



## ILLINOIS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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### President's Message

#### Dear Members:

The winter season is upon us and the CBCs are over for another year. The counts are always fun. If I am in town, I do the Evanston-Northshore Count which is an urban count. My group's territory is largely along the Lake Michigan shore. Each year a small group of dedicated folks gather from far and wide for the count. This year we welcomed some new blood. There is usually a surprise or two. This year it was a flock of Snow Buntings and a singleton Sandhill Crane belatedly heading south.

Two years ago I joined a group in Puerto Penasco, Mexico 60 miles south of the Arizona border. Almost everyone I met was American. Sadly no Mexicans. This December I was in the Yucatan. I missed their count, but did link up with a local guide. He was great and very professional. He is one of a growing number of locals who make their living as birding guides.

The guide's name was Luis. He appeared promptly at 5 a.m. the first morning sporting a Delmarva Ornithological Society cap. This was not the only sign of collaboration between American and Mexican birding interests. Two days later we birded the Sian Ka'an Biosphere. At the north end of this huge coastal preserve there is a very pretty Mayan ruin called Muyil. Muyil sits behind a Mangrove forest through which threads a well maintained board walk. The site map lists the Houston Audubon Society as a partner.

Over the past year I have received several enquiries from Mexican bird conservation groups asking whether IOS would be willing to contribute funds toward preserving habitat used by migrating shorebirds. The IOS budget is too small to support such efforts. However, they deserve our support. Take my experience in the Yucatan. Seventy of the 180 species I saw are on the Illinois list and most were wintering migrants.

My question to you our membership is whether we should circulate future funding appeals? If there is interest, IOS could gather donations to contribute to worthy causes connected to our birds.

On the subject of supporting conservation efforts and closer to home, the IOS Annual Meeting this year will be held in conjunction with the Birding Fest of Southernmost Illinois during the weekend of April 25-27 at Giant City State Park. This is a great opportunity to see southern specialties like Mississippi Kite, Black Vulture, Fish Crow, Prairie Warbler and Chock-wills-widow, and to support the Cache River Biosphere Reserve. Hope to see you there. For more information go to [http://www.illinoisbirds.org/2008\\_ios\\_annual\\_meeting.html](http://www.illinoisbirds.org/2008_ios_annual_meeting.html).

#### *Good birding.*

*Michael Hogg,  
President*

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