

‘European news’ becomes ‘The European Bird Report’

For the past 23 years, we have published in *British Birds*, at six-monthly intervals, an increasingly valuable and comprehensive compilation of records from more and more European countries. Data have been supplied by a correspondent in each country, appointed by or representing the relevant national ornithological society, rarities committee or equivalent organisation. In addition, accepted records have been extracted from every relevant journal or other publication. Thus, ‘European news’ has provided an accurate listing for reference purposes of all the most interesting records (including irruptions, range extensions or contractions, and population increases or decreases, as well as verified rarity records). It has, to all intents and purposes, been a European Bird Report. It has not been renamed as such, however, in deference to the Association of European Rarities Committees (which has, over the past several years, been attempting to compile just such a Report for 1994), since we had no wish to compete with such a compilation. Now that the AERC has announced that it has discontinued this attempt (*Brit. Birds* 93: 86-88), we intend to try to provide this service to European ornithologists. This will entail several changes.

First, and most important, the task has become much larger than it was when we started in 1977. This is compensated for, however, by the advances in technology, with compilation very much easier using a

computer than it was in the old typewriter-scissors-sellotape-and-tippex days, and communication much quicker by e-mail than by airmail. For the past 23 years, the compilation has been carried out anonymously by *BB*’s Managing Editor, but we are delighted to announce that, from the next report, compilation will be achieved jointly with a co-compiler, who will eventually take over as sole compiler. We recently requested help from volunteers (*Brit. Birds* 92: 612) and, from among eight first-class offers, have accepted that from Colin Davies.

Secondly, we aim to convert the current six-monthly listings into a document that more closely resembles a traditional bird report. It will probably be several years before it is possible to produce an annual report including all of Europe’s records for a single year, simply because each country takes a different length of time in which to assess its records. We intend, however, to publish each report in two parts, one covering non-passerines and the other passerines, so that related records will be more likely to be published together. In time, we hope that the concept of a year’s records all appearing in one report will come closer and closer to being realised.

The first part of the next pair of compilations that will form The European Bird Report, containing records from some 40 countries, is almost complete and will be published this spring.

