

# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

October 2014 – Vol. 21, No. 7

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

## NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

### How the Science Center Benefits Our Community

Ayla M. Amadio, Program Director and curator at the Carbondale Science Center, advocate for the Center and describe how it benefits our community **on Friday,**

**Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. The evening will begin with a potluck dinner at 6:00 p.m. with Ayla's program following at 7:00.**

The potluck and meeting will be held at the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale. Take the elevator or stairway down to the lower level Fellowship Hall. Potluck set-up begins at 5:30 p.m. with the potluck starting at 6:00 p.m. Members are asked to bring an entree to share and their own dinnerware. Some beverages will be provided.

Ayla is PhD student at Southern Illinois University Carbondale studying the archaeology and prehistory of the people and artifacts of the Southeastern United States. She has participated on many archaeological digs throughout the U.S., Mexico, Belize, and in the Caribbean. Ayla states that her favorite part of working at the Science Center is playing with and talking to the children about science and teaching them to observe scientific principles all around them!



### In memoriam: Esther Edelman

Longtime member and close friend Esther Edelman, 95, died on Sept. 9 in Los Angeles, where she had lived the last few years. She was unique, known for being "immune to intimidation," said her obituary – and say we all who knew her.

Esther and her husband, Milton, fully embraced SIAS in serving on the board, hosting our annual picnics at their incredible rural property near the Bald Knob Wilderness (purchased by The Nature Conservancy and now a part of the Shawnee National Forest), and in faithfully attending our meetings for many years.

They welcomed visitors to their Carbondale home on Hill Street, where we could pull up a chair and sit with them at their kitchen table and try to supply an occasional answer to a tough crossword clue. Through a picture window, we could watch the birds at feeders and enjoy the flower garden she maintained every summer.

Her family has requested memorial gifts to be sent to SIAS, an honor we are very humbled by. To leave a message for her family, go to [www.crainsonline.com](http://www.crainsonline.com). Internment services were held on Sunday, Oct. 12, at Pleasant Grove Memorial Park on Old Highway 13.

- Laraine Wright, Treasurer

### SIAS 2014-2015 Meeting Schedule

**December 5<sup>th</sup>** - Nov./Dec. combined meeting; Speaker: John Schwegman on The Lower Rio Grande Valley & South Padre Island of Texas

**January 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Annual Meeting with potluck & silent auction fundraiser; Speaker: Mark Glenshaw on Forest Park Great Horned Owls

### Sept. Program Highlights - On Safari

The September meeting featured a compilation of images from two African trips, separated by several years, taken by the Schwegmans. Both of the trips, and the centerpiece of the show, were directed toward the legendary Serengeti Plains of east Africa.

The first trip was long enough ago that John's camera work was done with film in Kenya; while the second trip to Tanzania was imaged with digital technology.

The denizens of the grasslands were fully visible with the traveling herds of wildebeests and zebras in large numbers. Two species of gazelles that travel with the herds were pictured as well. There were two subspecies of giraffes, reticulated from the more northern regions and Masai from Tanzania. The giraffes settle male hierarchy status by swinging their necks at each other.

John and Martha traveled the Serengeti and other regions in modified busses with raised roofs so that people could stand and view, and photograph, in all directions. In one case there were so many vehicles present on the game tracks that a traffic jam of sorts developed as drivers informed each other of spotted wildlife. Many of the animals, including lions, have habituated to the vehicles and really close up images were taken from the traveling platforms.

There were lots of pictures of carnivores besides lions; cheetahs, spotted hyenas, and jackals. Raptors such as eagles, vultures, and eagles were also portrayed. One of John's insights was that small patches of green on the plain were locations where large prey had been devoured and thus fertilized the area. Particularly of interest for birders were the many species John imaged. From small weaverbirds and sunbirds; the non-hovering, nectar feeding homologues of hummingbirds, to rollers, hornbills and the largest of all, black male and brown female ostriches.

Interesting sidelights were pictures of the pastoral Masai people who once lived on the Serengeti and now live on the periphery. They favor red colored cloths as wrap around robes for both men and women. Some of the Masai are able to make a living from ecotourism around the parks.

A fitting lingering image from the program was the entire ecosystem contained within the large, extinct Ngorongoro crater of Tanzania. Thanks to the Schwegmans for sharing their trips with us.

