

## **Ben Williams (Secretary-Treasurer)**

### Current Position:

Urban Waterfowl Project Manager, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Bartlett, IL. 2019 – present.

### Education:

B.S. (2013) from the University of Minnesota Crookston majoring in Wildlife Management and Natural Resources Management. M.S. (2018) from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in the Natural Resources and Environmental Science Department with a research focus on waterfowl spring migration.

### Personal Background:

Ben is from Excelsior, MN and spent a lot of time camping and fishing across the state. He took up duck and goose hunting while in Crookston, which has directed his professional career ever since. A fan of Minnesota sports teams, traveling, cooking, and reading, Ben enjoys spending his falls chasing waterfowl and deer throughout the Midwest.



### Work History/Positions Held:

While an undergraduate student, Ben spent several summers working with the arboriculture department at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, and also spent a summer at Audubon National Wildlife Refuge in Coleharbor, ND as an invasive species technician. After graduation, Ben worked seasonally for the U.S. Forest Service as a wildlife technician in Wisconsin before going on full time as the Conservation Programs Coordinator for Audubon Dakota in Fargo, ND. While at Audubon Dakota, a state program of the National Audubon Society, Ben assisted in wildlife sanctuary management, urban habitat restoration projects, piloting a conservation grazing program, and managing educational outreach and donor cultivation. In 2015, Ben moved to Illinois to study mallard and teal spring migration patterns as part of a graduate program. After graduating from UIUC, Ben helped manage a shorebird conservation initiative and continued waterfowl research with the Illinois Natural History Survey before being hired on with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources as the Urban Waterfowl Project Manager. In that role, Ben works with the public to mitigate nuisance waterfowl and migratory bird conflicts, assists the Wetland Wildlife Program with waterfowl hunting and habitat opportunities, and contributes to Wildlife Division objectives and priorities. He also serves as the Non-game Bird Technical Section representative from Illinois at the Mississippi Flyway Council.

### Views:

Early on in my career I was told that “successful wildlife management is often the result of successful people management”. With so many human variables involved in wildlife management (different agencies and jurisdictions, general public interaction and perception, nuisance wildlife and conflicts, hunting and harvesting, political issues and scientific knowledge, etc.) it often becomes the role of wildlife managers and biologists to blend these variables and coordinate management to encompass all of these considerations. I think this system works best when managers and biologists work together to implement proven, science-based management, and communicate methods, objectives, and justification with the wildlife community and the public. Professional organizations, such as The Wildlife Society and the Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society, are places where interagency networking and information sharing can take place, new science and techniques can be shared, and broader discussions about wildlife management can happen. I hope that my skills and abilities can help further the goals of the Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society and help foster connections between past, current, and future generations of wildlife managers.