

Jessica Pascoe

Jessica Pascoe, on behalf of the Meeting of the Rivers Foundation in Alton, IL, applied for an IOS Grant to pay for prizes for the Foundation's Bonkers for Birds Coloring Contest. This contest introduces children to birding, aspects of scientific research and the concept of biodiversity. IOS directly provided the funds for the \$500 IOS Grant to the 2009 Bonkers for Birds contest.

This 3rd annual Bonkers for Birds Coloring Contest in 2009 proved to be a great success. St. Louis area fourth-graders were asked to research, draw and color a native bird species. Winning entries were then compiled in a field guide. Every participant received a copy of the guide. The 2009 Contest reached more than 350 students from 17 different schools in the St. Louis bi-state area. Participants came from a wide variety of backgrounds, from inner city St. Louis to rural farm communities.

Students were excited to do the work necessary for the contest and the majority of participants—not just the winners—were excited about producing the field guides, about learning about the environment and about birding.

All 350 participants and families were invited to the Wings of Spring Birding Festival in the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West



Alton, Missouri. Winners were recognized on stage where they received their prizes and certificates, then autographed copies of the field guide afterward. Pictured above are two student drawings used in the field guide.

All of the grant recipients will prepare a summary article for *Meadowlark* when their respective projects are completed.

Eleven grant requests were received this year. All were worthwhile and the selection of the seven finally chosen was difficult. Thanks to Steve Bailey and Jeff Walk for their work analyzing the requests and for their recommendations.

Funds for these grants are raised from IOS activities such as the Gull Frolic, Big Day pledges and

the Silent Auction. This year IOS was able to partner with the Chicago Ornithological Society, the DuPage Birding Club, Southern Illinois Audubon, and several individuals, to increase the amount of funds available for grants. Your Board would like to raise additional sums to fund more requests in the years to come, and hopes that both individuals and other birding and bird conservation groups around Illinois will support this effort as the above organizations and individuals did in 2009. To this end the

Board has established an IOS Grant Fund Donation Program to accept contributions during the year to add to the funding provided by other IOS activities.

Contributions should be mailed to IOS, Grant Program, P. O. Box 931, Lake Forest, IL 60045. Individuals or groups desiring to provide funds to endow an individual grant in 2010, contact Denis Bohm, IOS Grants Coordinator at (847) 235-2738 or e-mail denismb@comcast.net.

—Compiled by Robert Fisher