

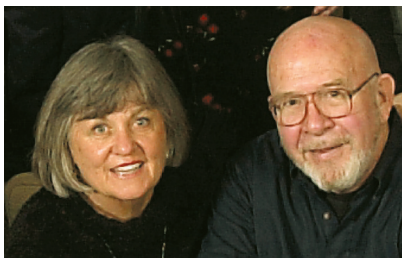
Message from the founding publishers

It's difficult to comprehend that we now embark on our fourth decade of publishing *Bird Watcher's Digest*. And it is especially rewarding to know that this magazine, which started with one mechanical typewriter in the living room of our home in Marietta, Ohio, played a significant role in making bird watching the most popular outdoor activity in North America today.

Our goal has always been to create a magazine that every bird watcher—no matter what level of skill or interest—can enjoy. We strive for a publication that informs, entertains, and educates in equal measure, and that feels like a trusted companion. In today's crazy world—where every minute is scheduled, and all forms of communication are constant—we hope that *BWD* serves as a sanctuary for you, as a break from the everyday, a quiet peaceful place for reading about birds and those who watch them.

And for 30 years, we've made it a priority to be available to our readers. We still answer the phone right here at our headquarters to handle subscription matters and address bird questions.

We owe a debt to the late William M. Sheppard, a friend and Marietta College professor, who helped launch *BWD* and edited the first issue, and to Mary Beacom



**Bill and Elsa Thompson,
BWD Founding Publishers**

Bowers, our longtime friend and outstanding *BWD* editor for many years. In 1988 our son Bill left a high-paying job in New York City to take a low-paying job as Mary's assistant editor—he later took the reins as editor. All three of our children supported the decision to launch *BWD* in 1978 and subsequently, after college and other occupations, all three returned to be part of the family enterprise. Andy is now publisher and Laura directs circulation. We are grateful to and proud of them.

We thank the writers, photographers, and artists whose skills have built *BWD*. We thank the industry partners who have been such fine traveling companions. But most especially, we thank our worthy readers for 30 years of generosity with advice, appreciation, criticism, and, of course, subscriptions.

—Bill and Elsa Thompson,
BWD Founding Publishers