- Joe Merkelbach, President

### Big Plans for Oakwood Bottoms

About 75 people attended a special program at Oakwood Bottoms on Sept. 27 held by the Shawnee National Forest to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this remarkable wildlife area off Ill. 3 near Grand Tower.

On hand, too, were SIAS's Rhonda Rothrock and Cathie Hutcheson along with our informational booth.

Over the years SIAS has had a special attachment to Oakwood. This bottomland forest encompasses 3,600 acres managed primarily for ducks, but the trees and moist-soil units attract spring migrants, night-herons, hawks, and woodpeckers especially.

We were happy to hear of more than \$1 million in grants to improve the area. Ducks Unlimited led the effort. Among the projects that are coming in the next few years:

- Improved water delivery to 1,200 acres for oak regeneration (a wood duck needs to eat only 8 pin oak acorns a day, but many of these original trees have died and will be replaced).
- Restoration of 1,200 acres of open wetlands south of Oakwood, plus the establishment of small open wet areas within the timber.
- Restoration work at Turkey Bayou, the backwater lake to the east along the Big Muddy River.

The SNF is also proposing to set up a waterfowl refuge area within Oakwood Bottoms for a trial period of 3-5 years. Here, duck hunting will not be allowed on 1,200 acres from 14 days before hunting season to the end of the season. This would increase the use of Oakwood by ducks as an essential resting area. We definitely want to support this proposal. - Laraine Wright, Treasurer

## Lots Of Upcoming Events & Outings

### Oct. 21 – Orionids Meteor Shower

Celestial spectacles are gracing the October night skies. The main one, the Orionids meteor shower, is on tap for after midnight. Experts suggest that some 10-20 Orionid meteors will blaze thru the night sky per hour on Tuesday, 10/21.

UniverseToday.com states that mid- to late October is “fireball season”, a time when several key meteor showers experience a broad peak. Observing meteor showers such as the Orionids is as simple as sitting back and patiently watching the skies. UniverseToday suggests watchers scan the skies for 10 minutes; one or more meteor sightings is a good sign to keep on watching, while no meteors means it's time to pack it in. Dark, moonless skies are key. Be sure to keep a pair of binoculars handy to examine any lingering smoke trails post-fireball passage. UniverseToday encourages sky watchers to report how many meteors they see to the International Meteor Organization at <http://www.imo.net>

And mark your calendar for the Geminids Meteor Shower that will peak the second week of December.

### Oct. 23 – Partial Solar Eclipse Observation

A solar eclipse will occur at 4:44-5:40 p.m. on Thursday, 10/23. The SIU Carbondale Physics Dept. will host a free public astronomy observation from 4:30-7:00 p.m. on the Neckers Building rooftop observation deck as well as on ground locations in front of the Neckers Building. The partial eclipse will be viewed using special solar telescopes.

### Oct. 25 – Field Day at Kincaid Mounds

The Kincaid Mounds Support Organization is sponsoring its annual Field Day at the Mounds on Saturday, 10/25. Activities include talks about the Mounds and recent archaeological discoveries at the site that will occur at 10:00 a.m., Noon, and 2:00 p.m. Each talk will be followed by a hike to the top of a large mound where further explanation of the site will occur.

Speakers and hike guides will include Dr. Paul Welch and Dr. Brian Butler (retired) of Southern Illinois University. There will be large artifact collections on display and people available to answer visitor questions. The event is free to the public.

The Mounds can be reached by turning east on Unionville Road at the north edge of Brookport. After 6.25 miles (through Unionville) turn right at a sign to the Mounds. More about the mounds can be found at the web site [kincaidmounds.com](http://kincaidmounds.com).

