



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

April 2013 – Vol. 20, No. 4

P.O. Box 222  
Carbondale, IL 62903-0222

## NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

### Member Image Night, 04/26!!

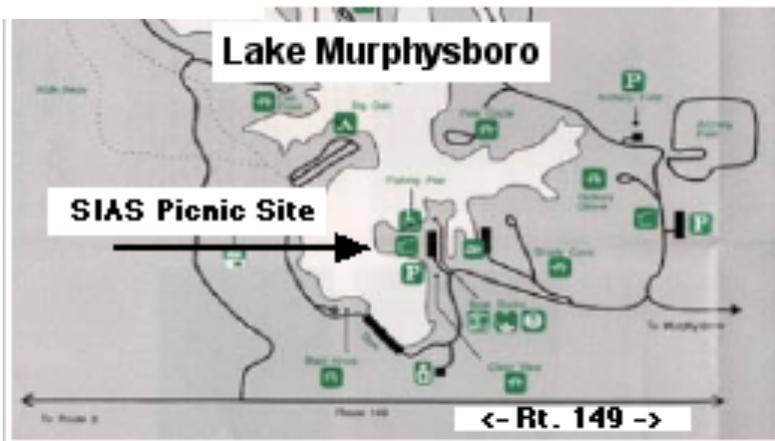
We're bringing back an old favorite, Member Image Night! For the Friday, 04/26, SIAS program, members are encouraged to bring 6-12 of their favorite nature-related images or maybe images of plants or birds you would like to get identified. Bring the images in electronic form, on a CD, DVD, or portable "thumb" drive. Cathie Hutcheson has graciously offered to provide a laptop and digital projector. The program will start at 7 p.m. and will be held Carbondale Township Hall, 217 E. Main St., Carbondale, but if you plan to bring images, please come by 6:45 p.m. Remember to enter the Township Hall from the back entrance, north off East Monroe Street, where parking is available.

.....  
**Welcome new member** – Carolyn Donow of Makanda.  
.....

### SIAS Annual Picnic, May 19th

SIAS's Annual Picnic will be Sunday, May 19th, from **12 noon-4 p.m. at Lake Murphysboro State Park**, at the East Shelter (same pavilion as past years.) Dining starts at 1 p.m. SIAS will provide the main course cooked on the grill. Members are asked to bring a dish to share and their own beverages and utensils.

Directions to Murphysboro State Park: Take IL Rt. 149 west out of Murphysboro (from the train underpass) for approx. 1/2 mile. Turn north on Murphysboro Lake Road, follow this road north then west where it meets Main Park Road, and turn north on Main Park Road. Watch for the SIAS banner. We hope to see you there!



### Sahara Woods - Good day had by all

A big "Thank You" goes out to Les Winkeler for guiding SIAS members and friends around Sahara Woods on April 6th.

Sahara Woods is more than just woods. This 4,200 acres of state owned land was once mined. Now it offers grasslands, pine stands, woodlands, and a large lake. A few small family cemeteries are marked and maintained. Roads traverse property and a walking path circles the entire lake.

Over 57 species of birds were seen (or heard). Most notable were the many Pine Warblers singing in the numerous pine stands and a Louisiana Waterthrush that sang a couple times for the group. The weather cooperated, providing attendees with a great day to be outdoors.

### Volunteers Needs for the Cache River Nature Fest

The Nature Fest could use volunteers to assist with the event including help with various exhibits, hikes and canoe tours held throughout the day. All volunteers who work a full day will receive a free lunch and an event t-shirt courtesy of the Friends of the Cache River Watershed. Volunteers will have a choice of a free event t-shirt from a previous year or a 50% discount off the purchase of a 2013 t-shirt.

For more info and/or to volunteer contact Casey Bryan at Casey\_Bryan@fws.gov or call the Cypress Creek NWR at 618.634.2231

### March Program Highlights: Turkeys in the Straw

Ryan Tebo, a masters student at the SIUC cooperative wildlife research lab, presented a very interesting and informative program on his study of wild turkey nesting success at the restored Burning Star # 5 strip mine land northeast of DeSoto.

Turkeys were essentially extirpated from Illinois by the first half of the 20th century. Since then wild trapped birds from other states have been used to restore a very healthy population throughout the state. Most of the studies done on turkeys have been on forest living flocks; but the restored areas of large strip mines have afforded turkeys room to live in grasslands, or at least ecotonal areas where trees and grasses intermix.

Ryan has focused his attention on the relative use of burn-managed areas versus controlled non-burned areas for success of turkey nesting and survival.

There are six units in the study, spread over the mine site and totaling about seventy acres. Borders around each of the sites were mowed to stubble as a firebreak and then half of each of the six locations was burned to ash. The burned areas recover rapidly in the spring with green up equal to controls in five to six weeks time.

