

EDITORIAL

The State of Pennsylvania Ornithology

Unprecedented progress in the study of birds in Pennsylvania in the last two years is worth noting. After years of statewide somnolence, birders throughout the Commonwealth have awakened to the vast richness and unexplored possibilities in Pennsylvania ornithology.

Two events, in particular, mark this stirring of the status quo. First is the initiation and completion of two successful years of field work by birders throughout the state under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project. This effort marks the start of an historical epoch in the state's ornithological history. The advent of a cooperative project of this magnitude that unites birders from all corners of the state has done more to raise consciousness of Pennsylvania's possibilities in the field than any other single bird event in the state's history.

The second significant event was the appearance early in 1985 of the SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN IN PENNSYLVANIA volume with its chapter on birds. (See review in this issue of *Cassinia*.) Birders, once again, from throughout the state pooled their specialized knowledge to create a major bird conservation document for the Commonwealth. Never before have individuals concerned with Pennsylvania's birds produced so important a statement.

What this activity adds up to is a state of statewide ferment that just begs for further steps. Despite these significant moves forward, Pennsylvania lags woefully behind numerous other states in its ornithological efforts. For example, there is no statewide "official" list of Pennsylvania's birds, there is no bird verification committee, there is no statewide bird journal and, regretfully, there is no statewide ornithological society that can provide a central clearinghouse for these and many other important functions.

Now, while the excitement and interest in statewide bird projects and problems are at their height, is the time to bring together the people necessary to organize an Ornithological Society of Pennsylvania. Individuals throughout the state should meet in the near future to lay the groundwork so that by the time the Atlas field work is completed a few years hence or, hopefully, sooner, an OSP will, indeed, exist to carry on the work so well begun by the Atlas Project and the SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN.