



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

January 2015 – Vol. 22, No. 1

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

NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

The Great Horned Owls of Forest Park

Mr. Mark H.X. Glenshaw will introduce SIAS members and friends to the Great Horned Owls of Forest Park in a program pm Friday the 23rd at 8 p.m. at 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.

Mr. Glenshaw is an amateur naturalist who studies, in both the field and the library, the wildlife found in Forest Park, St. Louis, MO. Since December 2005, Mr. Glenshaw has closely observed and followed the activities of a mated pair of Great Horned Owls he has dubbed Charles and Sarah. He shared his observations at <http://forestparkowls.blogspot.com> and will share them with SIAS members and friends in person.

This January meeting is our annual meeting. The evening will begin with a potluck dinner followed by a short business meeting and elections of officers. Set-up starts at 6 p.m. with the potluck starting at 6:30 p.m. SIAS will provide the main course and some beverages. Bring an entree to share and your own dinnerware and utensils.

The slate of officers to be elected/reelected are: President - Joe Merkelbach, Vice President - Vicki Lang, Secretary - Mary McCarthy, Treasurer - Laraine Wright, Hospitality Chair - Karen Kaufman, and Membership Chair - Rhonda Rothrock. Interested in one of the open positions? Please contact Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605. Nominations for positions can also be made the evening of the meeting as well.

SIAS will hold a silent auction and a door prize(s) drawing as part of the evening's events. Members are encouraged to bring new or lightly used items for the auction or to be given as door prizes (and a little spending cash.) Folks giving auction items are asked to suggest a value at which to start the bidding. And the remaining books donated by John Dycus from the estate of Terry L. Moulton will be available at the meeting for purchase.

Yea for our seed sale!

Our first seed sale in several years was a great success last month. We sold 75 bags and made a projected profit of \$225.

Vicki Lang-Mendenhall headed this effort, which came up on short notice when she heard of a source of high-quality black-oil sunflower seed. Rhonda got the form into our newsletter and people pitched in with orders.

We especially thank Nelda and Conrad Hinckley for hosting the sale at their house and grandson Trevor Hinckley for doing much of the heavy lifting. Greg Kupiec (our Finance Chair, how appropriate) bought 20 of the bags! Thanks to everyone who participated. The seed was truly clean, and the birds in this bitter weather are greatly enjoying it. It's possible we will have more seed for sale before the end of winter. We'll let you know.

– Laraine Wright

Governor Quinn Vetoes Bobcat Hunting

In his last days of office, Governor Quinn vetoed bill HB4226 that would have provided for hunting and trapping of Bobcats in Illinois. The Governor said he vetoed the bill because bobcats are a "valuable part of Illinois' ecosystem" that should be protected. "We all have a responsibility to protect and maintain Illinois' wildlife," he said in a statement. "Allowing people to hunt bobcats in Illinois violates this responsibility."

Illinois banned bobcat hunting in 1972 after the population was decimated by habitat changes and unregulated hunting for the highly valuable spotted fur. Bobcats were on the Illinois threatened species list from 1977 to 1999.

In Memoriam: Liz Loomis

Elizabeth "Liz" Loomis of Creal Springs died on Jan. 5. She and her late husband, Jon, were SIAS members who enjoyed our meetings and potlucks and who loved sharing news of the birds they saw on their small, rural farm. They also shared their lives with beloved pet dogs.

Liz was our Hospitality Chair for several years until she could no longer attend our nighttime meetings. We send our condolences to her sisters and brothers and extensive other family members.

Nov./Dec. Program Highlights:

Remembrance of the Alamo (Inn)

Our intrepid birding travelers and imagers, John and Martha Schwegman, treated us to a vicarious visit to birding hotspots in deep south Texas at the end of the year SIAS meeting.

The Schwegmans traveled south from Metropolis about the time that neo-tropical migrants were expected to reach the Rio Grande valley during their trip north from overwintering areas. They based at the Alamo; not the one of Bowie, Crockett, and Travis, but a specialized Bed and Breakfast that caters to birders in the Rio Grande valley of sub-tropical south Texas.

Wetlands associated with the river valley, Las Palomas wildlife management area, were one target of the trip and John got images of numerous waders and shorebirds. Still sandpiper, long-billed dowitcher, dunlin, and black-bellied plover were among the migratory birds John got into his viewfinder for images in breeding plumage.

As we have seen in his previous programs, John is gathering hummingbird pictures and this trip gathered the buff-bellied hummer, which frequents only extreme south Texas in the United States. The green, rather than blue, jay and the chachalaca were other regional specialties captured by his camera.

South Padre Island on the shore of the Gulf of Mexico was another chosen location for the trip. There are often fall-outs of migrants after they have crossed a portion of the Gulf of Mexico. Birds are tired from continuous exertion and often relatively easy to spot and photograph while they feed and recover.

John was able to spot and image twelve migrating warbler species on the bird friendly landscaped grounds of the regional South Padre Island convention center and the nearby world birding center location on the island. These locations are very important for migratory bird survival and fortunately birders have enough interest to make tourism an economic contributor for deep southern Texas, a happy congruence of bird and human interest.

There are nine locations under the direction of the world birding center in the Rio Grande Valley and it is the location of the 2nd ranked birding contest in the country.

Our thanks to John and Martha for this visit to an exotic birding spot in the USA. – Joe Merkelbach, President

SIAS 2015 Meeting Schedule

February 27th – Program Speaker: George Waring on
"Flora and Fauna of the Seychelles Archipelago"

March 27th – Program Speaker: To Be Announced



Treasurer's Report for 2014

The deaths last year of two longtime members, Esther Edelman and Susie Utgaard, brought in many appreciated donations-in-memory. Donors are listed below, along with those who gave to SIAS for our general funds.

At the end of 2014, our all-cash assets stood at \$8,222 (\$3,038 in checking, \$2,878 in a C.D., and \$2,306 in savings). This amount is divided into the following areas:

General fund: \$2,985
Birding Blitz (restricted): \$529
Ben Gelman Memorial fund: \$2,878
Esther Edelman Memorial fund: \$1,470
Susie Utgaard Memorial fund: \$360

We have pledged to those who donated for Esther and Susie to find a local project (educational, conservation, or other) that will honor the memory of our special friends. As yet the board hasn't met to discuss what that could be. If you have suggestions, please contact a board member about them.

Last year, we made donations to the following groups:

Friends of Cache River: \$400
SIUC graduate research grants: \$1,000
Free Again: \$300
Heartland Conservancy (Piney Creek): \$300
Carbondale Public Library: \$35

The regular income to SIAS comes from membership dues, our annual silent auction and sales at monthly meetings, and donations to our general fund from our members. In December, we also had our first seed sale in several years, organized by Vicki Lang-Mendenhall. The sale netted us \$225.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the above areas, as it helps keep SIAS a strong organization, able to cover our regular expenses plus extend much-needed help to similar organizations and worthy projects to benefit the birds.

We also thank the following people who donated in 2014 to the following funds or through gifts-in-kind:

-SIAS General Fund

Clark Ashby, Jim Cather and Lilly Crane, Neil Claussen, Vickie and Will Devenport, Mary Dresser, Linda Dutcher, Sylvia Greenfield, Nelda Hinckley, Cathie Hutcheson, Judith Joy, Judith Keesler, Margaret Krueger and Reed Arrott, Greg Kupiec, Richard and Cindy LaSalle, Lois Lembke, Clara McClure, Joe Merkelbach, Mary and David Rendelman, Rhonda Rothrock, Parviz and Kathleen Sanjabi, John and Martha Schwegman, Patricia Sims, Laraine Wright

-Esther Edelman Memorial Fund

Karl and Sandy Bartelsmeyer, Lawrence and Maureen Dennis, Vickie Devenport, Jean Grace and Geeta Kothari, Nelda Hinckley, Jeffrey Horrell, Gayle Klam, Lelia Marvin, Doug McEwen, Susan Metcalf, Chris and Carolyn Moe, James and Jan Morris, Edward and Patricia O'Day, Jerry O'Malley, Connie Rogers, Harry Schultz Jr., Harriet Simon, Joyce Webb, Laraine Wright

-Susie Utgaard Memorial Fund

Mary Luh Fraunfelter, John Hilgert, Nelda Hinckley, Jerry O'Malley, M. Jane Robertson, Edward and Patricia Sims, SIUC Dept. of Geology faculty (Steven Emling), Mary Vice, Laraine Wright

If you have any questions about this report or if you want further information, please call me at 457-8769. We have a great organization, now entering its 45th year. We've a lot to be proud of and a lot to continue to work for. - Laraine Wright

Bluebird numbers fell on CONWR trail

Our 25-year-old Eastern bluebird trail project at Crab Orchard NWR produced sad numbers for 2014. Compared to 2013, bluebirds fledged 37 percent fewer birds, at only 396. Tree swallow fledges fell by 18 percent, at 159. But we did count 13 prothonotary warblers juveniles, a happy record from our boxes.

Volunteer trail monitors reported fewer adults were sighted last year. No doubt the terrible winter and the cold, wet spring (which wiped out early hatchlings due to hypothermia and starvation) was part of the loss of millions of songbirds, including bluebirds, in the northern tier of states.

Fourteen volunteers serve as bluebird monitors for CONWR and at the State Fish Hatchery, which we also sponsor. These include SIAS members Mary Luh Fraunfelter, Anton and Dave Kvernes, Mary McCarthy, Jerry O'Malley and I, who serves as project coordinator. We're grateful for the \$250 in our annual budget that helps us update the boxes on the trails.

- Laraine Wright

President Protects Millions of Acres from Drilling

The North Aleutian Basin Planning Area consists of about 32.5 million acres, including Alaska's Bristol Bay. The previous Administration set in motion a new lease sale for 2011 that would have opened approx. 5.6 million acres - about one-fifth of the planning area - for drilling. In 2010, President Obama temporarily withdrew the Bristol Bay area from oil and gas development. On 12/16/14, the President took action that extends the protection indefinitely. Bristol Bay helps to produce 40 percent of America's wild-caught seafood each year. It supports \$2 billion every year in commercial fishing, and supports good jobs in sport-fishing and tourism.

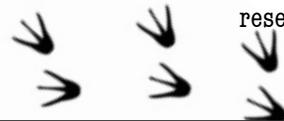
Help Penguin Researchers thru On-line Project

The opportunity for "citizen science" among amateur naturalists is exciting to many of us. Here's another one that is very easy to sign onto and to do.

Penguinwatch.com offers hundreds of thousands of photographs in the field taken by automatic cameras, too many photos for researchers to study by themselves. By signing up, you access a photo at random and click on what you see there: adults, chicks, and/or eggs. You count each one (or click "too many to count" beyond 30) and go onto the next photo. This helps researchers decide which photos to study in more detail. A brief tutorial helps you separate adult from juveniles.

Penguin Watch is part of a broader citizen science site called Zooniverse. You can set up an account here, too, to help in space, biology, and nature

research projects. - Laraine Wright



The Downside of the Boom & Where Oil and Politics Mix

In November 2014, the New York Times ran a major article, in 2 parts, on North Dakota's Oil Industry written by Deborah Sontag and Robert Gebeloff. I received copies of the articles from my in-laws who live in upstate Illinois.

Sometimes big articles like this stir media attention, but I didn't recall hearing about the story. I don't know where to begin an attempt to sum up the multiple paged stories, so I am going to encourage folks to look them up on line. The New York Times has the 2-part story on their website in major interactive form, including images and video. The first part includes data on the number of under reported oil spills, the soaring number of leaks, how the industry is being regulated by local politicians, and interviews with individuals injured in a well explosion. It states that more than 18.4 million gallons of oils and chemicals have spilled, leaked or misted into the air, soil and waters of North Dakota from 2006 thru October 2014. The second part goes into details of how the industry is changing the scenery of North Dakota and how the industry influences the states public servants.

Upon reading the story, I came away with the impression that the oil industry cares only for money and nothing else. I wish there was a way we could get Brandon Phelps, Gary Forby, Mike Bost and the rest to stop viewing fracking thru their industry purchase oil-colored glasses. I'd send them all copies of the article; doubtful they'd read it. The drop in oil prices has hurt but not stopped the industry. They are having to tighten their belts. I did hear that one or two companies are pulling out of their leases in Illinois. -Rhonda R.