**SIAS is offering carpooling from Carbondale and Anna. We'll leave from under the sign at Murdale Shopping Center, East Main St., Carbondale, at 8:00 a.m. Then we'll stop at the parking lot of Walmart, off IL Rt. 146, east of Anna, leaving there at 8:30 a.m. Bring water and a sack lunch. We'll head back after lunch. For more details on carpooling, phone Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 or c.ph. 618.534.8659.**

### Oct. 26 – Illinois Native Plant Society Fall Social

The Southern Chapter of the IL Native Plant Society will be holding their fall social at Giant City State Park, Shelter #1 beginning at 1:00 p.m. Bring a dish to share, grillables will be provided. RSVP to [southernillinoisplants@gmail.com](mailto:southernillinoisplants@gmail.com)

### Oct. 26 – Nov. 1 – National Bat Week

National Bat Week will kick off a new, national public action campaign called Save the Bats, which is designed to inspire Americans to become involved in protecting one of our country's most important animals. Save the Bats, managed by the Organization for Bat Conservation, is primarily a social media campaign. Go to the Save the Bats [www.facebook.com/savebats](http://www.facebook.com/savebats) and become part of the movement!

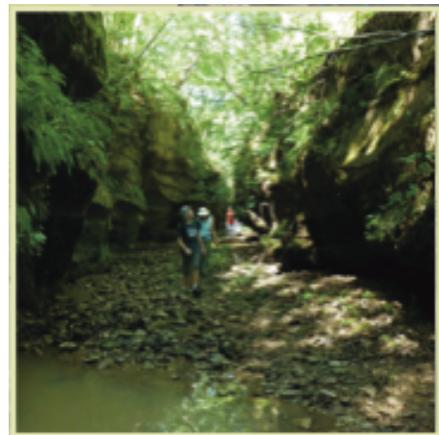
### Nov. 1 – Fieldtrip at Mill Creek Natural Area

HeartLands Conservancy is sponsoring a trek from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. at Mill Creek Natural Area in Randolph County. Mill Creek is a high quality natural area purchased at auction in 2012 to prevent development or over-harvest of the timber resources associated with the site. The property sits adjacent to Swayne Hollow Nature Preserve and is in close proximity to Piney Creek Ravine Nature Preserve. *Cont. on next column.*

### Mill Creek Nov. 1 Fieldtrip Details Cont.

In addition to hosting a high quality dry-mesic upland forest, the site boasts a Grade A Category 1 sandstone cliff /canyon community which has sheltered plants such as club moss, cinnamon fern, and bishop's cap for eons. These plants are more typically located in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Join HeartLand Conservancy on this trek to explore the area and experience its beauty first hand. RSVP to Dave Eustis at [dave.eustis@heatlandconservancy.org](mailto:dave.eustis@heatlandconservancy.org)

*Directions from IL Rt. 3: Turn north/east onto Hoghill Road, drive 4.75 miles. Turn right onto Degonia Road, drive 0.15 miles. Turn left onto Rock Crusher Road, drive 0.32 miles. Turn left onto Piney Creek Road, drive 2.4 miles. Look for parking signs.*



**Several SIAS members plan to attend. Consider carpooling with friends.** Bring water, bug and sun protection, and snacks to fuel you. Wear sturdy walking or hiking shoes.

HeartLands Conservancy is a nonprofit organization that works in partnership with landowners and community leaders to permanently protect lands that we value in Southwestern Illinois. They have launched a crowd-funding campaign to raise \$10,000 for the restoration of this unique natural area, to leverage state and federal habitat restoration funds. Donate online at [heatlandsconservancy.org](http://heatlandsconservancy.org) or by mail to: HeartLands Conservancy, 406 E. Main St., Mascoutah, IL

### Nov. 2 – Winter Tree I.D. at Giant City SP

Join an SIUC Urban and Community Forester for this fun winter tree I.D. hike from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Meet at the Giant City State Park Visitor's Center, 235 Giant City Road, Makanda. For more details, phone 618.457.4836.

### Nov. 9 – Wonder of Winter Hike at Giant City SP

Join in on a hike from 1:00-3:00 p.m. to discover where some of the wildlife takes cover when it's cold outdoors and discover how active the woods really are in the winter. Meet at the Giant City State Park Visitor's Center, 235 Giant City Road, Makanda. For more details, phone 618.457.4836

### Nov. 15 – Winter Plant I.D. at the Cache River

Discover the beauty of the remains of summer flowering plants and grasses. Learn to identify plants by their dying stalks and their various shaped seedpods. This program takes place at the Cache River Wetlands Center, 8885 State Rt. 37 South, Cypress, IL, at 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact the Wetlands center at 618.657.2064 for more information.

