

OTHER PUBLICATION PROJECTS

During these 50 years, the Federation has had a major role in four projects that have culminated in the publication of a major book about the ornithology of New York State. While the nature of the Federation's involvement has varied, all were originated by and fully supported by the Federation and its members.

Birds of New York State. John Bull. 1974: Another of the key objectives of the founding members in 1948 had been to prepare and publish a new treatise on the birds of New York State to update Dr. Elon Howard Eaton's monumental two volume work published in 1910 and 1914. However, in spite of the untiring efforts of our early leaders, this objective wasn't realized for 26 years.

As early as 1951 Gordon Meade, who had just completed his terms as our first president, was appointed chair of a committee to explore possibilities of revising Eaton's book. This committee was active continuously until the book was published. Meade was chair for six years in two different periods. He was succeeded in 1955 by Robert S. Arbib Jr. who, except for short periods when Harold Mitchell and Joseph Taylor were chair, served until actual publication, a total of 15 years. Many others, including Allen Benton, Kenneth Parkes, Harold Mitchell, William Webb, and Hazel Ellis, were also instrumental in the work of the committee. One of the committee's early tasks, one that involved a long series of meetings all over the state, was the establishment of criteria for such fundamental definitions as abundance and distribution.

Surviving documents also make clear that from the start many activities of the Federation, such as the Bibliography work, the Waterfowl Census, and later Migration and Breeding censuses that the clubs were asked to conduct, were all thought of as related directly, or in part, to the production of the book. By 1952 the committee had decided that several editors should handle different phases, and three sub-committees were named to undertake different studies. Each Member Club was also asked to name a representative to be a contact for the committees.

It wasn't until 1964 that the Federation was able to name John Bull as the author-editor of the new state bird book, and then it was another 10 years before publication. Financing had always been the limiting factor. Finally, with key support

from the American Museum of Natural History, with which Bull was associated, and a significant grant in 1966 from the Dan Caulkins Fund that allowed the author to devote full time to the book "for three or four years," the end was in sight. At the Annual Meeting in May 1973, Arbib was able to announce, for the Publications and Research Committee, that the manuscript was with the publisher and that the committee endorsed the book. Following publication by Doubleday/Natural History Press in 1974, *Birds of New York State* immediately became recognized as the "bible" on New York's birds.

After several years of new information had accumulated, the Executive Committee agreed to publish a *Supplement to Birds of New York State*. Bull prepared the necessary material and it was published by the Federation in 1976.

Where to Find Birds in New York State - The Top 500 Sites. Susan Roney Drennan. 1981: First championed by the Publications and Research Committee in 1952, preparation of a New York State birding baedeker was another project that required the passage of nearly three decades to be realized. Finally, in the mid-1970s the committee proposed, and the Federation's Executive Committee invited, Susan Roney Drennan to write such a book. By 1979, Publications and Research Chair Robert S. Arbib Jr., and Drennan, both professionally associated with National Audubon Society's journal *American Birds*, were able to report that work in preparing the book was 70% complete and arrangements for publication were underway. With a foreword by Roger Tory Peterson, and organized according to *The Kingbird's* 10 reporting regions, the book was published in 1981 by Syracuse University Press.

The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State. Robert Andrie and Janet Carroll, Editors. 1988: The 1980s witnessed the Federation's most demanding project to date: preparation of a breeding bird atlas, based on extensive contemporaneous field work.

The project was under the general chairmanship of Gordon M. Meade. Publication in 1988, by Cornell University Press, followed six years of field work by more than 4,000 volunteers, working in 5,335 separate 5 km sq "Atlas Blocks" covering the entire state. The field work was organized by and under the supervision of 10 Regional Coordinators: Robert Andrie, Dorothy Crumb, Mark Fitzsimmons, Jay Lehman, Dorothy McIlroy, John M. C. Peterson, Gilbert Raynor, Robert Spahn, Robert and June Walker, and Berna B. Weissman.

This project was a superb example of cooperative effort by the Federation and its members; the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, which, in addition to providing financial support, also provided the Project Coordinator, Janet Carroll, who handled all data compilation and distribution and map preparation work; and the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology, which, in addition to hosting many project meetings, also provided the overall Business Manager, Charles R. Smith. The final publication was prepared under the

general direction of the co-editors, assisted by 19 authors of the species accounts, and four artists.

Checklist of the Birds of New York State: First published in *The Kingbird*, and in handy pocket booklet form in 1989, with revisions in 1991, 1996 and 1998, the *Checklist* gives the status and currently accepted taxonomic order and nomenclature of all species accepted by the Federation's New York State Avian Records Committee as having been adequately documented in the state. Emanuel Levine, chair of the Publications Committee, has coordinated this effort throughout.

Bull's Birds of New York State. Emanuel Levine, Editor. 1998: Now, a quarter century after the 1974 publication of *Birds of New York State* by John Bull, the story of the state's ornithology has once again been brought up to date. As described more fully in the 1998 book, in this century the number of species known to have occurred in the state has increased dramatically to the current list of 451 accepted species, an increase of 41 just since 1974.

This time, while honoring Bull for his great 1974 work, and with his endorsement and continuing contributions, Emanuel Levine, longstanding Chair of the Publications Committee, took on the most demanding and formidable task of securing, organizing, and editing the work of more than 60 authors of species accounts and of many other contributors to bring forth this latest updating of the state's ornithological history. From the formal launching of the project in 1993, a key objective, now realized, has been to have actual publication occur in time for the book to be introduced at our Golden Anniversary.

At the 1993 Annual Meeting the Council of Delegates authorized the Executive Committee to proceed with the project and enter into the necessary contracts with the American Museum of Natural History and with a publisher. This followed many earlier discussions, including several with John Bull, and with the Museum, which holds the copyright to his 1974 book.

The Executive Committee appointed Emanuel Levine as Editor and created an ad hoc committee of Levine, Berna Lincoln, Stanley Lincoln, and Richard Sloss to manage the project. Contracts with the Museum and Cornell University Press, the chosen publisher, were negotiated. The copyright to the book will be held jointly by the Museum and the Federation.

A fund raising committee, set up in 1994 with Robert Budliger as chair, was successful in securing significant contributions from Member Clubs as well as individual members. In 1996 the committee was able to report that a \$30,000 commitment had also been made by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation from Return a Gift to Wildlife contributions.

For their work in computerizing and copyediting the entire text from the many individual contributors, Berna Lincoln and Stanley Lincoln were named Associates to the Editor.