

# MEADOWLARK

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## President's Message

Spring is one of the most anticipated seasons in the birder's year — a time to seek those coveted birds at your favorite spot and to share birding with someone new. This year, an entire week, May 3 - 10, is dedicated to a nationwide celebration to make the non-birding public aware of the wonders of bird migration and conservation. The week culminates on May 9<sup>th</sup> with Migratory Bird Day celebrations. In Illinois, this falls on Spring Bird Count Day, which prevents many of us from participating in special events scheduled that day. But we can find other ways to promote Migratory Bird Conservation.

One way is to volunteer to help with special activities planned at your neighborhood park, forest preserve nature center, or wildlife refuge celebrating bird migration. Another way you can help conserve migratory birds and other wildlife is to join the Teaming With Wildlife Initiative movement. Hopefully by the time you read this, a bill will be introduced in Congress to develop a funding source for non-game fish and wildlife. If you have ever birded a state or federal wildlife refuge you owe a debt to the men and women who hunt or fish. Money they pay in user taxes on the hunting and fishing equipment and licenses and special permits help preserve and maintain important birding areas.

Teaming With Wildlife hopes to generate similar user fees on equipment (field guide, bird feeders and other outdoor equipment) we and other outdoor enthusiasts use. These funds will be used to conserve and protect additional wildlife and fish habitat, provide additional recreational areas and fund continued conservation education. If you don't know what Teaming With Wildlife is all about, drop me a note and I'll be happy to discuss this issue.

The Society is a member of the "Teaming Coalition" but it is up to you to let your Congressman or woman know how you feel. Until next time, good birding, and remember to spread the word about conserving our migratory birds today.

*Bob Montgomery*

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## About Our Cover:

*Swainson's Hawk drawing by Brian K. Willis. This rare species was recorded on the 1997 Illinois Spring Bird Count.*

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