In this issue: Few birding experiences can match the sense of adventure, the thrill of discovery, the deep-down mystery, of a trip to sea. We have much to learn about the identification and conservation, the status and distribution, and even the basic biology of the scores of primarily offshore species that inhabit the ABA Area. Our cover image of a Buller’s Shearwater (Western Gull in background) was photographed at Monterey Bay, California, on 6 October 1995 by © Mike Danzenbaker.

The super-abundant Sooty Shearwater is an excellent jumping-off point for learning about the identification of dark shearwaters in the Northeast Pacific. See article, p. 598. Photograph © by Arnold Small.