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### President's Message

Here we are at Volume 12 Issue 3. Sheryl DeVore and her team of writers, editors, field notes compilers, photographers, artists and designers have once again come up with a fabulous magazine full of fascinating material about birds in our state. It never ceases to amaze me how the Meadowlark comes together issue after issue, volume after volume, year after year. It is a remarkable achievement given that the magazine is a labor of love put together on weekends and evenings.

The Meadowlark was the main reason that IOS was founded. A small group of concerned birders met over the winter of 1991/92 to build a volunteer organization capable of publishing a quality journal to celebrate birds and birding in Illinois. The vision of people like Laurie Binford, Sue Friscia, Dave Johnson, Muriel Smith and Wes Serafin, catalyzed and led by our first President Eric Walters, made Meadowlark and IOS a reality.

Our mission, however, not only includes recording Illinois bird life, but also promoting the scientific, educational and recreational aspects of ornithology. One arm of IOS, the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee, IORC, is an excellent example of the unsung dedication of a small group of our members, skilled birders all, who contribute to our mission. IORC maintains the official Illinois state check list of birds and meets several times a year all day long to carefully review written, photographic and video documentation of reported bird species. Doug Stotz, a staff ornithologist at the Field Museum in Chicago, leads IORC as the secretary. Committee members include Steve Bailey, Paul Clyne, Myrna Deaton, Dave Johnson and Dan Kassebaum.

On the recreational front, our Annual Meetings and field trips have proven extremely popular with our members. Bob Montgomery is hard at work on the next Annual Meeting for which we return to Pere Marquette on May 14-16, 2004. Mark your calendars now and be sure to join us on what will be a great weekend of renewing old acquaintances and meeting new friends. This birding hotspot never disappoints.

Our field trips this year under the capable leadership of Steve Bailey set a florid pace averaging two field trips per month. Had you attended every field trip you would have logged over 300 species in Illinois this year. Look for next year's program on our web site, [www.illinoisbirds.org](http://www.illinoisbirds.org). It will be posted shortly.

We all have a tendency to accept IOS's achievements over these past 12 years without appreciating the dedication and hard work that goes into bringing you the high-quality *Meadowlark* and *Wings Over The Prairie* newsletter with dependable regularity, along with the wonderful Annual Meetings, field trips and other publications. As I take over as President, I want to acknowledge the dedication of our editorial team, directors, officers, program leaders – all of them volunteers. Without them, none of this would be possible. Many thanks to each and every one of you.

*Good birding.*

Michael Hogg