

MEADOWLARK

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President's Message

Did you know that you and I are members of a growth industry? Based upon recent surveys and other information I have been collecting, the hobby of bird-watching is increasing rapidly. *Forbes* magazine published a survey that reported Americans prefer bird-watching to golf! Other surveys have found that the popularity of birding has increased 155% in 10 years — faster than any other outdoor activities. Today some 24.7 million Americans are engaged in birding.

Birding and other wildlife-related recreation contributes to the economic well-being of the country. Birders spend \$5.2 billion on goods and services per year. Much of this information comes from the 1991 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Survey of Fish, Hunting and Wildlife-Related Recreation. This survey, conducted every 5 years, found that revenue generated from hunting, fishing, birding, and other wildlife-related recreation amounts to \$67.9 billion or about 1.3 percent of the nation's gross domestic product. In Illinois, watchable wildlife recreation contributes \$1.1 billion and generates some 14,000 full or part-time jobs.

Your participation in wildlife-related activities make an important contribution to the local, state, and nation's economy. We need to get this message out to the businesses we support and in turn build a broader support for conserving, protecting, and managing the habitat needed for the birds and the other wildlife we enjoy.

We can only do this if we work together. The Board and I are looking for your ideas and energy to accomplish this. Will you help us? Let me or another Board member know now, so we can begin this important work.

Until next time.

Bob Montgomery

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About Our Cover:

The Snowy Owl staged an invasion in Illinois the winter season of 1996/1997. See details in Christmas Bird Count and Field Notes this issue. Drawing by Walter Marcisz.

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