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12-1-1973

### Correspondence from Danny Bystrak and Chandler S. Robbins to Breeding Bird Survey Cooperators, 1973-1974

Danny Bystrak

Chandler S. Robbins

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Migratory Non-Game Bird Studies  
U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife  
Migratory Bird and Habitat Research Laboratory, Laurel, Maryland 20810

December 1973

Dear Breeding Bird Survey Cooperator:

With the exception of excessive rain in parts of New England and the normally arid Southwest, the continent was blessed with good weather for running Breeding Bird Survey routes. In 1973 about 1800 routes were covered in the United States and Canada--a sizable increase over last year's 1606.

The enclosed machine listing is a print-out of the data punched from your 1973 BBS report. We hope that you can take a few minutes to examine it and report to us any errors that you might find. This year, more than in the past, the summary sheets have been checked against the field sheets, thus increasing the importance of submitting original field sheets. If you find a discrepancy between your summary sheet and the print-out, please check it against your field sheets before assuming we have made an error.

You will notice that any obvious migrants have been left off the print-out. This was necessary because the peak of the breeding season occurs very early in parts of the Southwest while some of the northern species are still migrating through that area; rather than have each observer decide which birds to omit as possible transients, we ask that all birds observed be recorded so that transients can be removed uniformly from all parts of the continent as part of our editorial process. It will help if you indicate by footnotes those species that you believe are late migrants rather than summering individuals.

As most observers are aware, the April 1973 issue of the *Auk* included an AOU Check-list Supplement which changes the classification of a few species, but for closely related species that were "lumped," the old species names will be retained for what are now subspecies. Thus we shall continue to use the same names for flickers, juncos, and the others. Only in cases of individuals of which identification is impossible should you resort to the new name (e.g. those poor folks in western Oklahoma who have both Baltimore and Bullock's Orioles). We are following the Supplement in "splitting" the Traill's Flycatcher into the northern and eastern Alder Flycatcher and the more southern and western Willow Flycatcher, and in separating the Great-tailed from the Boat-tailed Grackle. If your print-out says Traill's Flycatcher, please return it with a breakdown of how many Willows and Alders there were (or all Willows--all Alders) if you are able to tell us. Willows say "fitz-bew" and Alders say "fee-bee-o"--often confused with Eastern Phoebes. All routes which should have Great-tailed Grackle on the print-out but show Boat-tailed instead will be changed by us.

Since we have to Xerox about one fourth of the summary sheets every year and the field sheets are ultimately put onto microfilm, it is essential that if pencil is used it be no harder than a number 2 and that ink be any color but blue. The preferred colors are black and red, although blue-black is acceptable. Light pencil and blue ink do not photograph. Please remember this next year.

We extend to you our deepest thanks for the excellent support given to our program and look forward to an equally successful Survey next year.

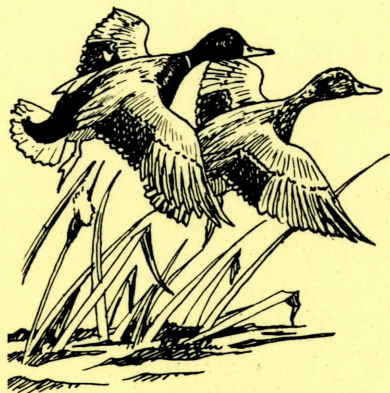
Sincerely yours,

*Danny Bystrak*

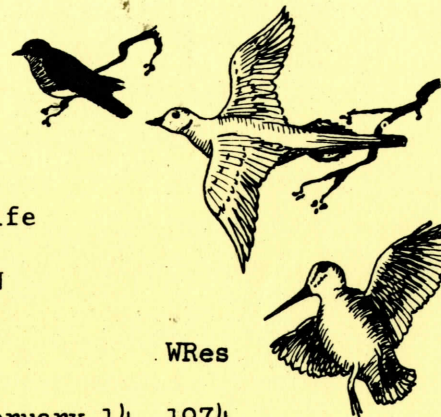
Danny Bystrak  
Migratory Non-Game Bird Studies  
Migratory Bird and Habitat  
Research Laboratory

