



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

March 2014 – Vol. 21, No. 3

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

NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

Costa Rica is the title of a program to be presented on Friday, March 28, at 7 p.m. by Tom Ulrich! SIAS programs are now being held in the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale. The Fellowship Hall is on the lower level of the Church. Take the elevator or stairway down to the Hall.

Tom Ulrich has made over a dozen trips to Costa Rica and has accumulating a wealth of wildlife captured photographically. Tom states that his specialties are the rainforest birds especially the hummingbirds. Insects, mammals, amphibians and reptiles will also be well covered.

A freelance photographer since 1975, Tom Ulrich is highly acclaimed around the world for his nature photography skills. Many of his 600,000+ transparencies have been used by numerous magazines and other publications, including National Wildlife, Audubon, Outdoor Oklahoma, Sierra, American Hunter, Ranger Rick, Alaska, National Geographic, Montana Outdoors, Life and many others. Tom is also responsible for publishing seven nature books, Mammals of the Canadian Rockies, Birds of the Canadian Rockies, Mammals of the Northern Rockies, Birds of the Northern Rockies, Once Upon a Frame, Photo Pantanal, and Mt. Reynolds: The Story.

If you'd like to see even more of Tom's fantastic photographs, he will be presenting a program of his latest work in the John C. Guyon Auditorium at Morris Library on the SIU Carbondale campus on Tuesday, March 18, at 7 p.m. This show, sponsored by The Southern Illinois Photographic Society, the SIU Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory, and the SIU Alumni Association, is free and open to students, the campus community, and the general public.



February Program Highlights: Cats & Dogs

The February program for SIAS was a very thorough explanation of the more complicated than expected relationships between predators and wild turkey populations in Illinois. Chris Bottom, a graduate student at SIUC, is working toward a Master's of Science in the complex of studies that the Co-op wildlife lab has been conducting on wild turkey populations on the restored strip mine lands at Burning Star #5 lands.

Turkeys, actually a forest species historically, have been successfully reintroduced in much of the United States including all of Illinois. The birds have benefitted from the restoration of interspersed restored young forests in the mix of grasslands, scrub-shrub, and agricultural plots on the Burning Star lands. The healthy turkey population, along with relative absence of human interference and thus a small ecosystem with predators and other species present, provides a very good study area for understanding population interactions.

Chris focused his attention on the meso-predator class of coyotes and bobcats and their relationship to turkey reproduction. Development of a model of the area was one goal of the overall study. The type of cover was determined from aerial photos and then characterized and gridded out on a map.

Live trapped cats and coyotes were fitted with radio collars so that they could be readily located and then individuals frequently pinpointed on the grid to develop a pattern of preferred areas for each individual.

These predator chosen locations were then compared to nesting use locations for turkeys. The interesting development was that the turkey nest locations seemed mildly correlated to preferred predator use areas. The exception was the coyote's use of row crop areas to hunt small mammals, but otherwise the speculation is that the coyotes and bobcats, defacto top predators in this area, kept smaller nest predators such as skunks, opossums, raccoons, and maybe snakes away from nests.

It appears an uneasy alliance perhaps but one that the turkeys seemed to use to their benefit. As Chris said the turkeys hold their friends close but their "enemies" closer.

It has been very interesting to hear and see; with the field trip, the various aspects of turkey population biology at Burning Star and other southern Illinois grasslands.

Special thanks to Vicki for bringing the set of presentations together. -Joe Merkelbach, President

Did you know: Birds sleep with 1/2 of their brain awake! It's called unihemispheric slow-wave sleep and keeps birds alert to potential predators while still catching some Zs. A sleeping bird can adjust how much of its brain is asleep by how wide it opens or closes its eye. <http://www.audublog.org/>

2014 Meetings Calendar – April 25th: Member Slide Night!
May: Annual SIAS Picnic **June & July:** No meetings / Summer break

Upcoming Events & Outings

March 22 – Aquatic Wonders of the Cache

Meet at the Cache River Wetlands Center at 1 p.m. This 2-hour interactive program will focus on aquatic invertebrates and the strange and exciting adaptations they have developed to live in a very special environment. For more details, call Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at 618.634.2231.

March 29 – Earth Hour 2014

Turn out your lights from 8:30-9:30 p.m. for Earth Hour and spend a moment in darkness for the world's future.