The Downside of the Boom - <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/11/23/us/north-dakota-oil-boom-downside.html>

Where Oil and Politics Mix - <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/11/24/us/north-dakota-oil-boom-politics.html>

Upcoming Events & Outings

Jan. 24, 25, 31 & Feb. 1 – CONWR Guided Eagle Tours

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge will host guided tours into the closed portion of the Refuge to view bald eagles and their nests. Refuge staff and volunteers will lead three tours on each Saturday at 8 a.m., 11 a.m., and 2 p.m. Sunday tours begin at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Meet at the Visitor Center with a short orientation talk, followed by a van tour, approx. two hours in length. The tours visit eagle nesting sites for the best possibility of seeing the birds as they begin to prepare for the nesting season. Binoculars and cameras are recommended. Refuge staff will have spotting scopes for viewing.

The annual eagle tours are one of the Refuge's most popular events. Seating is limited. Call 618.997.3344 ext. 1 to reserve your space. Tickets will be \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for children aged 12 and younger. Reservations may be made over the phone or in person at the Refuge Visitor Center on Route 148 in Marion. The Visitor Center is open from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. daily. Fees will be collected in-person the day of your reservation, prior to the tour. Please arrive a few minutes early to check in and pay for your tickets. Sponsored by the Friends of Crab Orchard.

Feb.-May – Movie Nights at the Cache

Bring your family and friends for a relaxing evening with fellow nature lovers on the First Thursday of each month. The theme of this year's series is "Critters of the Cache". Feb. 5th is *Fabulous Frogs*; March 12th is *Venom: Nature's Killer* (be advised this video contains graphic images and content); April 2nd is *Leave it to Beavers*; and May 7th is *Earth Flight*.

Movie Nights are held at the Cache River Wetlands Center from 6-8 p.m. and are free of charge. For more details, call Cypress Creek Refuge at 618.634.2231

Feb. 7 – Orientation for Cache Frog & Toad Survey

Calling all volunteers to help the IL Natural History Survey conduct surveys of the frogs and toads of southern IL during their different breeding seasons. At the orientation from 1-3 p.m. at the Cache River Wetlands Center, learn about the 19 anuran (frog & toad) species found in southernmost IL and their value to the ecology. Volunteers will receive data sheets & informational materials about the frogs & toads, and will learn the protocol for conducting the surveys 4 times from February thru June. For more details, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

Feb. 9 – Monthly Astronomical Association Meeting

If you're interested in learning more about Astronomy, consider attending a meeting of the Astronomical Association of Southern Illinois. The group meets the second Monday each month at 6 p.m. at Pagliai's Pizza, 509 S. Illinois Ave., Carbondale, IL.

Feb. 13-16 – The Great backyard Bird Count

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society invite you to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. In 1998, the Great Backyard Bird Count became the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time. Since then, more than 100,000 people of all ages and walks of life have joined the 4-day count each February to create and record the distribution and abundance of birds.

Simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world! If you're new to the count, first register online then enter your checklist. If you have already participated in another Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you can use your existing login. Visit <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/> for details.

Feb. 21 – SIAS Outing in Search of Raptors

SIAS's new Outings Chair Don Mullison will lead an outing down to the Wolf Lake Area of Union County in search of hawks, eagles, and other birds of interest. Meet at the north side of Murdale Shopping Ctr. parking lot, W. Main St., Carbondale just prior to 9 a.m. for carpooling. Trip will end between 1-2 p.m. Bring binocs and snacks or sack lunch.

Here's hoping the weather cooperates!

Feb. 22 – "Birds of a Feather" at the Cache

For many bird species, their feathers tell their story. Because birds have feathers, they can fly, stay dry when it rains, stay warm with it's cold, and be cool when it's hot. Come to the Cache Wetlands Center from 2-3:30 p.m. to learn about those amazing bird feathers. For more details, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

Feb. 21 & 22 – Maple Festival at Touch of Nature

The Maple Festival at SIU Carbondale's Touch of Nature Environmental Center will feature demonstrations, special activities, and a pancake breakfast. This year's festival runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Touch of Nature, located eight miles south of Carbondale off of Giant City Road. Demonstrations will include blacksmithing, hide tanning, silk embroidery and furniture, and visitors will have the opportunity to make purchases from local artisans and vendors.

Tree identification hikes are set for 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. The maple syrup demonstrations will occur at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and gives those attending the chance to learn the history of maple syrup production and about the process that converts the tree sap into maple syrup for the kitchen table.

Admission to the festival and the demonstrations is free.

