

## Letter from the Editor

While proofing *Meadowlark*, I realized this particular issue reflects nearly all of what IOS is about. Our lead story, "IOS awards seven research grants," prepared by Bob Fisher, shows how this society has reached one of its longtime goals—to support scientific endeavors that will help us know more about the state's avian life. Having several other organizations supporting IOS with the grants is a sign that the society's desire to work as a team to educate others about birds and support researchers is coming to fruition. And speaking of education, take a look at Robert Fisher's backyard birding column. Not only does this piece offer tips to birders on how to watch hawks from their own yards, it also shows how IOS is reaching out to birders of all skill levels and interests.

IOS also has the goal to publish scientific papers that further our knowledge of Illinois bird species. We are now able to publish more of these important and interesting articles, thanks to the growth of the IOS grants program. I think you'll agree that Mark Alessi, Tom Benson and Mike Ward's piece on Yellow-breasted Chats is fascinating.

And of course, IOS is also about birding, birding and birding. IOS offers many field trips that give some birders new lifers and others a chance to hone their identification skills. Greg Neise's photo story discusses one of the most popular field trips IOS has offered for many years—the boat trip on Carlyle Lake in September. Greg not only got his lifer Sabine's Gull, but also a Red Phalarope, which I'm still waiting to add to my Illinois list. Does seeing it in this magazine count?

And finally, the fall field notes, created from data you send our field note compilers, is a long-standing tradition in Illinois. With seven years of *Illinois Birds & Birding* and 18 years of *Meadowlark*, we now have 25 years of data from each season in the state that scientists can use as comparisons for years to come.

This was one of the most difficult issues I've had to produce in a long time. I won't bore you with the details about deadline and space issues, but I will say that now that it's done, it makes me feel good to know how far we've come. I look forward to where IOS is headed in the future.

*Sheryl DeVore*

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### About Our Cover:

Jenny Vogt created this issue's cover of a Loggerhead Shrike. This species' status has changed from threatened to endangered. See story on page 46.

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