



# Illinois Ornithological Society

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## **President's Message**

### *Society and conservation initiative need your help*

It is that time of year again when our birding and social lives get busy. Many of you will be chasing the winter rarities and scouting your Christmas Count areas for that "really good bird." Seasonal parties provide an opportunity to visit family and friends as well as to make new friends.

It is also a time to consider helping the Society by recruiting new members, giving gift subscriptions to your birding friends and family members, or giving a special gift of support to the Society. Our ability to meet the objectives of the Society's charter is limited by the operating capital, and for the past two years the budget has been very tight. We have two new publication projects waiting in the wings (Check-list of Illinois Birds and a new field card). We also have opportunities to start educational programs, something the Board strongly supports. To pursue these activities, we must have a sounder funding base.

One way to expand our financial health is to expand our membership. We now have about 512 members, and the Board has set a goal of 600 by December 31, 1998, and a long term goal of 1,000. We cannot achieve these goals without your help. Make a commitment to help promote our Society.

Your help is also needed on the conservation front. Each of you should have heard about the Teaming With Wildlife (TWW) funding initiative to fund conservation programs that will benefit birds and other non-game wildlife.

While this initiative targeted a user fee on selected outdoor equipment, a new initiative would use royalties from off-shore oil and gas leases to fund conservation and education programs.

Currently a discussion bill (The Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1998 sponsored by Representatives Don Young, John Dingell, Billy Tauzin, and Richard Baker and Senator Mary Landrieu) has been developed and is circulating. The bill has three sections. Title 3 is the one section that is written to include the intent of TWW's proposal. Conservation groups still support the TWW method of funding but are not pushing it, and instead are waiting to see what happens to this new proposal. The National Teaming With Wildlife Coalition is encouraging supporters to study the new proposal and let their Senators and Representatives know their views.

From my perspective, this is one of the most important and beneficial conservation issues we are facing. I want to encourage each of you to study the proposal, and then let me and, most importantly, your Senators and Representatives hear your views. If you need information or would like to see a draft copy this proposal please contact me at PO Box 9, Dundee, IL 60118 or call me at 847-428-6331. Good birding and happy holidays.

*Bob Montgomery*