The breakfast, featuring homemade pancakes and maple syrup harvested at Touch of Nature, will take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Purchase tickets in advance for the reduced prices of \$12 for ages 13 and older or \$6 for ages 6-13. Children ages five and younger eat free. Advance tickets are available to those who pre-register by 2 p.m. Feb. 20. Tickets are also available for the maple syrup pancake breakfast at the door where the price will be \$15 and \$8. Barbecue will also be available for purchase on the grounds beginning at noon. For more details or to purchase breakfast tickets, call 618.453.1121 or visit www.ton.siu.edu, email tonec@siu.edu.

Feb. 28 – Waterfowl Birding at Mermet Lake

Master Naturalist Anne Parley will lead a driving tour around Mermet Lake from 9-11 a.m., making several stops to identify birds along the way. Meet at Mermet Lake in the Bluebird Trail parking area near the entrance to the lake. For more details, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

January 2015 Guide to the 5 Visible Planets

Venus, brightest of all planets and 3rd brightest object in the sky after the sun and moon, sits in the glare of evening twilight in the western sky for most of January. Be sure to watch the skies on January 21, 22, & 23 when the waxing crescent moon will be back in the evening sky, moving up past Venus and then Mars in the western twilight.

Mercury, our solar system's innermost planet and always near the sun in our sky, will be seen in the evening sky this month. Mercury reaches its greatest elongation from the sun on January 14. Mercury might become visible in the evening sky in early January. Your binocular will help you scan for Mercury in the bright evening twilight, just after sunset.

Mars reliably pops in to view as soon as darkness falls throughout January. It's rather low in the southwestern twilight sky. Catch the red planet at nightfall. Let the waxing crescent moon guide you to Mars on January 21, 22, & 23. Mars sets about 3 hours after the sun nearly all month long.

Jupiter, 2nd brightest planet after Venus, rises in the east at roughly 8 p.m. in early January and 6 p.m. by the end of the month, and lords over the nighttime from mid-evening till dawn. Once Juniper rises over the eastern horizon, it's unmistakable, shining more brightly than any star. Earth is speeding toward Jupiter, to Jupiter will continually rise earlier and earlier in the evening all month long. Earth will catch up with Jupiter on February 6th at which time Jupiter will be out all night long.

Saturn is visible in January's eastern predawn sky. It rises about 3 hours before sunup in early January and 3 ½ hours before the sun by month's end. Watch for the waning crescent moon to couple up with Saturn mid-month.

Find updates on your cosmos and world at <http://earthsky.org/>



The Save Vanishing Species stamp is again on sale at post offices & online!

Featuring a bold graphic of an Amur tiger cub, the artwork of the Save Vanishing Species™ First-Class Semipostal stamp depicts just one of the magnificent animals that it is designed to help. Each stamp costs 60¢, the base rate of 49¢ plus 11¢ that goes to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Multinational Species Conservation Funds supporting efforts to protect wild populations of tigers, rhinos, elephants, great apes and sea turtles. These efforts include work to help combat poaching, habitat protection, disease prevention, and education for local communities about the value of conserving wildlife. As of October 2012, over \$1.74 million has been raised for the cause. When you head to the post office to mail cards and packages or buy postage online, look for the Save Vanishing Species stamp!

USFWS Releases 2014 List of Candidates for Endangered Species Act Protection

On 12/03/14 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released the Candidate Notice of Review, a yearly status appraisal of plants and animals that are candidates for Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection. Twenty-two species from Hawaii and one from Independent Samoa and American Samoa were added to the candidate list, one species was removed, and one has changed in priority from the last review conducted in November 2013. There are now 146 species recognized by the Service as candidates for ESA protection. The Service is now soliciting additional information on these species and others that may warrant ESA protection to assist in preparing listing documents and future revisions or supplements to the Candidate Notice of Review.

Although candidate species do not receive ESA protection, the Service works to conserve them and their habitats. Candidate species are plants and animals for which the Service has enough information on their status and the threats they face to propose as threatened or endangered, but for which a proposed listing rule is precluded by other, higher priority listing actions. The annual review and identification of candidate species helps landowners and natural resource managers understand which species need most to be conserved, allowing them to address threats and work to preclude ESA listing.

