



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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P.O. Box 222

Carbondale, IL 62903-0222

NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

Exploring Greenland, northern Quebec, Labrador & Newfoundland

Dr. George H. Waring will present a program, "Exploring Greenland, northern Quebec, Labrador & Newfoundland," on Friday, February 22nd at 7 p.m. For this program, SIAS will be returning to the Carbondale Township Hall, 217 E. Main St., Carbondale. (Use the back entrance, north off East Monroe Street, where parking is available.)

Dr. Waring is Professor Emeritus in Zoology at Southern Illinois University Carbondale where he has been a Scholar, Ornithologist, and Animal Behaviorist since 1966. His research has taken him to many locations throughout the world. For more on Dr. Waring's research and publications visit his website at: <http://www.science.siu.edu/zoology/waring/vitae.html>

January Meeting Highlights

The annual meeting of SIAS on January 25th was well-attended and great fun, with an estimated attendance of 75 members and guests. Thanks to all for the scrumptious entrees and desserts we shared at dinner.

Greg Kupiec made a motion that all board members up for reappointment be re-elected, which passed unanimously.

Many wonderful items were donated for our silent auction, including a handmade wooden footstool and wooden puzzle donated by woodworker and new member Dale Hartmann and multiple bird books from the estate of Genevieve Houghton. Auctions proceeds totaled \$378; a portion will be donated to Free Again.

Welcome new members

Emily & Dale Hartmann of Murphysboro.
Vicki Mogharreban of Desoto.

2013 Meetings Calendar:

March 22nd: Ryan Tebo - *Response of wild turkeys to grassland fire management in an agricultural setting*

April 26th: Program to be announced

May: SIAS Annual Picnic

August 23rd: Denny Hays - *Africa Safari*

September 37th: Karen Mangan - *Bats*

October 25th: John Schwegman - *Wildlife of the Ecuador Andes and Amazon Lowlands with special emphasis on birds*

Common owls uncommonly interesting...

The annual meeting of SIAS was a presentation by our friend Bev Shofstall of the lifestyles of some of her education charges from Free Again Wildlife Rehabilitation. Since the meeting was at night it was appropriate that our guests were owls; ranging from a tiny Screech to a large and impressive Great Horned. All of the birds are current residents at Free Again; some on the path to rehabilitation and release and one with an amputated wing and a permanent role as an educational ambassador.

The first out of the box was a red phase Screech, more common in the midwest than the gray phase, though grays are the more numerous strain in the east. There is another very rare color strain, brown, but Bev has never had one of those. Screech owls feed on small rodents and insects in the warm months.

Next was the most common species in our area, the Barred Owl; identified by the brown and white pattern on its breast. The dark eyes on this species are very different than the bright yellows of the Great Horned Owl. Barred Owls, formerly identified with lowland forests, have increased in the last few years and taken over former upland forests territories of great horned owls. This change is seemingly due to the hard effects of West Nile Virus infections on Great Horned populations, while Barreds were less affected.

The majestic and fearsome looking Great Horned Owl was next out. Robust looking and about 16 to 18 inches tall, the Great Horned Owl is a bit of a bluffer in terms of bulk. Most of its body outline is really composed of feathers, lots of feathers. The owls do not weigh nearly as much as they appear. The large bright yellow eyes are really striking on this bird.

The final bird was the one migrant visitor. Short-eared Owls have small feather tufts like the Screech and Great Horned, but they are very small and only visible when the bird is in hand. Short-eared Owls spend the fall and winter in open areas in southern Illinois, but they fly far north to the Canadian tundra to breed. The Short-eared Owl Bev brought was so severely injured when it was brought to Free Again that one wing had to be amputated. Since it is an unusual species for Illinois, Bev applied for and received a special permission to keep this bird alive as an education animal.

Bev explained that owls depend on their great night vision and even better sense of hearing to catch prey in darkness. The owls that Free Again gets in for rehabilitation come primarily from automobile strikes and fence wire encounters; fortunately the wing injuries involve out of place or broken bones that can be

repaired to allow some birds to be released back to the wild. SIAS is pleased to support Free Again and we commend Bev and Jim their educational out-reach in behalf of raptors, hawks as well as owls. -Joe Merkelbach, President



Treasurer's Report for 2012

Money in our checking account and two C.D.s now totals \$7,875. Much of this amount was due to donations in memory of founding member Ben Gelman, who died in 2007, but members have also been very generous in support our former seed sales and our current auctions and fund raisers.

In addition, each year we receive financial donations from members. For 2012, we recorded contributions from Vicki Devenport, Mary Dresser, Bill Eddleman, Sylvia Greenfield, Nelda Hinckley, Judith Keasler, Greg Kupiec, Richard and Cindy LaSalle, Louis Lembke, Mary McCarthy, the Neighborhood Food Coop in Carbondale, Jerry O'Malley, Bruce Wallace, and Laraine Wright.

We also thank those who gave gifts-in-kind, such as items for special raffles and a projector for our programs: Joanne Christopher, Nelda Hinckley, Genevieve Houghton, Greg Kupiec, Vicki Lang, Joe Merkelbach, and Rhonda Rothrock. I did not note the names of those who bring items to our annual silent auction, but we all appreciate you, as well! (And I do apologize to any of you whose names were inadvertently left off these lists.)

Among the donations that SIAS made in 2012 were \$400 to the Friends of the Cache River for habitat restoration, \$100 to the Women's Center in Carbondale for a memorial brick in honor of Genevieve Houghton, and \$30 to the Carbondale Public Library for an annual subscription to *Audubon Magazine*. We also spent \$250 for affiliate dues to the Illinois Audubon Society and the Illinois Environmental Council and \$228 for materials to upgrade our bluebird trail at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge.



-Laraine Wright, Treasurer

Bluebird Season Begins for Crab Orchard Volunteers

Our 25-year sponsorship of the 180 bluebird boxes at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge is starting a new season with 14 volunteer monitors. This year's volunteers include SIAS members Mary Luh Fraunfelter, Jef Finer, Karen Kaufman, Dave and Anton Kvernes, Mary McCarthy, Jerry O'Malley, and Laraine Wright, who also serves as project coordinator.

Last season, 652 Eastern Bluebirds and 216 Tree Swallows were successfully fledged, although many unhatched eggs were lost because of the hot, dry summer and predation by snakes in tall-grass areas. We are continuing to add cone guards to boxes identified as the most predated. A few years ago, we managed to reduce raccoon predation to almost zero with the addition of PVC sections placed over the poles.

SIAS contributes up to \$250 each year to this project. My estimate is that at least 20,000 birds have been fledged from these boxes, which are very important for cavity-nesting species.

If you have any questions about attracting bluebirds to your own property, please call me at 618.4578769. -Laraine Wright

25th Annual Tropical Adventure / May 23-30 2013

Trinidad & Tobago: Experience a tropical evergreen rain forest, a mangrove, tide pools, a tropical deciduous forest, a giant Leatherback Turtle watch, and West Indian cuisine. Land Cost: \$1375 (with ten participants, includes all meals, lodging, and field trips with local naturalist guides). For information and current air-fare, contact:

Nelda W. Hinckley at 618.549.5588 or neldahinckley@jalc.edu

What's Happening - Events & Outings

March - Pere Marquette Bald Eagle Programs

Enjoy watching bald eagles on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers near Pere Marquette State Park this winter by participating in one of the park's popular Bald Eagle Days tours. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 618.786.3323. Programs are on select dates through early March. To check the schedule of program dates, go to the Pere Marquette State Park web page and click on "Bald Eagle Days" at this link:
<http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/parks/R4/PEREMARQ.HTM>

March-May - Movie Nights at the Cache

Movie Nights will be held the first Thursday of the month from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Cache River Wetlands Center, 8885 State Rt. 37 South, Cypress. Movies about nature will provide viewers of all ages with a fun way to learn about the outside world. The AmeriCorps staff will hold a short discussion about the movie after each presentation. For more info, phone the Wetlands Center at 618.667.2064.