### Dec. 4 – Cypress Creek NWR Holiday Open House

Celebrate the holiday season with the staff and friends at the office of Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, 0137 Rustic Campus Drive, Ullin. There will be good food and good friends. For more details, call the Refuge at 618.634.2231.

### Dec. 13 – Geminids Meteor Shower Observation

Join in this free public astronomy observation hosted by the SIU Carbondale Physics Dept. from 11:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m. View meteors from the Geminids Meteor Shower, Jupiter, the Andromeda Galaxy, and the Orion Nebula. A presentation on the night sky will accompany the viewing. Campus location to be announced. For more details, phone 618.453.2643.

### Dec. 14 – Jan. 5 – 115<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count Season

Christmas Bird Count Season is less than two months away! This is the 115<sup>th</sup> year of the all-day census of winter bird populations, providing the longest running database in ornithology. The dates and details for local circles will follow in the Nov./Dec. Newsletter.



## Winter Finch Forecast 2014-2015

I always look forward to reading Mr. Ron Pittaway's (Ontario Field Ornithologist member) Winter Finch Forecast. The report predicts fall movements of finch species from the boreal forests of Canada to southern Canada and the U.S. based on the availability of berry, conifer seeds, and pine nuts. Reading this report is a fall tradition for birders nation-wide.

The prediction for 2014-2015 is that this is not an irruption (flight) year for winter finches, meaning there is adequate food to sustain them in Canada, but there will be some southward movement of most species into their normal winter ranges. For us, that means we'll see our regular number of Purple Finches but we'll see limited numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches and few if any Pine Siskins.

As the last of our summer visiting songbirds leave, waterfowl and winter migrant songbirds arrive. I heard my first White-throated Sparrow at dusk on 10/15. Yellow-rumps Warblers are arriving. Watch for these winter migrants feeding roadside and listen for their call notes as they flock up into evergreens at night to roost.

The calls of Red-bellied Woodpeckers echoing through the woods this time of year signals that winter is almost here...as do the honking of geese overhead. -Rhonda R.

The first Slate-colored Dark-eyed Junco sighting came from Vicki Lang. She saw and heard one on 10/11.

Frank Bennett reports he still had 3 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at his feeder the week of 10/13.

On October 10<sup>th</sup> the 2014 class of captive born Whooping Cranes took off from White River Marsh State Wildlife Area, Green Lake County, Wisconsin for their first migration south, guided by ultralight airplanes. As of 10/15, the flock and their entourage were spending their 5<sup>th</sup> night in Marquette, Wisconsin.

Actually, 4 groups of Whooper chicks are heading south this fall. The captive-hatched chicks learning to migrate by following the ultralights are Group 1. Group 2 are the "direct autumn release" (DAR). These chicks were also captive born but are released on Horicon NW Refuge in the fall in the company of older cranes. This year's DAR chicks will be released into the migratory Whooper population in Louisiana. Group 3 are wild-hatched chicks raised by their parents and taught to migrate naturally. A total of 13 chicks hatched this season but only 2 survived to fledge. Group 4 chicks are captive born. Each chick is released near a wild crane pair without chicks in the hopes that the pair will adopt and lead the chick on migration.

For opportunities to view the ultralight guided Whooping Cranes as they take off from their camps or to track progress visit Operation Migration's Website [http://www.operationmigration.org/Field\\_Journal.html](http://www.operationmigration.org/Field_Journal.html) If weather permits, stops are planned at Wayne County, IL, Union County KY, & Marshall County KY.

As this program continues and past fledglings join in the migration, our chances of spotting a Whooping Crane improve. With populations wintering in both Florida and Louisiana it's not unreasonable to expect Whooping Cranes to flyover or stop in southernmost IL somewhere between Union County Refuge and Cypress Creek NW Refuge. Whooping Cranes still are a critically endangered species. If you encounter a Whooper, report your sighting to the nearest US Fish and Wildlife Refuge manager or biologist, then keep the location secret. Keep your distance from the bird(s) and avoid interaction. -Rhonda R.

