

Letter from the Editor

In the field

As I write this, I've just completed one of the most exciting Spring Bird Counts in a long time. Dave Johnson, Marj Lundy, and I, along with some other birders, could barely keep up with counting the thousands of warblers and other songbirds that were flitting in nearly every tree on the 500+ acre Ryerson Woods in Lake County. We had upwards of 20 Golden-winged Warblers in one little section of the woods – and that is a species of special concern in the United States. Does that mean this warbler's numbers are increasing?

Not at all. The fall-out was more a reflection of the spring weather patterns – cold northerly winds stalled migrants for quite a while – and several storms that came with southerly winds dropped the migrants into the trees beneath where we stood. Lucky for us. But one glorious day in the field doesn't signal much about bird distribution and populations. Rather, many, many days in the field over many, many years can tell us something about birds and their population. And that's why it's important we get out there and count the birds year after year after year.

What's equally, if not more important, in my opinion, is getting out there and improving habitat for birds. In this issue you'll read about people who do just that – Brad Semel and Donald Dann who are protecting and improving habitat for breeding Common Terns in Illinois (see page 6) and Richard Urbanek, who is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help bring the Whooping Crane back from the brink of extinction (see Karen Furnweger's article on page 2). This issue also features other articles written by people who spend time in the field, including all of you who gather all the Field Notes you see compiled each season. Another thing birders can do in the field is introduce youngsters to birding (see Pat Prichard's article on page 16, "Introducing children to birding").

Hopefully, one day the children we introduce to birding will be out in the field counting and saving habitat for birds, too.

Sheryl DeVore

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About Our Cover:

Denis Kania drew our cover of a Whooping Crane with Sandhill Cranes. A well-known artist from DuPage County, Denis works as a naturalist at the DuPage County Forest Preserves. His art work has graced *Meadowlark* since its inception in 1992.

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