The 23 species being added to the candidate list include the Ma'oma'oa, a large, dusky olive-green honeyeater native to Upolu and Savaii, Independent Samoa (Samoa), and Tutuila Island, American Samoa, but now only found in small populations on the islands of Savaii and Upolu. Also being added are 18 Hawaiian flowering plants and four ferns found on one or more of the Hawaiian Islands; all are being negatively affected by nonnative animals and plants.

All candidate species are assigned a listing priority number based on the magnitude and imminence of the threats they face. When adding species to the list of threatened or endangered species, the Service addresses species with the highest listing priority first. The complete notice and list of proposed and candidate species is published in the Federal Register and can be found online at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/cnor.html>.

USFWS Protects Red Knot as Threatened Under the Endangered Species Act Designation

On 12/08/14, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced federal protection for the rufa subspecies of the red knot, a robin-sized shorebird, designating it as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). A "threatened" designation means a species is at risk of becoming endangered throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Since the 1980s, the knot's population has fallen by about 75% in some key areas, largely due to declines in one of its primary food resources – horseshoe crab eggs in Delaware Bay, an important migratory stopover site. Although this threat is now being addressed by extensive state and federal management actions, other threats, including sea-level rise, some shoreline projects and coastal development, continue to shrink the shorebird's wintering and migratory habitat. Changing climate conditions are also altering the bird's breeding habitat in the Arctic and affecting its food supply across its range, in particular through climate-driven mismatches in migration timing that affect the peak periods of food availability. The bird must arrive at Delaware Bay at exactly the time when horseshoe crabs are laying their eggs.

One of the longest distance migrants in the animal kingdom, some rufa red knots fly more than 18,000 miles each year between breeding grounds in the Canadian Arctic and wintering grounds along the Gulf Coast, southeast U.S. and South America. One bird, banded by biologists in 1995 in Argentina, has been nicknamed Moonbird because he has flown the equivalent of a trip to the moon and at least halfway back in his 21 or more years of migrations.

In making its decision, the Service analyzed the best available data in more than 1,700 scientific documents, and considered issues raised in more than 17,400 comments provided during 130 days of public comment periods and three public hearings. As required by the ESA, the Service is also reviewing the U.S. range of the rufa red knot to identify areas that are essential for its conservation, known as critical habitat. The Service expects to propose critical habitat for the rufa red knot for public review and comment in 2015. Visit <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/redknot/> to read the final rule and all details.

USFWS Initiates Status Review of Monarch Butterfly under the Endangered Species Act

Dec. 29 2014- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced it would be conducting a status review of the monarch butterfly under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service has determined that a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity, the Center for Food Safety, the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and Dr. Lincoln Brower to list a subspecies of monarch (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*) presents substantial information indicating that listing may be warranted.

Monarch butterflies are found throughout the United States and some populations migrate vast distances across multiple generations each year. Many monarchs fly between the U.S., Mexico and Canada – a journey of over 3,000 miles. This journey has become more perilous for many monarchs because of threats along their migratory paths and on their breeding and wintering grounds. Threats include habitat loss – particularly the loss of milkweed, the monarch caterpillar's sole food source – and mortality resulting from pesticide use. Monarch populations have declined significantly in recent years.

The Service will now conduct a status review to determine whether listing is warranted. To ensure this status review is comprehensive, the Service is requesting scientific and commercial data and other information through a 60-day public information period. Specifically, the Service seeks information including: The subspecies' biology, range and population trends, habitat requirements, genetics and taxonomy; Historical and current range, including distribution patterns; Historical and current population levels and current and projected trends; The life history or behavior of the monarch butterfly that has not yet been documented; Thermo-tolerance range and microclimate requirements of the monarch butterfly; Past and ongoing conservation measures for the subspecies, its habitat or both; and, Factors that are the basis for making a listing determination under section 4(a) of the ESA;

The notice will publish in the Federal Register December 31, 2014, and it is requested that information be received by March 2, 2015. To view the notice and submit information, visit www.regulations.gov docket number FWS-R3-ES-2014-0056.

I've always considered W. Douglas Robinson's *Southern Illinois Birds: An annotated List and Site Guide* to be the birding bible of southernmost IL. There are those that now see it as outdated, but I still sing its praise. In December Tom Lerczak posted a reference to his 2003 review of *Southern Illinois Birds* on the IL Birders Exchange Thoughts list serve. I read it and thought other fans of the book might enjoy it too. And, if you have a copy you no longer want, I would gladly take it off your hands, so to pass it on to the next new southernmost IL birder I meet. -Rhonda R.