April-May – Movie Nights at the Cache Wetlands

Movie Nights will be held the first Thursday of the month from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Cache River Wetlands Center. *April 5*- Bees: Tales from the Hive; *May 1*- The Secret World of Bats. A discussion will follow each movie. For more info, phone Cypress Creek NW Refuge at 618.634.2231.

April – SIAS Outing to Glenn O. Jones Lake

Les Winkler and Trevor Hinckley will co-lead an outing to Glenn O. Jones Lake at Saline County State F&W Area, 5 miles southeast of Equality in southeastern Illinois. Full details to follow.

April 5 – Wildflowers of Southern IL Class at JALC

Take this class learn how to identify wildflowers. View the wildflowers on the John A Logan College campus, take closer looks at wildflower specimens under a microscope, and take a field trip during the second session. No tests or quizzes—just interesting facts and information. Fee: \$25.00. Phone the college for details or to register.

April 6 & 13 – Spring Wildflower Walks Along Trillium Trail

Trillium Trail in Giant City State Park is one of the best spring wildflower trails in Southern Illinois. Join the Natural Resources Coordinator as we take a closer look at these spring beauties. This is a moderately difficult 2-mile trail with some steep stair climbing. Meet at 1 p.m. at the Visitor Center Giant City State Park Visitors Center, 235 Giant City Rd., Makanda for this 2 hours walk. All park programs are free unless otherwise noted. Call the Giant City Visitor Center for more details 618.457.4836. And visit the Giant City Visitor Center throughout the year for Information and seasonal displays.

April 12 – LaRue Pine Hills Appreciation Day

Spend a morning in nature. Meet at Winter's Pond, at the north end of Snake Road, at 9:30 a.m. Enjoy guided field trips to see unique birds, wildflowers, reptiles, plant communities, and more in the world-renowned La Rue – Pine Hills Research Natural Area. Activities will run until noon. Parking space is limited, carpool with your friends if possible.

April 12 – IAS Central IL Prairie Ridge State Natural Area Trip

This field trip, from 6 a.m. – 3 p.m., will cover the grassland areas in and around Prairie Ridge State Natural Area. Caravan in search of prairie chickens, grassland birds and early spring migrants. The exact route will depend on where the action is that day, determined by our trip leader Mary Ann Hoefliger. Cost: \$15, includes lunch and water. Call IAS at 217.544.2473 or register on line at <http://www.gifttool.com/registrar/ShowEventDetails?ID=2046&EID=16888>

April 19 – SIAS Big Day Birding for Beginners

Join Vicki Lang, Mary McCarthy, Trevor Hinckley, and Rhonda Rothrock for a Big Day of birding! Learn what a Big Day is all about, including strategies for how to spend your time, where to go, and what species to look for throughout the day. We'll visit several locations including Lake Murphysboro State Park, Otter Slough, Oakwood Bottoms, and Pine Hills.

Meet in the parking lot of Wal-Mart, Rt. 13, Murphysboro, at 5:30 a.m. Come prepared to carpool with others and dress for walking in the woods, rain or shine. Bring a field guide, lunch, beverages, snacks, and don't forget your binoculars.

Registration is not required but would be helpful, contact Rhonda at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com or 618.684.6605.

April 26 – The 13th Annual Birding Blitz of Southernmost IL

Form a team and compete in the Birding Blitz! Spend April 26th birding in the midst of migration and support habitat restoration and preservation in the Cache River Watershed.

Choose a category that best suits your team from a list of five: Open A / The Big Day; Open B / Dawn to Dusk - a more relaxed day of birding; County Big Day - spend the whole day birding in your favorite southernmost IL county; Muscle-powered - non-motorized birding; and last but not least the Senior / 55+ category – for the young at heart.

An awards brunch will be held at the Crab Orchard NW R Visitors' Center the morning of April 27th. The awards brunch is open to the public as a way for future competitors and non-birders alike to experience the camaraderie that exists between participants as well as meet other birders and possibly pick up some tips on birding, rare bird sightings and birding spots.

Visit the Birding Blitz website <http://www.birdingblitz.org> to view full details about the categories, also download the rules, pledge, and registration forms, and check out last year's winners and winning species 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 acquisition of 80 acres of additional wetlands along the Cache corridor.

