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## Commentary

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The Library of Congress, and the Canadian Institute for the Blind. Lang Elliott, owner-operator of NatureSound Studios, developed the concept of a bird song tutor after being motivated by the Library of Congress' "Birding: An Introduction to Ornithological Delights for Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals" series. Whereas, it is obvious that sounds are important for visually handicapped persons in studying nature, Elliott was surprised to discover that narrated, auditory tutorials emphasizing sounds were unavailable to this audience.

In large part because of their calls and songs, birds provide much enjoyment while we are engaged in various outdoor activities. By sound alone, most species of birds can be identified without seeing them, often at considerable distances away. Think about hearing the calls of a Barred Owl at night, a Red-tailed Hawk on a distant ridge, or a Common Loon on the other side of a lake during an early foggy morning. Birders frequently sharpen their avian natural history skills by listening to similar tapes and the USFWS sponsored Breeding Bird Survey program is extremely dependent upon bird identification by sounds. As visually dependent creatures, we often forget how important are sound for species identification and communication. As stated in the advertisement booklet, these cassettes provide "A narrated introduction to the sounds made by common birds, frogs, insects, and mammals of the eastern United States and Canada" for visually handicapped individuals. The two cassette tapes (four sides, 120 minutes total) contain the sounds of about 70 species. However, the program is dominated by birds; by my count there are 56 identified species of birds. Further, many avian species are represented by mechanical sounds (e.g., woodpecker drumming), calls, and songs.

The tapes are divided into several sections that explore animal sounds. In the introduction to the diversity of natural sounds, the pitch, quality, and timing are discussed. Another section explores the function of sounds, such as, alarm calls, begging calls of young, and breeding calls. But most of the tape time is devoted to identifying the various species by habitat association or settings. For example, types of habitat or setting include the city; suburbia; farm and field; stream, swamp, and lake; deep forest; and ocean coastline. The farm setting is further divided into sounds typical of the morning and evening hours.

The tutor is available for no-cost loan to patrons of the NLS. Sighted listeners may also find this tutorial as a useful introduction to the world of natural sounds.—**James A. Rodgers Jr.**, Wildlife Research Laboratory, 4005 South Main Street, Gainesville, Florida 32601.

## EDITORIAL

**Acknowledgments.**—This concludes my third volume as editor of the *Florida Field Naturalist*. I wish to thank the officers and members of the Florida Ornithological Society for support of the journal. Special thanks go to the Associate Editors for their assistance with producing the journal. I sincerely appreciate the conversations with many FOS members, especially L. Atherton, for making suggestions to improve the quality of the journal. My editorship was made easier with the support of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. The following individuals accepted the arduous, thankless, and blithe task of reviewing manuscripts during this volume: T. Below, W. Biggs, D. Buden, J. Cox, J. Diemer, R. Duncan, T. Hardisky, W. Hoffman, S. Humphrey, J. Jackson, F. Johnson, H. Kale, H. Langridge, J. Layne, F. Lohrer, B. Millsap, R. Norton, O. Owre, R. Paul, W. Robertson, L. Short, H. Smith, S. Sprunt, H. Stevenson, N. Synder, J. Wooding, and G. Woolfenden.

**Commentary.**—“Time has come, said the walrus, to speak of many things.” And so I shall take this opportunity to speak to the FOS membership and interested individuals, because as you can see below, there is a lot of empty space in this very slim issue:

Why is there a lot of empty space in this issue? A better question is, why hasn't more material been submitted to the *Florida Field Naturalist* during this last year? Let me list some of the *excuses*: 1) it is the end of the field season and a long hot summer and the number of manuscripts normally decreases at this time; 2) people do not like the review process in order to publish their observations; 3) there are important observations to be published, but people just can not find the time to write a manuscript; and 4) people do not think their observations are worth writing and submitting to the journal. There are several other lesser excuses, but these are the most often quoted ones that I hear from the membership and other professionals when I talk with them.

But these reasons are just *excuses* and they do little to improve the quality and support of the journal by the general FOS membership. Despite the fact that the FOS has a 550-plus membership that spends thousands of field-days observing birds and other wildlife, few manuscripts are submitted by the non-professional members. Let me take this opportunity to invite the FOS members to participate in the support of the journal by submitting their observations. If you require assistance, the knowledgeable and kind Associate Editors are available to help with preliminary drafts of your manuscripts. Let me assure you that, despite the rumors of the review process, publishing can be both a valuable contribution to wildlife biology and an enjoyable experience.

Last, but not least, let me point a finger at the professional deadbeats. In a state that has a well developed private and public university system with numerous faculty and students in the natural sciences, with several state agencies dealing with the environment, conservation, and wildlife, and numerous conservation and environmental consulting firms actively involved in research, it amazes me that I do not have a large backlog of manuscripts. Yet, the submissions from these groups has been disappointing during the last year. I know of several individuals that have done fine research in Florida, but fail to publish once the field work is completed. Let me appeal to these individuals to support the *Florida Field Naturalist* by submitting your manuscripts now!—James A. Rodgers Jr., Editor.

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