.

NYSARC. The NYSARC report in the last issue generated some criticism. Most of it wonders why reports are rejected. Communication with submitters of reports seems to be wanting. However, no one has yet submitted a formal letter. NYSARC is another important Federation activity. It too deserves open discussion. Grumbling in private solves nothing. We need some feedback here. A big shock to me was hearing that some birders refuse to submit their observations to their Regional Editors or to NYSARC. Such a stance results in a significant loss to the birding community. We must learn why such behavior results and do our best to ameliorate these instances.

Everyone should get into a fight every now and then, just to summon up the blood. But I hate to see birders squabbling with other birders. We should all be on the same side. Anyone itching for a brawl, is encouraged to take on some of those guys who are destroying habitat.

Readership. Feedback is essential for *The Kingbird*, because our readership sweeps across a broad gamut, ranging from professors of ornithology to beginning backyard birdwatchers. I have a vague impression that its composition is about 10% credentialed ornithologists, 30% more who are other-ologists interested in avian biology, 50% strictly birders, and 10% just casual birdwatchers. But hey, what do I really know? No survey has ever been

taken. Thus, the reliance on feedback. Comments already received reveal mixed signals. Articles are too specialized, say some. Too general, too shallow, say others. Not usable by ordinary birdwatchers, not at all interesting... Pleas for more and better photos are frequent. As a result, until I get more feedback, expect a motley assortment of something for everyone.

Letters. The Letters section of *The Kingbird* is available for discussion, so please take advantage of the opportunity. Such public debate works best if each letter is limited to a single subject, focuses on issues, rather than personalities, and is short. Some of you may have difficulty putting all your thoughts into such a restrictive format. If so, perhaps I can help. Call me to test drive your ideas: 607 338-4628.