The Birding Blitz is coordinated by the Southern IL Audubon Society.

May 10 & 11 – Spring Bird Count!

The Spring Bird Count historically took place on one day a year but now the season has been expanded to 2 days to allow folks to participate in multiple counts. This year's dates are May 10 & 11. Illinois spring bird counts are designated county by county, with nearly all counties in the state participating.

Local counts and contacts are: Williamson Co., date to be announced, - Vicki Lang-Mendenhall 618.697.9868; Jackson Co., May 10th - Rhonda Rothrock 618.684.6605; Union Co., May 10th - Vern Kleen at 217.636.8476.

May 30- June 6 – 26th Annual Tropical Adventure with Nelda

Explore Trinidad & Tobago! See Leatherback and Hawksbill sea turtles, beautiful rainforests, hundreds of tropical birds! Contact Nelda Hinckley at neldahinckley@jalc.edu or 618.549.5588 for full details, including costs, and to register!

Urge the U.S.F.W. Law Enforcement to Track Down & Prosecute the Whooping Crane Killers

The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is asking everyone to write Wildlife Law Enforcement and urge them to pursue those responsible for recently shooting a mated pair of critically endangered Whooping Cranes in Louisiana. This species deserves the full protection of the law. These magnificent birds numbered just 16 individuals in 1941 due to overhunting and habitat loss. In 1967, when the crane was listed as endangered, the USFWS and its partners began an intensive captive breeding effort that brought the current population to 600. Today, those efforts are undermined by illegal shootings, with nearly one-fourth of all Whooping Cranes dying from gunshot wounds. The species' survival is a testament to the love and hard work of thousands of people and conservation organizations over the past 70 years. Every effort should be made to bring the shooters to justice. The Whooping Crane, beloved by millions of Americans and one of the most dynamic and charismatic species in the world, deserves nothing less. You can send a copy of this text to: William C. Woody, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement, USFWS, 4401 North Fairfax Dr. Room 520, Arlington, Virginia 22203. Urge him do everything in his power to track down and prosecute the individual(s) responsible for this senseless crime.

<http://www.abcbirds.org/>

Seeing Birds

Word from upstate is they've found a number of dead waterfowl along the shoreline of Lake Michigan. Scientists are confused by this but believe the unusually long extent of time the lake remained frozen might have lead to starvation deaths.

On 03/05, Joe Merkelbach reported seeing a few thousand Snow Geese in the air between Trenton and Germantown.

Vicki Lang-Mendenhall heard a Fish Crow at Union County Refuge on 03/06, an early migrant.

John VanDyke spent 03/07 birding the Crab Orchard NW Refuge area, tallying a total of 50 species. Among these were a Mute Swan at Heron Flats and a Long-tailed Duck. Other birds spotted included plenty of American White Pelicans throughout the Crab Orchard Lake area as well as Horned Grebes, Common Golden-eye, and Red-breasted Merganser (off Wolf Creek Spillway.)

The morning of 03/11, Vicki Lang-Mendenhall flushed a Common Snipe from the overflow area of her pond, a life yard bird.

John Schwegman saw his first Red-necked Grebe at Mermet Lake on 03/11. It was in non-breeding plumage but had the pale ear patch and was in the open lake near the levee road just north of the bend in the levee. Also present were Pied-billed Grebes.

Keith McMullen was able to fit in a few birding stops on 03/07. He spotted a single Common Loon from the Rt. 154 parking lot at Rend Lake. A pair of Blue-winged were foraging with Northern Shovelers at Rose Farms in Johnson County. One early migrant Tree Swallow was feeding overhead at Mermet Lake where Keith also saw the Red-necked Grebe hanging with Ruddy Ducks.

FRACK NO! Governor Pat Quinn claimed the law he supported to regulate fracking would protect Illinois' environment. This law is inadequate and will not prevent: earthquakes after fracking in two Illinois seismic zones, water contamination, the results of flooding and tornado disasters that hit fracking sites, radioactivity of fracking waste water, the negative health impact of air emissions on people who live nearby, destruction in the Shawnee National Forest, or many other community and public health impacts of a fracking boom. It even allows the office of Mines and Minerals to waive fines and grant new permits to repeat offenders who have a history of violating the law.

