



ILLINOIS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Publisher

Illinois Ornithological Society

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President's Message

Dear Members:

One of the issues that puzzles us is why many of the local bird club members do not also belong to IOS. Roughly 30 percent of the membership of the CAS, COS and DuPage Birding Club are IOS members. A substantial percentage of Illinois' American Birding Association members are not IOS members, and the same thing goes for IBET. The question is why not?

I have heard it said that our name, Illinois Ornithological Society, is the problem and that we should adopt a more friendly name like the Illinois Birding Club. It is interesting that COS, one of the state's more successful clubs, is going through this same debate after 93 years as the Chicago Ornithological Society.

Some think IOS is just for expert birders. We do have experts as members, but many of us are also less than expert. One of the great things about being a member and attending our Annual Meeting or going on an IOS field trip is the chance to meet and learn from the experts. In my experience these experts are uniformly approachable and more than willing to help a novice birder.

An IOS offering, Lister's Corner, (see our Web site at www.illinoisbirds.org <<http://www.illinoisbirds.org/>>) shows that of those with totals under 300, approximately one-fourth are not members. Quite a number of these listers can thank IOS for their lifer Smith's Longspur and Yellow Rail.

We're expanding our offerings to provide the leadership and support for programs that enhance birding. We want to focus our field trip program on specialty birds like Smith's Longspur and Yellow Rail, and on educational events like the Gull Frolic.

At the request of the organizers, IOS assumed the organizational responsibility this year for Jim Landing and Dave Johnson's highly successful annual Gull Frolic at Winthrop Harbor. As in previous years more than 100 birders had a wonderful time enjoying winter gulls with our experts pointing out the finer points of aging and identification.

Our thanks go to Dennis Bohm and Dave Johnson for a great event.

Later this year we will be offering another program patterned after the Gull Frolic, a Shorebird Weekend featuring a program on shorebird identification followed by field trips with the experts.

Future years' programs may focus on raptors, warblers or other confusing difficult-to-identify families. Empids anyone?

This year's Annual Meeting is in Rockford the weekend of June 3-5. Bob Montgomery and Dan Williams have a wonderful program planned. Check the program and field trips on our Web site, www.illinoisbirds.org, and sign up online. See you there.

Good birding.

Michael Hogg
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