



## ILLINOIS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

### President's Message

Dear Members:

I am writing this message on Father's Day. It makes me think back to how I became hooked on birding.

My father was raised in a farming community in the South Island of New Zealand during the Great Depression. Yes, its effects were even felt in New Zealand. He earned pocket money collecting bird eggs which he turned in for a small bounty paid by the New Zealand Government. The bounty was paid under the theory that fewer seed-eaters would increase the wheat yields. Dad became an expert nest finder.

As a preteen I grew up on the remnants of a farm on the edge of Christchurch, the South Island's largest city. On our side of the road it was country. On the other it was city. Our house backed on to fields, hedge rows, scattered wood lots and a meandering stream. It was here each spring that Dad took me bird nesting. His intention was not to show me how to rob birds nests, but rather in a more enlightened age to instill the love of nature. I still remember finding a redpoll's, nest which required a trip to the Public Library to identify.

It was the rambles through the countryside with Dad and family trips to the beach and into the mountains that sparked my interest in birds. These experiences combined with a teacher at my primary school (grade school in American parlance) who took me under his wing showing me cliffside Spotted Shag colonies and cave-nesting White-flipped Penguins hooked me for life.

What you may ask has this to do with the IOS? It is about the future of our organization and, more importantly, instilling the sense of stewardship in the following generations without which there will not be the public support for preserving habitat for wildlife.

Unless we each seize the opportunity to mentor young people with whom we become acquainted who show an interest in birds and nature, we are losing a great opportunity to pass on our values and love of birding.

*Good birding.*

Michael Hogg, President  
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