



# Illinois Ornithological Society

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## **President's Message**

We are fortunate to be birders, because birders always live in interesting times. The cycles and seasons and movements of birds give us a world of constant fascination. The next cold front might bring a rarity to our birding neighborhood. Our next excursion to the field may uncover an unusual behavior we hadn't observed before. We might find ourselves surprised because we found a summer resident lingering far later into the fall than expected. As birders we keenly observe the world around us, ever-watchful for the unusual, the interesting.

However, we can make these observations only if we understand what constitutes the usual. We must know what birds are common to recognize that one is rare. We must be familiar with the natural history of our birds to remark upon odd behaviors and out-of-season occurrences. For mastering the difference between usual and unusual, we are blessed with a tremendously helpful resource, and it is resting in your hands at this very moment. The Illinois Ornithological Society is now publishing the ninth volume of *Meadowlark: A Journal of Illinois Birds*. Each issue enhances our knowledge and understanding of Illinois birdlife. And this latest issue not only brings us up to date on the most recent happenings in avian natural history around our state, but it also is yet one more building block in Illinois's ornithological record. Nine years and counting! The talents and tireless efforts of Editor-in-Chief Sheryl DeVore and the fine leadership of past presidents Eric Walters and Bob Montgomery were key in making these years of *Meadowlark* possible. Sheryl continues her excellent work as chief editor, and I hope to serve you as well as Eric and Bob have. But the foundation of the ornithological record in *Meadowlark* comes from you. It is all of you who put in hours in the field, hours making and recording observations of Illinois birdlife.

The seasonal reports and the articles detailing significant avian events are an outcome of your efforts as observers of nature. It is my wish that IOS, through its publications and its many other activities, continually helps each and every one of you to improve your knowledge of Illinois birds and your observational skills. We'll then be even better equipped to record the ongoing story of the birdlife of Illinois. And we do indeed live in interesting times. The status and distribution of birds in Illinois are changing. The Eurasian Collared-Dove has arrived. Climate change from global warming may already be impacting the distribution of birds in Illinois, and that influence will no doubt increase. Positive and negative effects of restoration efforts and land use policy will affect the abundance of birds. These changes will unfold in the pages of *Meadowlark* and will be recorded there for the benefit of future generations in addition to ours. All because you saw them, and you reported them.

Please contribute to our understanding of Illinois birds.