To learn more about cranes, visit the International Crane Foundation's Website:

<http://www.savingcranes.org>



## 4<sup>th</sup> South American Adventure: Ecuador 2015

Join Professor Nelda Hinckley and Trevor Hinckley for some eco-trekking in Ecuador, January 4-13, 2015. Tour pricing is based on double-occupancy and a minimum of 10 paying participants. For complete details, including tour cost, contact Nelda at 618.549.7335 ext. 8820, 618.564.5588, or [neldahinckley@jalco.edu](mailto:neldahinckley@jalco.edu)

## Tracking from the Tropics Reveals Behavior of Juvenile Songbirds on Their First Spring Migration

Juvenile songbirds on spring migration travel from tropical wintering sites to temperate breeding destinations thousands of miles away with no prior experience to guide them. This study provides a first glimpse at the migration timing, routes, and stopover behavior of juvenile Wood Thrushes on their inaugural spring migration by using miniaturized archival geolocators to track them from Central America to the U.S. and Canada. The study found significant differences between the timing of juvenile migration and that of more experienced adults: juveniles not only departed later from tropical wintering sites relative to adults, they also became progressively later as they moved northward.

The increasing delay was driven by more frequent short stops by juveniles along their migration route, particularly in the U.S., as they got closer to breeding sites. Surprisingly, juveniles were just as likely as adults to cross the Gulf of Mexico, an open-water crossing of 500-6500 miles, and migration route at the Gulf was not significantly different for juveniles relative to adults.

Later migration timing of juveniles relative to adults could be an adaptive strategy (as opposed to condition-dependent) to avoid the high costs of fast migration and competition for breeding territories with experienced and larger adults. The study did find significant differences in wing size between adults and juveniles, which could contribute to lower flight efficiency of juveniles and thus slower overall migration speed. This study was published: August 20, 2014. View the full study at: <http://www.plosone.org/article/abstract?uri=info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0105605&representation=PDF>

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## The State of IL to Purchase 4400 Acres of Burning Star #5

IDNR and CONSOL Mining Company LLC, a subsidiary of CONSOL Energy, Inc., have announced a contract to purchase 4,400 acres of contiguous wildlife habitat near Hurst, 7 miles north of Carbondale. Completion of this transaction is subject to a number of conditions, and accordingly, a closing date for the sale has not yet been set. The parcel, known as Burning Star Mine #5 includes some reclaimed mine land.

The property contains floodplain forest along the Little Muddy River, deep-water lakes and ponds, and leased farm ground that could be restored to grassland habitat. The site should produce outstanding trapping, fishing, hiking, limited camping and wildlife observation as well as hunting for waterfowl, deer, turkey and upland game, plus.

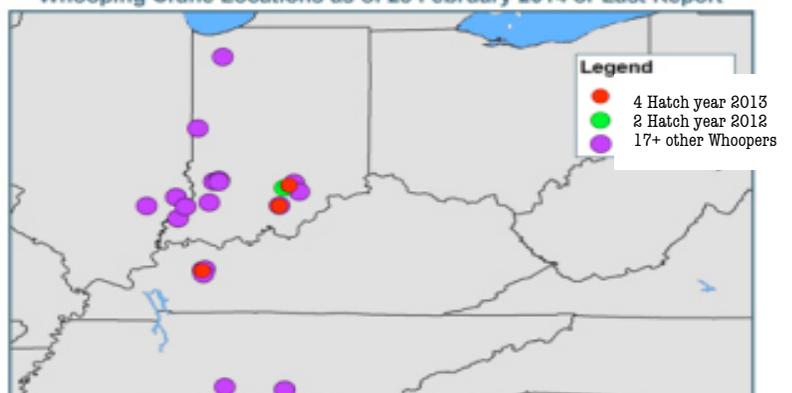
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On 09/22/14 President Obama signed a bill requiring the US Postal Service to resume selling Tiger stamps, to benefit imperiled wildlife.

On 09/26/14 President Obama protected vital marine habitat in the Pacific Ocean by expanding the existing Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, protecting nearly 490,000 miles around the islands and atolls.

