

## Letter from the Editor

Here's something you don't hear often as a birder: "I didn't get my target birds but it was the best field trip I've been on."

Best field trips of course are the ones when you saw great birds, right? But a young birder, a charter member of IOS's Illinois Young Birders Club to be exact, uttered those exact words to his father after going on an owl prowl at Ryerson Woods recently.

Steve Bailey and I led the prowl, with Steve doing most of the prowling and talking and me trudging behind through the deep snow. Though Barred Owls responded, they didn't show themselves to the prowlers. And that was OK. We went out for pizza afterward and talked about, you guessed it, birds, or lack thereof!

The next day, Steve and I went to see more than 60 Bald Eagles at Lock and Dam No. 13 along the Mississippi River. We were also out and about looking for the Barrow's Goldeneye along the Mississippi River farther south. We didn't get the goldeneye, but we did give some youngsters their first looks through scopes of Bald Eagles, and told a family how to get to the place where the Snowy Owl was being seen.

You can have a great time birding and not see the birds you've been seeking. There really is something to this "camaraderie" part of birding, and especially to getting youngsters involved in the hobby. That's why I'm thrilled about the new young birder's club and how well it is doing. I'm grateful to Brian Herriott for his leadership and to IOS for making this – one of our new outreach programs – a success.

Besides, Steve bought a book called "Zen Birding," and I read some of it to remind myself once again that it's not just the rare bird I'm after, but the experience.

I will, of course, not say that I'm perfect – I'm still not happy I didn't see the Western Grebe a couple of years ago that everyone else, it seems but me, saw at Saganashkee Slough. But, ah, the camaraderie. Ommmmmmmmmm.

Doesn't always work, does it?

*Sheryl DeVore*

# MEADOWLARK

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## About Our Cover:

Michael L. P. Retter created the graphite drawing of an immature King Eider for our cover depicting one found by Sam Burckhardt at the bend of the Little Calumet River in Cook County.

A central Illinois native, Michael currently lives with his partner, Matt, in West Lafayette, Indiana. While at home, he serves as both a Technical Reviewer and the "Sightings" Department Editor for *Birding*. He leads tours for Tropical Birding in the Americas and Australasia and serves on the Indiana Bird Records Committee. You may see more of his artwork at <http://www.xenospiza.com/>

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