

## Letter from the Editor

**It's finally here** – the long-awaited Breeding Bird Atlas, published. (see pages 45-49 in this issue for details.) One of the very first articles featured in *Meadowlark* focused on all the difficult, rewarding and exciting work we birders did to confirm breeding success of our favorite summer Illinois birds a dozen or so years ago. It's all coming back to me now – the joy of hearing the incessant, machine-like begging calls of young Yellow-headed Blackbirds from their natal marshes. Confirmed! The utter discouragement of a male Indigo Bunting taunting me with his song all summer long, yet never confirming his (and his mate's) nesting success. Probable. Never confirmed. The thrill of running across a grassland with a storm cloud following me, ready to release its rain, only to stumble upon a female Dickcissel on her nest. Confirmed! The location of two Cedar Waxwing nests and young right in my own neighborhood, and watching how the parents land much farther below the nest in the tree, then quietly hop up to the nest in the confines of greenery. And then discovering a windy storm that knocked one of the nests down before the young had fledged.

Yes, it's been way too long waiting for this Atlas to appear, but now that it is here, I'm going to revel in those early morning birding adventures I had right near my home. And I'm going to hope that someone will take on another survey as other states are doing, so we can have more adventures, but more importantly so we can document how important it is to conserve the habitats we explored that offer nesting places for Illinois birds.

*Sheryl DeVore*

– Sheryl De Vore

sheryl.devore@comcast.net

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# MEADOWLARK

A JOURNAL OF ILLINOIS BIRDS

Volume 13, Number 2 - 2004

ISSN 1065-2043

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

## Articles

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- The status of wintering Bald Eagles in Central Illinois** 42  
– Richard and Sigurd Bjorklund
- Possible, probable, confirmed! Three authors publish Illinois Breeding Bird Atlas** 46  
– Christine Williamson
- Loggerhead Shrike: an excerpt from the Illinois Breeding Bird Atlas** 48  
– Vernon M. Kleen, Liane Cordle and Robert Montgomery
- Chicago Black-tailed Gull: second inland North American record** 50  
– Robert Hughes
- Kane County Sharp-tailed Sandpiper: fifth Illinois record** 51  
– Scott Cohrs
- Record late fall date in 2002 for Northern Parula** 53  
– Geoffrey Williamson

## Departments

---

- Tenth Report of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee** 54  
– Douglas F. Stotz and David B. Johnson
- Photo Gallery**
- Scenes from Central Illinois: shorebird rarities** 59  
– Travis A. Mahan
- Scenes from Montrose: birds at the shore** 60  
– Robert Hughes
- Field Notes: Fall Migration 2003** 62  
– Douglas F. Stotz

## About Our Cover:

Eric Secker drew our cover of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Eric is a regular contributor to *Meadowlark*.