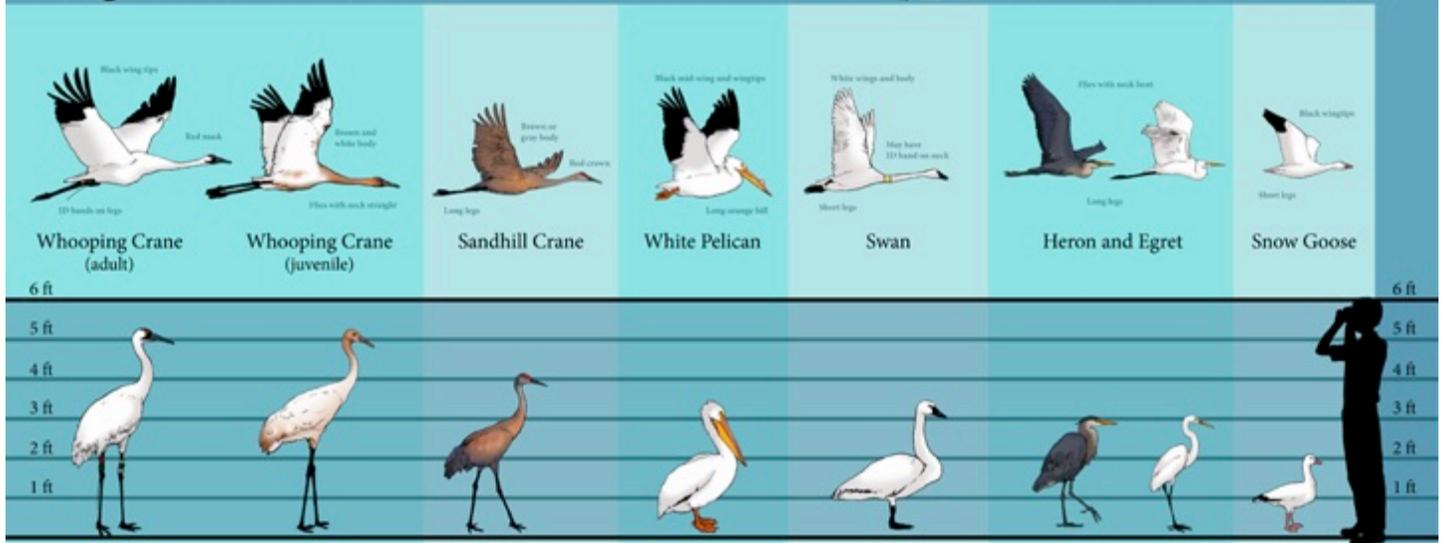
10/10/14- President Obama, using his authority under the Antiquities Act, established the 346,177 acres of national forest land in the San Gabriel Mountains as a National Monument.

Whooping Crane Locations as of 28 February 2014 or Last Report



# Large Water Birds: An Identification Guide

To learn more about cranes and wetlands visit [www.bringbackthecranes.org](http://www.bringbackthecranes.org)  
 Panel and illustrations developed by the International Crane Foundation: [www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org)



## Might the Interior Least Terns Be Delisted?

The Interior Least Tern, once thought to be rare, is now one of the most abundant birds on the Lower Mississippi River. Back in 1985, little was known about river-nesting Least Terns outside of the northern Great Plains, where battles were raging about water management on the Platte and Upper Missouri rivers. These battles led to the “endangered” listing for “Interior Least Terns (ILT),” which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) defined as any Least Tern nesting more than 50 miles from the Gulf of Mexico.

Dike maintenance and new dike construction to facilitate barge navigation have helped the terns, creating new sandbars for nesting birds on the Lower Mississippi. As sand is transported by the river at high flows, it is deposited in lower energy areas between dikes, creating huge sandbars, some more than seven miles long. In the past, dikes connected to the shore enabled predators to access tern nesting area. But collaboration between USFWS and US Army Corps led to an inexpensive way to prevent this problem. By cutting notches into many of the hundreds of dikes built into the river, backchannels are created that isolate the sandbars from the river shore.

Read the full story at <http://www.abcbirds.org/results/terns.html>



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### Newsletter contributions

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Printed on  
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SIAS continues to collect canceled stamps for the Illinois Audubon Society Land Conservation fund.



Bring your stamps to any SIAS meeting and give them to Rhonda R. For details on this IAS project visit their website. [www.illinoisaudubon.org/](http://www.illinoisaudubon.org/) There, click on **Land Conservation** then click on **Stamps for Wildlife Habitat**

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

