

In Dedication to Chandler S. Robbins (1918–2017)

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DEDICATION

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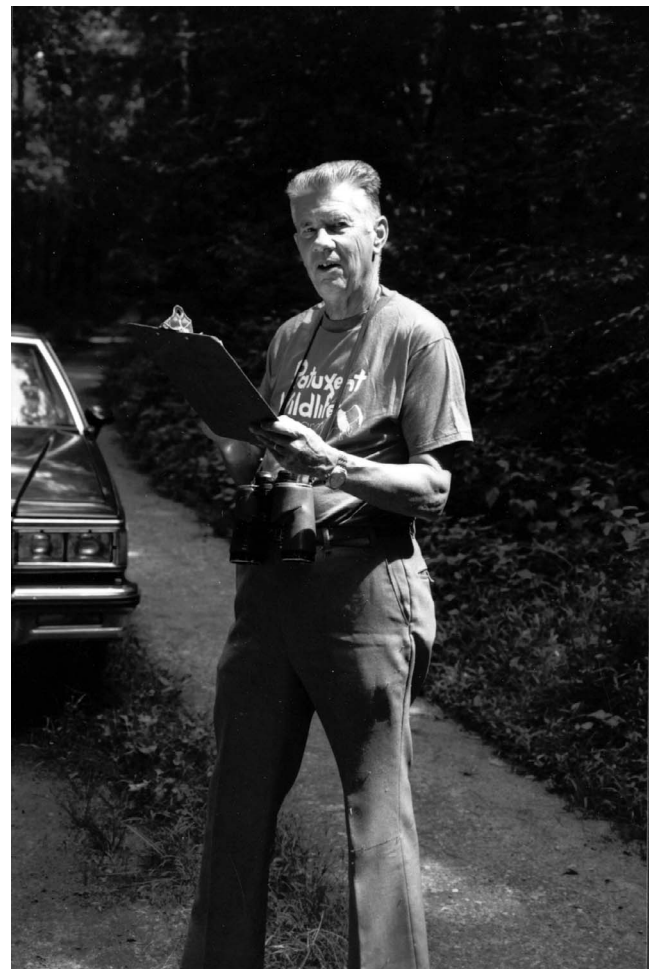
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*The crane's legs
have gotten shorter
in the spring rain*
—Matsuo Basho

An indefatigable avian admirer and world-class scientist, Chan was also a conservation visionary—and his mastery of ornithology, statistics, and social science is nowhere more evident than in the North American Breeding Bird Survey program (BBS). He balanced the competing imperatives of scientific rigor and cultural mores to form a roadside bird monitoring program that spans most of a continent, has endured more than five decades, and now serves as the quantitative foundation for North American bird conservation. At a time when nongame biology programs were virtually unheard of, few thought the BBS would succeed. Even Eleanor, Chan's wife and most ardent supporter, voiced her doubt during the survey's formative years, as did most of his colleagues within the scientific community. Nevertheless, Chan's persistence and careful planning—including his own observations, gleaned in 7 states and provinces over 15 years—paid off. The papers that follow in this Special Section attest to the tremendous success of the BBS. The program has enriched us all by providing the data needed to more clearly see large-scale patterns in avian population change, and by facilitating better stewardship of the natural environment upon which we all depend, birds and humans alike. In gratitude and with fond memories, we thank Chandler S. Robbins for his foresight, creativity, and generosity in developing the BBS. We dedicate this Special Section, based on the 50th Anniversary BBS Symposium at the 2016 North American Ornithological Conference, to Chan and to all those who have shared in his vision through participation in the BBS.



Chan Robbins on a Breeding Bird Survey in about 1985. Photo credit: Barbara Dowell