



ILLINOIS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

President's Message

Dear Members:

Your board has just held its third of four meetings we hold each year. Our agenda focused on the state of our finances, membership, the next Annual Meeting and our use of electronic media to communicate.

You will be pleased to know that our finances continue to be solid, but at a level that does not permit us to fund much more than our publications. And despite our congratulating ourselves late last year on the year-to-year stability of our membership, our numbers do not look as good right now. Like other state birding clubs, we are suffering a decline. So if you are reading this issue of the *Meadowlark* and have not yet renewed your membership, please renew now to ensure that you will not miss a single issue. Sheryl DeVore and her team of writers and photographers continue to produce one of the best birding magazines in the country replete with seasonal highlights, bird-finding guides and articles of general interest to Illinois birders.

You'll also be pleased to know that after surveying bird club Websites around the country, we have decided to significantly upgrade our own site both as to content and as to functionality. Our Website compares favorably with those of other state bird clubs. However, our survey found a number of features in other sites that would add interest to ours and help improve communications with members and the public. Some of the other states' offerings are well worth considering for IOS such as two meetings each year and member-only value adds like searchable magazine archives and membership directories. Food for thought, and I welcome your comments on these suggestions.

Speaking of meetings, our Annual Meeting chairman, Bob Montgomery organized another wonderful gathering this May at Pere Marquette State Park. This is one of my favorite locations. The scenic park is set in forested hills along the Illinois River. It has a beautiful lodge and access to an excellent variety of habitats. All who attended had a great time meeting old friends, making new friends, and enjoying leisurely field trips in beautiful settings while viewing a wide variety of bird species. And for those who wanted a more intense birding experience, we had the Carlyle Lake trip.

Next year's Annual Meeting plans are already in place. We'll be in the Rockford area on June 3-5, where breeding warblers will be the focus. Mark your calendars and look for the detailed announcement in *Wings Over The Prairie* and on our Website, www.illinoisbirds.org in the coming months.

Here's wishing you all lots of great birding experiences. IOS is here to help you to get more out of your birding. If you have suggestions as to how we can improve our offerings, please let me know.

Good birding.

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