



Illinois Ornithological Society

Publisher

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President's Message

Heraclitus, the ancient Greek philosopher, said, "You can never step into the same river twice." Although he certainly wasn't thinking explicitly about birds, birding, and organizations like IOS, the metaphor applies there, too. As IOS moves into its second decade, it's not the same organization it was when first founded. When IOS is 20 years old, it won't be the same as now.

To be sure, some aspects of our organization have remained constant. The river of IOS still flows true to its major objectives: publishing a journal of Illinois bird life, improving the knowledge and awareness of birds in Illinois, and keeping a permanent record of Illinois bird life. Sheryl DeVore has been a steady hand at the helm of *Meadowlark* throughout IOS's entire history, and the strength and vitality of our journal has continually grown under her leadership as chief editor. Michael Hogg is the only treasurer IOS has known, and through that role he has consistently influenced IOS to stay focused on course. Also, it's now all 10 years and counting that you've read summer field notes prepared by Vernon Kleen and fall field notes by Bob Chapel.

But our waters also see continual refreshing, replacement, and replenishment. Many, many folks have contributed their time and effort to IOS in the past 10 years, but fresh faces join the ranks of those active in the organization each year. Their new ideas and energy keep Society members growing, improving, and adjusting to better reach our objectives and serve the Illinois birding community. I hope you agree with me that each year we're doing better than the last.

Some of our accomplishments the last few years include publishing the official checklist of Illinois birds and producing a field card. Both reflect the high quality for which we strive in our publications. We've also expanded our field trip offerings, both within Illinois, outside the state, and even outside the country. Right now we are unveiling a scholarship program to support research on Illinois birds (see this issue for more details).

As for the future, the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee is working to complete a description of when regularly occurring Illinois birds are considered out of season, thus warranting documentation. We are moving toward electronic publication of Listers Corner as part of a broader effort to expand the birding resources we provide via the internet. Look for improvements in our web site in upcoming years. We're also devoting more resources toward our newsletter, *Wings Over the Prairie*, to serve you even better. Another future endeavor is to expand our educational efforts.

But most of all, we'd like the IOS river to get bigger. Expanding our membership base is key to build a resource base for our growing activities and services, and now is a good time for this. Just today, at the dedication of a lakefront bird sanctuary in Chicago, I had the privilege of letting city, county and state elected officials and government agency representatives look through my scope at a Great Horned Owl, and at a Cooper's Hawk devouring a European Starling. Their interest in the sanctuary project and their excitement from seeing these great birds is indicative of the growth of birding throughout our state. Feeding this stream of new interest into the IOS river will ensure a vibrant and exciting organization 10 years from now that we'll be even more proud to support.

— Geoff Williamson

Visit our website at: <http://www.illinoisbirds.org>