

EDITOR'S NOTE

S. S. Mitra

Biology Department, College of Staten Island
2800 Victory Blvd., Staten Island, NY 10314
mitra@mail.csi.cuny.edu

After many years of dedicated service as Editor of *The Kingbird*, Emanuel Levine decided to step down in July of this year. I feel deeply honored that Manny proposed me as his successor, and that NYSOA's President, Kevin McGowan, and its Board of Directors promptly vetted my appointment as Editor at their meeting on 31 July at Vestal, NY.

Commencing with the present issue, my goals for *The Kingbird* are to strive for continuity with the journal's exemplary traditions, and to pursue new directions as appropriate. As Manny so frequently has mentioned, both in conversation and in various *Editor's Notes*, this publication strives to be responsive to its readership as it pursues its function as the primary repository of ornithological data collected by NYS's birders.

As the ongoing acceleration of electronic communication affects all aspects of modern life, including birding, a vast amount of information can be shared rapidly and widely across the birding community. Although the benefits of this discourse are obvious, its limitations should not be ignored. Two of the most significant weaknesses of websites and email lists involve archival stability and quality control. Although the reader will find a number of website addresses in the *Literature Cited* sections of the present issue, it must be remembered that even the addresses themselves often prove ephemeral over very short time-scales. More seriously, as the content of these sites is revised and updated (one of the good things about the internet!), the very essence of any prior reference to them, in any medium, is destroyed. Thus, there really is no substitute for archival media, like *The Kingbird*, which preserve painstakingly distilled data and analysis—along with any shortcomings, gaps, and errors—as a stable reference point for all future readers and researchers.

Established journals like *The Kingbird* also offer advantages over electronic media in terms of quality control. The fluid, minimally regulated content of websites and email lists is one of their principal strengths, but the advantage inevitably comes at a cost in terms of quality control. In contrast, readers of the Regional Reports can approach the data published therein knowing that these data were carefully collected, sorted, analyzed, and vetted by a corps of dedicated editors, specifically chosen for their local and Regional expertise.

This same concept can be, and to some extent always has been, applied to *Kingbird's* feature articles—in the form of peer review. One of my primary goals is to expand the scope of peer review to include all *Kingbird* articles that present data and scientific analysis. In other words, such articles will be read and reviewed by individuals intimately familiar with the subject matter in question.

The prospect of outside review should encourage, rather than discourage, potential contributors, because they can be sure that their hard work will be read by persons with similar interests and passions. The advantages of this approach, in terms of constructive criticism and improvement of early drafts, can hardly be overstated.

I ask that readers consider contributing scientific papers, summaries of longterm studies, photos and descriptions of exceptional bird records, accounts of important birding areas, discussions of conservation issues, birding narratives, and short notes on unusual observations. If an observation is noteworthy enough to merit posting to a website or email group and includes a little background analysis or interpretation, it probably would constitute an excellent short note for *The Kingbird*. My hope is that *The Kingbird* will continue to serve the New York State Ornithological Association as a respected, credible, useful, and permanent archive of our ornithological knowledge and interests.



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