



Letter from the Editor

Last winter season, birders witnessed a record irruption of Snowy Owls in Illinois – and we’ve got a list of every, if not nearly every Snowy seen in our state right here in the pages of *Meadowlark*. David B. Johnson, a fellow birder and friend, wrote a spectacular article with accompanying tables and histograms regarding this great year for an uncommon winter visitor. Photographers were out in full force taking pictures of the owls as far south as Pulaski County. Associate and Photo Editor Steven D. Bailey gathered all these photos and gained permission from the photographers to publish them here in *Meadowlark*. The photographers are commended for their stunning images of owls posing, behaving and interacting with other birds. Meanwhile Barbara Williams crafted another of her great cover drawings to introduce readers to what they’ll find in the issue. And Board Member Josh Engel of The Field Museum examined some Snowy Owl pellets to see what they were eating, then wrote a piece about it for this issue as well.

We added four extra pages to get the terrific images in, as well as the Christmas Bird Count and the Winter field notes.

This issue has been a long time coming – we’ve had to work hard to get all the many details, including all the photographers’ names, right, along with dates and places seen.

From the editorial staff, we hope you will enjoy this special issue, a lasting legacy to the Snowy Owl invasion of 2011/2012. We also have it in digital format to be saved for perpetuity.

Coming next issue: Dave Johnson’s article on a Black-throated Blue Warbler in Chicago during winter, Jeff Smith’s article on finding eight owl species in one day in Illinois, and, the Illinois Statewide Spring Bird Count report from last season. Thanks to all our members for supporting IOS to make issues like these become reality.

Sheryl DeVore

Above:

*Snowy Owl with American Crow.
Northerly Island, Chicago, Cook County.
29 January 2012. Photo by Richard Remington.*

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About Our Cover:

IOS Board Member and Membership Secretary Barbara Williams created this issue’s cover of a Snowy Owl. Barbara has been a devoted student of natural history for many years and has been a birder since she saw her first Scarlet Tanager at the age of 4. She ran the biology department at the Burpee Museum of Natural History for 13 years. She lives in Rockford with her husband, Daniel. Both are dedicated volunteers for IOS.

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