Dec. 13, 2014 -BOOK REVIEW: *Southern Illinois Birds: An annotated List and Site Guide*

This review written by Tom Lerczak of Havana, Illinois was originally published in the *Transactions of the Illinois State Academy of Science*, 2003, Volume 96, pages 321 - 323. The reprint with all literature cited (too much to fit here) can be found at http://theriverlanding.typepad.com/the_river_landing/2014/12/book-review-southern-illinois-birds-an-annotated-list-and-site-guide.html

Having traveled throughout most of Illinois many times, I wholeheartedly concur with W. D. Robinson as he states, in the Introduction of *Southern Illinois Birds: An Annotated List and Site Guide*, that "Southern Illinois is a unique and wonderful place to find birds..." Southern Illinois, especially the Shawnee Hills and southward, seems to have a palpable sense of place. For this reason, with scientific considerations aside, it is entirely appropriate for such a widely recognized and distinct geographical area of the state to have its own book of ornithological information. On the other hand, somewhat comparable coverages of southern Illinois are included in Bohlen (1989) and De Vore (2000).

In writing this book, the author's primary goal was to "document the current knowledge" of southern Illinois birds. Additionally, he wished to provide a reference document, usable indoors and in the field, that would highlight the wealth of information currently available, emphasize gaps in knowledge and help observers assess the importance of their observations. Robinson includes a section in his Introduction called "A History of Southern Illinois Bird Study" in which he laments observers who have not published their data. He further states that "everyday bird observations...are useful contributions..." and he encourages birders to accurately record their observations in a systematic manner that will be useful in scientific analyses. The list of 167 individual observers whose data were drawn upon to compile this book supports this view. In addition, this book is well documented with references to the ornithological literature. Considering this, it is curious that Robinson does not cite works by Stephen A. Forbes and Alfred O. Gross of the Illinois Natural History Survey (Forbes 1913, Forbes and Gross 1922, 1923). Yet, he attributes the beginning of scientific bird surveys in southern Illinois to Richard R. Graber and Jean W. Graber, also of the Illinois Natural History Survey, in the 1970s and 1980s.

Robinson includes the 17 southernmost counties of Illinois plus part of St. Clair County in his definition of Southern Illinois." Within this area, he recognizes three distinct physiographic areas based upon the Natural Divisions of Illinois: the Shawnee Hills; the Floodplains of the Ohio, Wabash, and Mississippi Rivers; and the Till Plain in the northern ten counties of the coverage area. The next logical step is for the reader to begin thinking about types of habitats found within the physiographic areas and habitat requirements for specific birds (species). Robinson especially emphasizes the habitat needs of forest songbirds that are sensitive to the effects of forest fragmentation. He often shows a strong conservation ethic in his writing, and he offers five management recommendations for improving forest habitats for songbirds. Many other types of habitats are mentioned, but not similarly highlighted, although much certainly could have been written about each. These types of habitats include grasslands, shrublands, wetlands, mudflats, large reservoirs, large rivers and small streams.

About three-quarters of *Southern Illinois Birds* is composed of the first two main parts of the book entitled "Species Accounts: The Past and Present Status of Birds in Southern Illinois." Species are arranged phylogenetically and grouped by order and family. Each account for the 361 species includes: information on the status and abundance of the species (i.e., migrant, resident or rarity); the habitat(s) where the species may typically be found; records for the species by season (dates and numbers); and documentary evidence supporting species identification (e.g., collected specimens and photographs). Lastly, the accounts include page numbers where the reader can find more information in three popular birding field guides. In addition, each account for migratory birds begins with dates between which the species is most likely to be observed (e.g., late March to early May).

