

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

In my first "President's Page" (September 1973) I discussed the roles of some American ornithological journals, with special reference to The Wilson Bulletin. At that time I wrote: "In W.O.S. Council discussions in recent years, the prevailing opinion has been that The Wilson Bulletin should emphasize the publication of *field-based* studies. This leaves plenty of scope for variety, but reduces the amount of space available for (although we continue to publish papers on) anatomy, experimental (i.e., lab-based) physiology, some kinds of systematics, synthetic and theoretical ecology based on other people's field work, etc." In thinking about a subject for my last "President's Page," I became curious as to how closely The Wilson Bulletin has adhered to the balance of subject matter suggested above. I therefore made a rough (and admittedly somewhat subjective) analysis of the articles and general notes in the 1973 and 1974 volumes.

I divided "field-based" studies into 2 categories. In the first, in which most of the gathering of the *data* was done in the field, there were 120 papers (66%). In the second category were studies in which the authors themselves collected their *materials* in the field for later indoor analysis. These materials included bird specimens, egg shells, pellets and droppings, nests, parasites, and sound recordings. There were 33 such papers (18%). Non-field studies were also divided into two categories. Laboratory studies of living birds accounted for 13 papers (7%) and indoor studies of all other kinds for 17 (9%). With 153 field (84%) and 30 non-field (16%) studies published in these years, it seems that our suggested emphasis is being practiced.

The question naturally arises as to whether these figures simply reflect the thrust of current ornithological research in general. To test this possibility, I assumed that The Auk probably publishes an accurate cross-section of ornithological research, and applied the same 4 categories to the papers published there during the same 2 years. I found that 56% were primary field studies, 18% were studies of materials collected in the field by the authors, 11% were studies of captive birds, and 15% other "indoor" studies. The division for The Auk was therefore 74% field-based and 26% non-field-based papers, versus 84% and 16% respectively for The Wilson Bulletin.

Refining the classification, the Wilson Bulletin papers fell (or could be forced) into 18 subject matter categories. The largest of these was behavior, including vocalizations (40 papers). Then came various aspects of reproductive biology (35), followed by food, water, and foraging, with 26 papers. Distributional information was the topic of 23 papers. Broad-scope studies of the biology of single species (in one case a comparative study of 2) accounted for 13 papers. I "lumped" parasitology, pathology, pesticides, and trauma, which collectively included 10 papers. The remaining categories, in roughly descending sequence, were taxonomy, plumage and molt, populations, fossils, physiology, migration, anatomy, predation on birds by nonavian predators, hybridization, techniques, eggshells, and a specimen census.

I made a geographic breakdown of the field-based studies and found, as expected, that most were done in the continental U.S. (114) or Canada (13). Other areas included Mexico (4), Bahamas (3), Colombia, Costa Rica, Hawaii, Jamaica, Peru, and Trinidad (2 each), and Antarctica, Australia, Ecuador, England, Guyana, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Okinawa, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Surinam, Tonga, and Venezuela (1 each). One author didn't mention where the field work was done!

Omitting faunal and other multispecies studies, the subjects of the Wilson Bulletin papers belonged to 46 avian families. The ten most popular groups for study were the Icteridae (16 papers), Anatidae, Laridae (10 each), Parulidae (9), Accipitridae, combined Strigidae-Tytonidae (8 each), Emberizidae (7), and Picidae, Turdinae, and Carduelinae (6 each).

I think this diversity of subject and approach is encouraging, and a good indication that The Wilson Bulletin contains "something for everyone."—KENNETH C. PARKES.