

Kelly McKay

Kelly McKay of the BioEco Research and Monitoring Center and seven field research colleagues (Cathleen Monson, Robert Bryant, Walter Zuurdeeg, Shirley VanMeter, Jennifer Rothe, Brian Ritter, and Jason Monson) will be using the IOS grant to conduct the first-ever weekly Bald Eagle population survey project on the Upper Mississippi River between Lock and Dams 14 and 16 (Rock Island County) during the 2010-2011 winter season. This research complements the ongoing Milan Bottoms Bald Eagle night roost survey project, which will be conducted for a sixth consecutive winter. The primary objective of the Milan Bottoms night roost study is to document the importance of this location to local and regional wintering Bald Eagle populations, as well as to investigate the potential impacts of various ongoing human development activities, in close proximity to this site, as they relate to night roosting eagles. Milan Bottoms is a major Bald Eagle night roost location, although use has varied considerably between winters.

- In 2005-2006, researchers made 10,386 observations of eagles entering and exiting the night roost throughout the study.

- The number of observations decreased to 2,553 during the 2006-2007 winter season, but rebounded substantially in 2007-2008 to 6,957 total observations.



Kelly McKay (far left in photo) is working with a crew to survey Bald Eagle roosting sites.

- During the last two winters (2008-2009 and 2009-2010), eagle numbers wintering in Milan Bottoms again declined, resulting in overall observations of 3,244 and 2,826, respectively.

The new river survey will document the number of eagles wintering in the vicinity of Milan Bottoms each week. These data, when combined with data from the night roost study, will provide a good approximation of the proportion of wintering Bald Eagles that are night roosting within the Milan Bottoms study area, and provide a better understanding of the overall importance of Milan Bottoms to both local and regional wintering Bald Eagle populations.

Peter Oliver

Peter Oliver of the Dixon Illinois Park District is using the IOS grant to conduct a bird census at the 200-acre Lowell Park in Dixon. The results of that census will be used to develop a natural resource management plan for the park, with the specific aim of enhancing bird habitat. The avian survey for Lowell Park is ongoing. The survey route has been run three times by Tara Beveroth of the Illinois Natural History Survey – twice during summer and once in fall. The survey route contains nine points within the park. Here are preliminary results:

- Forty-seven species have been recorded so far, the most common being Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Wood Thrush.

- Uncommon species observed include Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher.



Peter Oliver is surveying birds at Lowell Park.