March 16 - Hummingbirds

This visit to the Cache will help you get ready for the spring migration of hummingbirds by preparing your yard or garden for their arrival. From 1-3 p.m. at the Cache Wetlands Center, learn how the right habitat will supply these jewels of the sky with enough food resources and nesting opportunities that they will make their home in the neighborhood. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

March 15-17th - Indigenous Plant Symposium

An indigenous plant symposium sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners, SIU Dept. of Plant Biology, and the Southern Chapter of the Illinois Native Plant Society will be held at John A. Logan College Center for Business and Industry.

Registration Deadline is March 12th! For complete details and/or to register, phone 618.687.1727 or visit <https://webs.extension.uiuc.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=7731>

March 16-April 20 - Cache Spring Birding

Spend a Saturday identifying birds on the diverse landscape that the Cache has to offer. 7-9 a.m. Hike a different trail each week. Call ahead and reserve your spot. Group size will be limited. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to participate. For more information, call the Cypress Creek Wildlife Refuge at 618.634.2231

March 23 - Wild Orchids, Lilies & Irises of the Cache

Naturalists John and Martha Schwegman will take you on a virtual tour to learn about these wildflowers found within the Cache River Basin. A photo presentation of these beautiful wildflowers will highlight their flowering time, ecology, habitat, and distribution. For more info, phone the Wetlands Center at 618.667.2064.



April 27 & 28 – Birding Blitz of Southernmost IL

Form a team and compete in the Birding Blitz! Spend the spring day of April 27th birding in the midst of songbird migration with some of your friends while supporting habitat restoration and preservation in the Cache River Watershed.

Choose a category that best suits you and your friends from a list of five: Open A / Big Day - for those "hardcore" birders; Open B / Dawn to Dusk - for those who prefer a more relaxed day of birding; County Big Day - spend the whole day birding in your favorite southernmost IL county; Muscle-powered - for those who prefer a day of non-motorized birding; and last but not least the Senior category – for the young at heart.

An awards brunch will be held at the Crab Orchard NWR Visitors' Center the morning of April 28th. The awards brunch is open to the public as a way for future competitors and non-birders alike to experience the comradery that exists between competitors as well as meet other birders and possibly pick up some tips on birding and birding spots.

For more details including registration, visit the Birding Blitz at the Cache Nature Fest website at <http://www.birdingblitz.org>. Click on the Birding Blitz link where you can view details about the categories, download the rules, pledge, and registration forms, and check out last year's totals.

If you would like to help the cause but prefer not to participate, please consider pledging to a competing team. Pledges can be made per species seen or in a lump donation. Or you can donate to the Friends of Cache River Watershed in support of all teams. Past donations have helped in the construction of the Michael Wolff Wetlands and in the recent acquisition of additional acreage along the Cache corridor. *The Blitz is coordinated by the SIAS.*

The Urban Jungle Archive

Trapped inside because of bad weather? Spend a little time checking out the Washington Post's Urban Jungle Archive. It contains many short but interesting nature-related articles and all are accompanied by charming illustrations, all by Patterson Clark.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/metro/urban-jungle/?tid=rr_mod

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-- Join SIAS --

To join or renew your membership, fill in the following form and return it along with your dues to:

Southern Illinois Audubon Society

Attn.: Membership

P.O. Box 222

Carbondale, IL 62903-0222

Individual member \$15

Additional member in a family \$10

Student voting member \$ 5

Amt. Enclosed:\$

Annual membership renewal month is January and coincides with board elections held at the annual meeting in January.
Member address labels reflect current dues status.

Wanted-Whooping Crane Observations/Sightings

If you have seen the Whooping Cranes in southernmost Illinois the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership would love to know of those observations! They rely heavily on public observations of birds over the migration and wintering periods because they are unable to be in the field constantly covering all the areas where birds are wintering nowadays.

Sightings can be reported at the following website:
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/whoopingcrane/sightings/sightingform.cfm>
Reports submitted here are automatically sent to a number of people in the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership. - Eva Szyszkoski
<eva@savingcranes.org>

More protection for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers

A legal settlement secured by the Center for Biological Diversity and two allies will mean more protection for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers on Mississippi's Noxubee Wildlife Refuge. The rare birds, once common in the Southeast but now endangered, depend on old trees in longleaf pine forests. Over the past few years, logging on the Noxubee refuge – including logging inside woodpecker habitat – has increased, hurting the birds.

