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ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With this my final message to the membership for my term of office, I wish to express my appreciation for the support I have received.

The AOS has been a comfortable organization. We have a nucleus of professionals and knowledgeable amateurs, supported by a loyal and constant membership. Our Society has grown slowly, and to our advantage in at least one respect: most of us have known each other long enough to have become old friends.

But now we are faced with the disturbance of controversy. We have engaged briefly in the conservation fight, and we have spoken out loudly enough to commit ourselves to a stand. This brings up a point. Although we have had unanimous support for our resolutions and other actions, I sense that the membership at large does not wish to engage in the politics and associated responsibilities which come with involvement in controversial issues.

We need to decide immediately whether we should continue to fight our own private battles for conservation or just give our support to other organizations created primarily for the cause of conservation.

In the past year we have engaged in a letter writing campaign in opposition to the Alabama Water Improvement Commission standards for Alabama streams and we have issued a resolution opposing the stream channelization program of the United States Government's Soil Conservation Service.

We should be pleased that the United States Department of the Interior has expressed dissatisfaction with the Alabama water standards.

In the stream channelization issue, our resolution has been distributed widely, but the success of our campaign appears doubtful.

Significantly, we seem to have lost the support of the state government in both issues. Governor Wallace has notified Secretary of the Interior, Udall, that Alabama's water standards are good enough and we have been advised by the Alabama State Soil and Water Conservation Committee of the wholehearted state support of the stream channelization program.

In regard to our ornithological activities, I feel that we should expand our organized programs and try to interest our membership in greater participation. We need more programs of interest to our younger members and we should include them in our assignments and appointments.

I am sure that AOS can look forward to another successful year and I hope that our new officers receive the same support and consideration that I have received in the past year.

James C. Robinson