Key legislators who led the way in negotiating the law include Representatives John Bradley, Mike Bost, David Reis and Barbara Flynn Currie, plus Senate sponsor Mike Frerichs, and Green Caucus chair Ann Williams. They claim to care about protecting your environment. Tell these fracking proponents that only reliable way to protect people and our environment is to ban fracking!

Please write or phone The Illinois State House, The Illinois State Senate, and Governor Pat Quinn, or visit the link below to sign a petition which says: " Illinois' weak fracking law won't protect people and our environment. Governor Pat Quinn and the Illinois General Assembly must pass a ban on fracking. "

http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/ban-fracking-in-illinois-1?source=s.fwd&er_by=225722

To Join SIAS or Renew Your Membership, please fill in this form and return it with payment. Thank You!

Individual Member	\$15	Your Name _____
Additional Family Member	\$10	Street Address _____
Student Voting Member	\$ 5	City, State, Zip _____
Donation	_____	Phone Number _____
Amount Enclosed	\$ _____	Email _____

Mail to:
Southern Illinois Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 222

I/We would like to received our newsletter via email: YES / NO

Annual membership renewal month is January and coincides with board elections held at the annual meeting each January.

Say NO to Illinois HB 4226, a bill that would permit and encourage the hunting of Bobcats in Illinois.

Brandon Phelps and some others politicians believe bobcats are causing the decline in Northern Bobwhite populations. If these folks would actually research the topic, they'd quickly find this isn't so. Quail Forever, one of the top quail support groups, states that the leading reason quail numbers are plummeting is due to habitat loss. As farmers and other rural citizens mow more acreage, take out fence rows, remove brushy areas and crop right up to woodlands, they are eliminating nesting and feeding habitat for quail.

Equally, bobcats are not responsible for the reduction of Wild Turkey, as some hunters have suggested. The National Wild Turkey Federation states that the decline in turkeys is human caused, not due to predators like bobcats. They also state, "Predators are important components of the ecosystem and really benefit the prey species in the long run." This is a conclusion Chris Bottom referenced in his program for SIAS in February.

As per the National Wild Turkey Federation, Wild Turkey numbers have increased over the last two decades and at the same time predator populations have also increased. While certain predators may need to be controlled in specific instances, the long-term solution to maintaining wild turkey populations at huntable levels will be dependent not on the predator control, but on man's activities and good habitat availability and management.

Predators of the eggs and nestlings of quail, turkey, and other ground nesting species include raccoons, opossums, skunks, foxes, raptors, groundhogs, squirrels, snakes, deer and even chipmunks. Predators of both adults and young birds include coyotes, bobcats, raptors, humans, and domestic dogs. Bobcats are just one of many in the line plus studies have proven bobcats prey mostly on rabbits and squirrels, animals whose populations are thriving. Bobcats, on the other hand, are not an abundant species. They are just now making a comeback. Their numbers do not support the need for a hunting season.

HB4226 has passed the IL House and has been sent on to the IL Agriculture Committee. Please write all your state senators and representatives urging them to vote NO on this misguided bill. *-Rhonda R.*

Fukushima: The Story of a Nuclear Disaster (2014)

is a new book by the Union of Concerned Scientists. It's being called a "gripping, suspenseful page-turner" and a "must read for anyone interested in the present or future of nuclear power." On the 3rd anniversary of the tragic event, this definitive, scientific retelling of what happened at Fukushima reminds us that the crisis is far from over and that U.S. nuclear power isn't as safe as it could and should be.

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



Tom Ulrich Image

Printed
on
recycled
paper!

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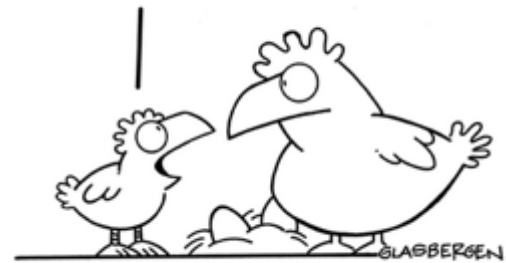
Rhonda Rothrock 618.684.6605

New Members!

We'd like to welcome new member:

Frances Oros of Marion.

"Want to play Monopoly?
How about chess or checkers?
In the mood for some Mortal Kombat?
Maybe we could just play cards!"



CORNISH GAME HEN.