In January 2012 the Center filed a lawsuit, along with Wild South and a long-time volunteer at the refuge. A year later a federal judge has now approved a settlement that requires the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to prepare a new management plan that's more protective for the woodpeckers. Any new logging in the birds' habitat will have to wait for that plan. <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org>

World's Oldest Known Bird Hatches Chick

She is described as awesome. And wonderful. And maybe a little weird. Her name is Wisdom, she's a Laysan Albatross, and she is the world's oldest known living wild bird at age 62, and she produced a healthy chick that hatched Feb. 3rd. It's pretty amazing that Wisdom, named by scientists who stuck a tag on her ankle years ago, has lived this long. The average Laysan albatross dies at less than half her age. Scientists thought that, like other birds, albatross females became infertile late in life and carried on without producing chicks. But Wisdom, who hatched the chick at the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge in the Pacific Ocean, defies comparison. Her feat could prompt scientists to chuck some of their early theories about the bird out the door.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/>



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Renew Your Membership --

Your name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

I/we would like to receive my newsletter via email. YES or NO
Interested on being on the Board? Contact a Board Member!

Help Needed with Martin Nest Box

Dorothy Fleener works at the Union County Refuge office and is seeking assistance with cleaning and maintenance of a Purple Martin house that was stands near the refuge office on Refuge Drive. The martin house is on a pole, but can be lowered by removing a bolt and leaning the pole over. Dorothy thinks the task would require more than one person's efforts. If you are interested in helping Dorothy, please phone her at



Seeing Birds...

The last confirmed Whooping Crane sighting came from William Wood who reported seeing them on 01/28.

For the next 11 months, Cathie Hutcheson is on a quest to tally as many species in a year in Illinois as she can. Since her start on the 1st of January, Cathie has tallied 110 species. She's currently trying to track down a Great Horned Owl and a Screech Owl. If you have either on your property or get a visit from any unusually bird species in the next 11 months, contact Cathie.

During the last week of January, Cathie Hutcheson saw approx. 40 American White Pelicans flying around Union County Refuge.

Sandhill Cranes have been reported over Missouri in double digit numbers so keep an eye out for Sandhills flying over southernmost IL.

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Swans were not the only rare animals seen during the SIAS outing to the Burning Star reclaimed mine property on 02/02. Students from SIU's Cooperative Wildlife Research Lab turkey/predator project previewed their live-trap catches of the day...one coyote and two bobcats. *See below!*

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Affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society,
the Illinois Environmental Council,
& the North American Bluebird Society



A Big Thank You to all SIAS members who have already renewed their membership dues for 2013. If you haven't yet renewed you dues, please don't forget to...we count on all of you!

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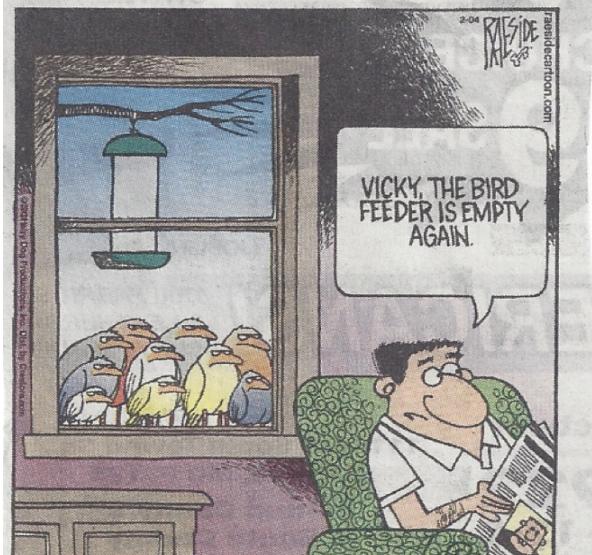
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