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## MISSISSIPPI RIVER BLUFFLANDS AND BIRD CONSERVATION

*A Bird's Eye View: A Guide to Managing and Protecting Your Land for Neotropical Migratory Birds in the Upper Mississippi River Blufflands.* Marlene Ehresman. 2003. Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. 44 pages with 8-page pamphlet insert. Free, also available at [www.inhf.org/neotropbook.htm](http://www.inhf.org/neotropbook.htm).

The "rubber hits the road" in conservation when the landowning public gets involved. Researchers and amateur birders know that populations of many species of neotropical migrant birds are declining because of habitat loss and many natural- and human-caused dangers. However, the landowners may not know what neotropical migrants are or that they are in peril. This excellent booklet and enclosed pamphlet are intended to educate landowners along the Mississippi River blufflands in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota about neotropical migrant birds and their plight. Furthermore, it tactfully attempts to inspire concern about neotropical migrants and explains how management can help. While the editing isn't perfect, both the booklet and pamphlet are effective in presenting information and persuasive arguments for conservation.

The booklet begins by explaining what neotropical migrant birds are, why they are important, and the various threats they face. The information is general (although citations are provided) and somewhat hyperbolic in places, but seems convincing. A brief lesson in some basics of conservation biology follows, with discussions of habitat loss, fragmentation, connectivity, edge effects, and community succession. With this knowledge, the reader can proceed to the discussion of conservation actions that benefit habitats important for native birds in the Mississippi River blufflands. Ideas are introduced for forest, prairie, cliff, savanna, and riparian habitats in general. Ideas are also presented for habitats on the scale of a farmstead and include management issues of concern to landowners such as logging practices, deer populations, and invasive plants. Finally, conservation partnerships and their advantages are discussed. The booklet wraps up with a reminder that conservation practices benefit other wildlife and that a healthy landscape benefits future generations of people as well.

The booklet has many interesting photographs, and insets on special topics, such as text boxes, diagrams, and maps, are abundant and informative. Four useful items are found at the end of the booklet: 1) a glossary of terms for the non-biologist, 2) a list of financial and organizational resources that can help landowners reach their conservation goals, 3) "a guide to neotrops" that gives a brief account of several bird species and species groups, and 4) a list of references that should satisfy the curious reader.

The pamphlet is attractive and readable and has many great photographs of birds and habitats. Just like the booklet, the pamphlet is full of good information and makes the convincing case for conservation.—*Eileen M. Kirsch, USGS, Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center, La Crosse, WI 54603.*