

Letter from the Editor

As we head into the holiday season, I would like to thank our wonderful volunteers for the many gifts they offer to *Meadowlark* and the IOS. These volunteers do their work for gratis and make my job so much easier. There's no way to list all the names of those who have contributed their talents to the journal, but I am going to at least try to get some of the names out here who have contributed the most. You can look at past issues of *Meadowlark* and see who I've missed by looking at the names of authors, photographers, board members and others who have contributed.

First to associate editors Steven D. Bailey and Jeff Walk – Steve is a proof reader par extraordinaire and he spends hours researching Illinois bird photos that make the magazine shine – Jeff helps with securing articles from grant winners – no easy task – and Matt McKim-Louder is stepping in to help as well.

Well, then I must thank Denis Bohm, who has organized the grant process for many years – without him, not as many fine stories. (Without him, no records of our IOS meeting minutes, either!)

The artists! We are lucky to have such talented artists who are also birders in Illinois. For more than 21 years, they have been drawing the covers and field notes headings at no charge! We are the only state journal that has this special cover, and it's because of them.

Thanks to Nandu Dubey (an Illinois Young Birder member), Matt McKim-Louder, Peter Olson, Michael L. P. Retter, Jenny Vogt and Barbara Williams. Other past artists have included David Athans, Karen Becker, Leslie DeCoursey, Denis Kania, Walter Marcisz, Eric Secker, Kevin Sierzega, Brian Willis, Eric Wright and Jim Ziebol.

The field notes editors! Gathering the information keeps getting more complicated as editors are now gleaning information not only from personal emails and snail mails, but also ebird and IBET. We have the most comprehensive 21-year history of bird sightings among the many state journals. These data will prove invaluable to researchers for years to come – and as you will read in our president's message, we are on the road to making that data accessible on line. So thanks to Steve Bailey, Bob Chapel, Paul Clyne, Bob Danley, Myrna Deaton, David B. Johnson, Vern Kleen, Kelly McKay, Travis Mahan, Doug Stotz, Eric Walters, Geoff Williamson – all of whom have done the field notes over the years. Bravo!

Christmas Bird Count compilers! David B. Johnson (with help from Al Stokie) and Paul Sweet have crunched a lot of data so that we can see trends – Vern Kleen did the spring bird count article for many years and now we have Mike Ward and Tara Beveroth of the Illinois Natural History Survey sending me the reports to publish.

The photographers! We have some of the best bird photographers in the land and they willingly share their prized pictures with the readers of *Meadowlark*, again at no cost. Did I say that all these folks listed above do all of this for nada? Unbelievable! I am not going to even try to list all the photographers. You'll see their names in issues of *Meadowlark*. We are so proud to be able to share more and more of their photos in color. Check out the spread in the middle. It takes so long for us to choose those photos and we can't even fit

MEADOWLARK

A JOURNAL OF ILLINOIS BIRDS

Volume 22, Number 1 – 2013

ISSN 1065-2043

Visit Our Website at: <http://www.illinoisbirds.org>

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About Our Cover:

Peter Olson created our cover featuring a male Lark Bunting. See inside for information on this bird that spent the summer of 2012 courting a non-existent female. Peter is the assistant director for the NIU Art Museum. His fine art has appeared at many shows, including the prestigious Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wisconsin.

them all in – we've gone over pages just to get in as many of these great photographs. In the beginning, Joe Milosevich sent us scores of photos as did Dennis Oehmke and Eric Walters. Then with their departure, lots more got on board – thank you all so much! Some of the more prolific photographers in more recent years have included Don Blecha, Jackie Bowman, Mark Bowman, John Longhenry, Bob Schifo and Steve Spitzer. Others who have provided scores of great photos over the years include Amar Ayyash, Sam Burckhardt, Paul Dacko, Bonnie Duman, Josh Engel, Matthew Fletcher, Matt Fraker, Frank Holmes, Kanae Hirabayashi, Steve Huggins, Robert Hughes, Dan Kassebaum, Jerry Kumery, Greg Lambeth, Nolan Lameka, Travis Mahan, Walter Marcisz, Emil Martinec, Ivan Petrov, Mary Kay Rubey, Ari Shavit, Brian Tang, Craig Thayer and Matthew Winks.

The authors! Special thanks to David B. Johnson, Steven D. Bailey, Dan Kassebaum, Travis Mahan – who have written more than their share of articles for the *Meadowlark*, and to Christine Williamson, a frequent contributor in the early years. Sue Friscia also wrote many feeder station columns.

I am so humbled and proud to be associated with these fine people. Thank you – may all the gifts of the season be yours including fine views of the birds you love.

Sheryl DeVore

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