Letters

To the Editor:

Now that I am about to be Shanghaied to NBS (*Morituri te salutamus!*) I have one last act to do vis-a-vis *Park Science*, aside from wishing you well.

It is this. I note that with increasing frequency you are mentioning particular species of birds in *Park Science*. That is terrific, and clearly demonstrates a maturing publication.

However, there is one thing that you (and others: you are not alone) are doing, and which is incorrect. It is this: English-language vernacular names of birds around the world are carefully chosen, formal and precise names. They are also for that reason proper nouns. Thus, **English names of bird species are always capitalized**. There are no exceptions to this: it is uniform ornithological format. Pick up any ornithological journal or book in English and you will see what I mean. The format is for initial caps only; thus, Red-winged Blackbird, Greater Golden-Plover, Western Bluebird, but convention also leads to Common and Roseate terns–omitting the initial caps for the collective in strings of common names.

Aside from indicating exactly which particular species you are talking about, this practice cleanly obviates such ambiguities as "eastern bluebird": is this a bluebird in the decadent east, or *Sialia sialis*? Etc.

Off the soapbox. Best wishes for the continued health of *Park Science*.

Sincerely,

P. A. Buckley
NPS Senior Scientist