Enclosure





U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife  
Division of Wildlife Research  
MIGRATORY BIRD POPULATIONS STATION  
Laurel, Maryland



WRes

February 14, 1974

Dear Breeding Bird Survey Cooperator:

Like all of you, we are much concerned about the energy crisis, and are doing our part to conserve fuel and other resources. Your route listing for 1973 is enclosed in the same mailing with this inquiry about 1974. We are not routinely enclosing a Certificate of Appreciation this year to those who participated in 1973, but we shall be pleased to enclose one for you and/or your assistant, with your 1974 packet, if you check the appropriate boxes at the bottom of this sheet.

As of this date we cannot predict what impact the gasoline shortage may have on the Breeding Bird Survey. We sincerely hope that most routes can be covered as usual in 1974, although we fully appreciate that some of you have been driving hundreds of miles to get to your route(s) and that some of the most distant ones may have to be abandoned. Coordinators will do their best to reassign observers to closer routes in the interest of achieving the best possible coverage. Please use the bottom portion of this letter to let us know promptly whether you expect to be able to run your route(s) in 1974.

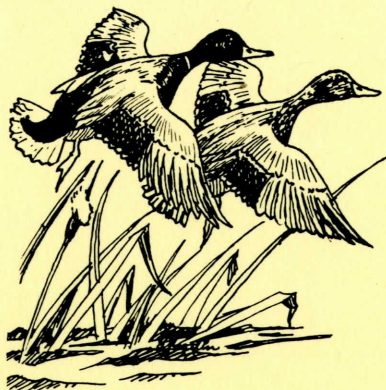
The BBS maps and population trends are being more and more widely used each year. We fill scores of requests for information at the local, state or province, regional, and continental level. The species showing the greatest population changes through 1972 are the Starling (increasing at the average rate of 25% per year) in the west, House Finch (+18%) in the east, Yellow Warbler (-15%) in the central region, Savannah Sparrow (+15%) in the west, Cattle Egret (+13%) in the east, and White-throated Sparrow (+12% in the east and +10% in the central region).

Sincerely yours,

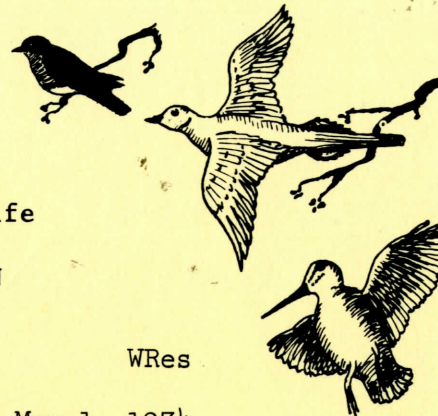
*Chandler S. Robbins*

Chandler S. Robbins, Chief  
Migratory Non-Game Bird Studies





U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife  
Division of Wildlife Research  
MIGRATORY BIRD POPULATIONS STATION  
Laurel, Maryland



WRes

May 1, 1974

Dear Breeding Bird Survey Cooperator:

Thank you for volunteering for another year of the Breeding Bird Survey. If the gasoline is still flowing in June, it appears that we will have another highly successful year.

Please continue to record Yellow-shafted, Red-shafted, and Gilded Flickers, Myrtle and Audubon's Warblers, Slate-colored and Oregon Juncos, and the other birds that were combined by the AOU last year. Since these are readily distinguishable subspecies, we intend to continue treating them separately indefinitely.

Although many observers expressed uncertainty over separating their Traill's Flycatchers into Willows and Alders and most have difficulty hearing "Fitz-bew" in a Willow Flycatcher's song or "Fee-bee-o" in an Alder Flycatcher's, please, whenever possible, specify Willow or Alder on the field sheets and summary sheets. Also separate Great-tailed and Boat-tailed Grackles.

Lastly, please use soft pencil or dark ink on your forms to make it easy for us to Xerox them when necessary.

Sincerely yours,

*Danny Bystrak*

Danny Bystrak  
Migratory Non-Game Bird Studies  
Migratory Bird and Habitat  
Research Laboratory