Turkeys are drawn into the study areas by baiting with grain for a period and then the study hens are captured with cannon nets. The furred nets are fired over a feeding flock and the hens, which are the targets of study, get all the radio jewelry. The birds are weighed and aged, juvenile versus adult by barring pattern on the primary and tail feathers. Each hen gets a transmitter with her own frequency and locations are checked daily. Once a location is the same for three days running a nest is considered established. Normal incubation for turkeys is thirty or thirty-one days; if a hen leaves before that interval the nest has been disrupted. In 2012 12 hens had nests; all of them had at least one and 85% tried a second if the first was disrupted. The number of third attempts is unclear.

All nests were located in the control portions of study areas rather than the burned sites.

The vegetation at each nest location was evaluated by species, successional level, visibility and density at four meters. This information is used to characterize relative success value of nesting locations. The burning of areas can possibly promote increased growth of invertebrates as a protein source for chicks.

The predation effects on these treatments are also being studied, with coyotes, wildcats, and raccoons as primary actors. Coyotes are the most frequent nest disruptors; raccoons also vandalize nests while wildcats are more frequently predators on adult birds.

It was enjoyable to learn of details of this study after visiting the field locations in February. Thank you to Ryan for his presentation. *–Joe Merkelbach, President*

### 2013 Meetings Calendar:

**May:** SIAS Annual Picnic

**August 23rd:** Denny Hays - *Africa Safari*

**September 30th:** Karen Mangan - *Bats*

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

## What's Happening - Events & Outings

### May 4 - Spring Bird Counts

This year Spring Bird Counts will take place on May 4th. Illinois Spring Bird Counts are designated county by county, with nearly all state counties participating. The following local counts will be held on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup>. Contact the compiler listed for details: Williamson Co. - Vicki Lang-Mendenhall at 618.697.9868; Jackson Co. - Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 or woodthrusheola@hotmail.com; Union Co. - Vern Kleen at 217.636.8476.

### May 11 - Cache River Nature Fest

This year's Nature Fest will be held (rain or shine) on Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to 4:00pm at the Cache River Wetlands Center, 8885 State Route 37 South, Cypress. This year's activities include hiking, canoeing, amphibian & reptile exhibit, fish ID exhibit, native bird banding, and live wildlife presentations. And don't miss the chance to sample deep fried Asian Carp. All activities are free. For a full listing of activities, visit <http://www.cacherivernaturefest.org>. Pre-registration is required for canoe tours; phone Cypress Creek NWR at 618.634.2231 to reserve a space or for more information. Visitors may register for other tours and hikes the day of the event at the Cache River Wetlands Center.



## Seeing Birds...

Many sightings have been reported but due to special circumstances I need to keep the newsletter short. Hope to follow up with all the great bird reports. Until then, here are some birding related items of interest. - R.R.

Check out BirdCast for real-time bird migration forecasts. BirdCast will allow, for the first time, real-time predictions of bird migrations: when they migrate, where they migrate, and how far they will be flying. <http://birdcast.info/>

If you're a hummingbird fan, Audubon is launching a brand-new citizen-science project that's just for you. Hummingbirds at Home will help scientists understand how climate change, flowering patterns, and feeding by people are impacting hummingbirds. On the Hummingbirds at Home website you can track and report what nectar sources matter for your birds. A free mobile app makes it easy to report sightings and learn more about these remarkable birds. Find out more at <http://www.hummingbirdsathome.org/>

## Stamps for IAS Habitat Acquisition

Don't forget to save your cancelled stamps for the IAS Land Acquisition Fund. Save stamps by cutting them from the envelope, allowing at least a 1/8" border on all sides. Unused, foreign stamps, and stamp collections are especially desirable. Give them to Rhonda Rothrock at any SIAS meeting. They are forwarded to Vern Kleen, coordinator of this IAS project. For more information about this great program, visit <http://www.illinoisaudubon.org>



✂—cut here and return with dues—cut here and return with dues—✂✂✂✂—cut here and return with dues—cut here and return with dues—✂

### -- 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** Individual member \$15  
Attn.: Membership Additional member in a family \$10  
P.O. Box 222 Student voting member \$ 5  
Carbondale, IL 62903-0222 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.

### 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

✂—cut here and return with dues—cut here and return with dues—✂✂✂✂—cut here and return with dues—cut here and return with dues—✂

## Southern Illinois Audubon Society

P.O. Box 222

Carbondale, IL 62903-0222

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



### SIAS Board of Directors

President: Joe Merkelbach 618.532.2112

Vice President & Programs Chair:

Vicki Lang-Mendenhal 618.697.9868

Secretary: Mary McCarthy 618.684.8182

Treasurer: Laraine Wright 618.457.8769

Conservation/Education Chair: Cathie Hutcheson 618.529.2022

Finance Chair: Greg Kupiec 618.684.5168

Hospitality: Karen Kaufman 618.412.1333

Outings: Trevor Hinckley 618.967.1157.

Membership Chair & Newsletter Editor: Rhonda Rothrock

Newsletter contributions welcome, contact Rhonda at:

618.684.6605 or woodthrusheola@hotmail.com

SIAS Webmaster: Jim Shofstall

SIAS Website: <http://www.siaudubon.org>