



# Illinois Ornithological Society

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## **President's Message**

As we prepare for the new millennium, plan our winter birding excursions and receive our annual reminders to renew memberships, we might want to think about giving back to the birds we enjoy so much.

First let's talk briefly about the Christmas Bird Counts that are reported in this issue. Dave Johnson and his team of editors (Alan F. Stokie, Duane Heaton, Diane E. Johnson) have spent a great deal of their free time compiling and verifying everything is correct. Considering the number of reports they must review this is a sizable undertaking and speaks of the dedication of these individuals. Recognition must be given to all the compilers and those individuals who carefully and accurately documented the rare birds that were found. The compilers really did an outstanding job of organizing their count, summarizing the results and submitting the count results.

Of course no issue of our journal would ever see the light of day without the skill, talents, and organizational skills of our Editor-in-Chief Sheryl De Vore and Kathy Ade, who is in charge of Graphic Design and Prepress Production. We are fortunate to have these women on our staff. Our other volunteers, including associate editors, writers, photographers, and artists are equally as talented and need our support and thanks for producing an outstanding journal.

My second point of giving back to the birds may come in several ways. First, and the easiest, is an end of the year gift to your favorite conservation group or birding group.

Perhaps the most difficult way is to voice your support for conservation issues that will directly benefit birds and bird habitat. One such measure is the HR 701 The Conservation and Restoration Act of 1999 (CARA). This funding initiative has just been approved by the House's Resource Committee and will be voted on by the full House some time next spring. This funding bill will provide much needed dollars for land protection and acquisition, restoration of habitat, management for endangered species, and money for management of species currently not receiving management funds such as most migratory nongame birds. Illinois will receive an estimated \$55 million per year.

This one initiative may do more for migratory bird conservation than any single law since the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Each of us must let our members of Congress know our views. This may be the greatest gift back to the birds we so enjoy. If you need information on this issue drop me a line or send me an Email at [Rmontey@aol.com](mailto:Rmontey@aol.com).

I wish you and your family the best in the new millennium.

Good Birding.

*Bob Montgomery*