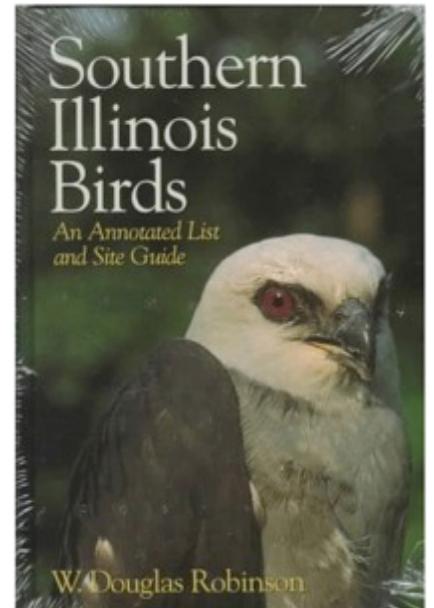
While it could become tedious to read the species accounts one after the other, even for the most serious birder, remarks included with most accounts can be interesting and even entertaining. For example, consider Robinson's description of banding a Northern Saw-whet Owl: "As an illustration of the tameness of this species, after the Ozark owl was banded, it was placed on a tree limb and photographed; it remained motionless, except for blinking its eyes, for nearly an hour." Robinson's remarks typically include information on nesting, migration, behavior and sometimes conservation issues.

Part Two of *Southern Illinois Birds* consists of a guide to 26 of what Robinson calls "the traditionally best birding spots in southern Illinois." About half of the site descriptions also include simple maps. Other than the book's Introduction, these site descriptions are the most readable portion of *Southern Illinois Birds*. Directions to the sites were obviously drawn from first-hand experience, because they contain information that one would most likely know only from having been there. For example, when describing Alexander County, Robinson mentions "...a small trail [that] will take you down the other side [of a levee] into some woods and out onto the shores of the Mississippi River." It remains to be seen, though, whether one could actually find such a small unmarked trail.

Site descriptions typically describe some of the habitats as well as some of the birds to be expected. Here it would make little sense to list the same common species that could be seen at almost every site (e.g., American Robins) while emphasizing rarities (e.g., Pacific Loon) or one-of-a-kind sightings (e.g., Rock Wren at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge [NWR]) that would be unlikely to happen again. Robinson generally strikes a fair balance in naming common to rare species. He rightly emphasizes fairly reliable southern Illinois specialties, such as Least Terns along the Mississippi River or Black Vultures at Heron Pond-Little Black Slough Nature Preserve along the Cache River. Readability of site descriptions is enhanced by comments on conservation issues. For instance, for Baldwin Lake, Robinson writes that "Summer is virtually worthless [for birding]. Dozens of fishing boats cruise around the lake..." Robinson occasionally mentions unusual aspects of visiting certain sites, such as the description of Crab Orchard NWR, where he warns that the "turnaround at the end of the road is also a meeting place of undesirable sorts of company..."

Southern Illinois Birds succeeds very well as a reference book, field guide and an inspiration for birders to become adventurous as well as systematic and accurate in recording their observations. Although a book such as this soon becomes dated, it will always serve as a record of information at the time of publication and may hopefully generate an endless series of revised editions.

* * * * *



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Annual membership renewal month is January and coincides with board elections held at the annual meeting each January.
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12-Day Costa Rican Expedition, March 3-14 2015

The 2015 trip to Costa Rica (the rich coast) has again been designed specifically for Vern's Birding Tours and includes outstanding birding locations on both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, in the Caribbean and Pacific lowlands and northern highlands. It is anticipated that 350 or more species of birds should be found on this trip. For full details and reservations, contact Vernon Kleen, 1825 Clearview Drive, Springfield, IL 62704, (217-787-3515) or vkleen@comcast.net. All checks should be made payable to Vernon Kleen.

Stamps for Wildlife Habitat

The Illinois Audubon Society collects, sorts and sells stamps to raise funds for land acquisition to protect habitat in Illinois. SIAS members and friends have been big supporters of this project. I forward on average a shoebox full of collected stamps to Vern Kleen every year.

In the fall I was contact by the estate of Mr. Robert Beck. They donated a large box full of old stamps. And just 10 days ago I received another large box full of old stamps from Mr. Dean Paulsmeyer of Centralia. Thanks to Mr. Paulsmeyer's and to everyone else who has donated stamps throughout the year the Stamps for Wildlife Habitat program continues to be a success. (And please continue to collecting stamps. Bring them to SIAS meetings)-Rhonda R.



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P.O. Box 222
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Watch for Mercury and Venus after sunset! Closest on January 10. Look in the sunset direction, shortly after the sun goes down.