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Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology

A Labor of Love

By Sheldon Dingle
Norco, California

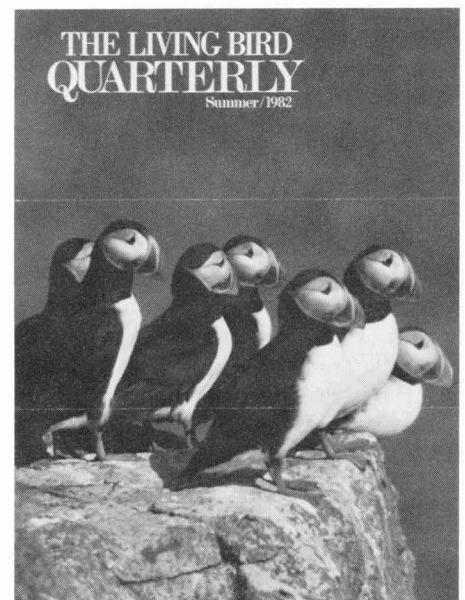
Several centuries ago John Donne sought to, "find what wind serves to advance an honest minde." Today, in the same spirit, I feel that most of the A.F.A. members are honest, intelligent, and have inquiring minds—particularly regarding birds and aviculture. They actively seek out "what wind," so to speak, serves to advance a better understanding of their favorite subject.

In these happy days of enlightenment there are, fortunately, many ways one can gain knowledge. One of the best and easiest ways is to read. The A.F.A.'s *Watchbird* is, of course, devoted specifically to aviculture but there are other periodicals that embrace rather different but very important areas of avian interest. One such magazine is *The Living Bird Quarterly*. It is a new publication out of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

You should know something of the Cornell Lab. It is a world center for the study and cultural appreciation of birds. The Lab is situated on the 180 acre Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary about three miles from the main Cornell campus at Ithaca in the heart of the beautiful Finger Lakes region of New York State. The sanctuary is an especially enticing place for ornithological studies because of its rich natural woodland features that serve as home or a stopping-over place for many native birds. There is a ten acre pond with a variety of wild waterfowl, and the rich flora and fauna is left undisturbed in a natural state of boreal beauty. For the visitors there are four miles of trails winding through the sanctuary from which many birds can be observed.

Low key, blending into the natural set-

ting, are buildings housing offices, photographic rooms, a sound laboratory, a reference library, and an auditorium. There are bird feeding stations just outside the windows and the bird sounds are brought into the building by means of a public address system with microphones located near the feeders. The walls of the rooms are hung with many of the world's finest bird paintings. In a separate facility a short distance off is the peregrine falcon breeding operation pioneered and run so successfully by Dr. Tom Cade. It is not open to the public.



But one of the most important aspects of the Laboratory of Ornithology is the philosophy of its directors and staff. Unlike many organizations, the Lab at Cornell recognizes, enhances even, the soul satisfying interaction between birds

and humans. To the people at the Lab birds are not the untouchable, sacrosanct relics of nature only to be viewed at a distance. The Laboratory is not a museum, it is, indeed, a *laboratory* where humans actually labor with birds. Dr. Cade, for instance, is a falconer who keeps and flies his birds—an aviculturist if you will. The late Dr. Keeton kept many flights of pigeons which he used in his navigation studies. The people at Cornell do not stand by wringing their hands and lamenting at the extinction of this bird or that. They roll up their sleeves and take a hand in the work that must be done to help out birds that are in trouble.

The Laboratory staff also recognizes that millions of ordinary people love birds and know something about them. The Cornell people are not the holier-than-thou ornithologists who refuse to speak to you unless you have a Ph.D. There are many programs designed to teach the amateur ornithologist more about birds and, significantly, the Laboratory listens to knowledgeable amateurs and accepts volunteer assistance in many phases of Laboratory activity.

The Laboratory's main objective is to promote the science of ornithology through education, research, and cultural enrichment, serving both the professional and the amateur. Projects underway now include a colonial bird register; an expanding library of natural sounds; the building up of the ornithological library; gathering a collection of color transparencies of birds from throughout the world that can be used by professionals, students, and amateurs; to continue the captive breeding program aimed at developing a self-sustaining population of peregrine falcons in the wild.

The Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University is a non-profit organization involved in the most worthy work any bird lover could hope for. It deserves your support. You can become a supporting member of the Laboratory for \$25.00 per year. For this modest sum you will receive *The Living Bird Quarterly*, a colorful new magazine with pictures and articles about every aspect of bird life. The magazine is very good with an abundance of outstanding color photos and with articles written by world class experts but written for the amateur as well as for the professional. Contact *The Living Bird Quarterly*, Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York, 14850. You and the Laboratory will both be pleased. ●

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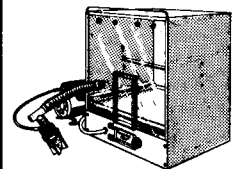
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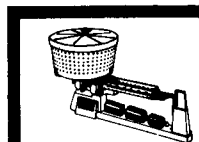


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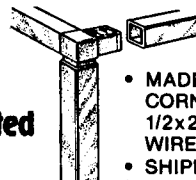


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