



ILLINOIS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

President's Message

Dear Members:

It's autumn once again. The leaves are falling. The juncos have been in for some weeks and this week, the first American Tree Sparrows arrived in my neighborhood. Only yesterday Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin reported their first Snowy Owls of the season. It will not be long before one is reported here in Illinois.

What avian goodies will this fall and winter bring?

Last year was the year of the Northern Shrike and the redpoll. Shrikes were reported in high numbers (look for an article in a future issue) while Common Redpoll reports increased as the cold weather rolled in with flocks growing to 100 birds or more. We even had more than one Hoary Redpoll to scrutinize. Also notable were sightings of Clark's Nutcracker, Common Raven, Sprague's Pipit, and Rufous Hummingbird. Perhaps the oddest sighting was of an immature Northern Gannet over icy Lake Chautauqua. You can read about some of these fascinating finds in this issue by reading the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee's (IORC) annual report, which we feature in the No. 2 issue of each volume.

Previous issues of *Meadowlark* show that in fall of 2006 birders had the chance to see Say's Phoebe, Yellow-billed Loon, and a Barnacle Goose, judged an escapee by IORC, a finding disputed by some knowledgeable observers.

In fall of 2005, Northern Goshawk sightings were numerous and birders also enjoyed seeing Burrowing Owl, Spotted Towhee, and Townsend's Solitaire.

By November/December the southbound migration is pretty much over, but it is not the time to hang up your binoculars, not even after the Christmas Counts are over. There are still winter finches and owls to look for and gathering hordes of gulls to sort through for rarities. There is still a good chance for a western straggler. And, if you read *Meadowlark*, you'll find something new, different, and exciting that's been found and documented by birders each season. These reports should be enough to make you want to get out there and start looking for more rarities.

Good birding and Good Luck.

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President*

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