



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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

NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

Rebuilding a Broken Land, Efforts to Rehabilitate Afghanistan's Pastoral Landscape

Is the title of a program to be given by Charles Ruffner, Professor at SIU's Dept. of Forestry, on Friday, Feb. 26th. The program, starting at 7 p.m., will be held in the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale. Dr. Ruffner studied old growth forests and fire history at Penn State before arriving here at SIU. He teaches courses in Forest Fire Management and Disturbance Ecology among others and has contributed to the reconstruction and conservation of Afghanistan's war torn countryside since 2008. He and his colleagues at the SIU College of Agricultural Sciences have worked with various military units and federal agencies in these endeavors.



Everglades Forever?

Dr. Loretta Battaglia, of SIUC, presented a program about her work on the panel that is charged with scientific review of the Florida Everglades restoration at the January meeting.

Dr. Battaglia, of the botany section of the biology department, is a Louisiana native with personal and professional interest in wetlands. Her main study subject is the status and preservation of the wetland of the Mississippi River.

The Everglades is properly called a unique ecosystem. It was, before modifications to protect the developed coasts from flooding and supply agriculture with irrigation water, a marsh of grass interspersed with other vegetation in a slow flow of water streaming south across all the width of the southern half of Florida. The picturesque name was and still is "River of Grass".

The state and federal governments and many private conservation groups have had intermittent success over the last 25 years or so in returning diverted water flows back toward the southern tip into Florida Bay. The sugar interests and the coastal cities still get a share of Florida's fresh water, but more of it is now flowing south to partially restore the Everglades. Restoring the hydrological status of water movement is one key for restoring a natural Everglades.

Another large problem is presence of many invasive species of plants and animals. Changed water movement and human introduction of exotic garden plants which escaped into a favorable natural situation has allowed Australian Pine, Melaleuca, climbing fern, and Brazilian Pepper to become serious threats to native plant communities.

The Burmese python is the best known but not the only animal invasive species. It is large enough to threaten alligators, the top native ecosystem predator; and it takes a toll on other native populations.

One interesting factor in the river of grass is the formation of an underlying mat of only partially decomposed vegetation beneath the water (like peat bogs) that maintains the grass cover.

The take away of Dr. Battaglia's presentation is that continued restoration of the natural hydrology would maintain some part of the Everglades for the future; but increase in global temperatures could submerge the edges of the state including much of the Everglades. *-Joe Merkelbach, President*

2016 Illinois Ornithological Society Grant Program

The Illinois Ornithological Society (IOS) has announced they are now accepting applications for the 2016 Illinois Ornithological Society Grant Program. Awards of up to \$1,000 are available to anyone or any organization with a bird and/or birding related project including students, professionals, organizations and individuals. Recipients of an IOS Grant award must be a member of IOS and agree to write an article about the project and its results for the IOS journal *The Meadowlark*. Interested applicants should submit a project proposal of up to but not exceeding three pages. Application forms are available at <http://www.illinoisbirds.org/ios-grant-program/> or e-mail your request for an application to bfisher928@aol.com.

Completed applications should be e-mailed to Bob Fisher at bfisher928@aol.com by March 15, 2016. Announcement of the awards will be April 15, 2016.

Another Great Annual Meeting

Over 50 members and friends attended the annual meeting in January. The slate of officers up for re-election was approved unanimously. Two-dozen items were donated for the silent auction including one of Cal Maginel's legendary handmade birdhouses. The auction netted \$72.

A new collection of books was made available for purchase. These books were part of a large collection assembled by the late Dr Richard Blackwelder.

Dr Blackwelder was a highly regarded insect systematist and taxonomist who had spent many years working at the National Museum of Natural History, part of the Smithsonian Institution, before being recruited to SIU by Delyte Morris.

Dr Blackwelder, along with several other colleagues, started the Society of Systematic Zoology (SSZ) in 1948. The SSZ would later become the Society of Systematic Biology and the publisher of one of the top scientific journals in the field. Dr. Blackwelder served as the unofficial librarian of the Society and as a result was the recipient of many books from publishers of biological materials.

In the early days Dr. Blackwelder made these books available to the Society by hauling them to annual meetings in a large trailer. For decades since then the books have graced a classroom in the Life Science II building, Dept. of Zoology, on the SIU campus. Dr Blackwelder and his wife retired to Cape Girardeau where he had a second career as a scholar of the works of JRR Tolkien.

Space constraints led to the dispersal of this collection, and SIAS was one of the beneficiaries. SIAS wishes to thank the Zoology Dept. and specifically Richard Thomas for making the collection available to SIAS as a fundraiser. \$203 in books sold meeting night, this included a few books from a prior donation. *-Rhonda R.*

SIAS Meetings Calendar for 2016

March 25th: Tom Ulrich-Costa Rica

April 22nd: Christopher Benda

May: SIAS Picnic-date to be announced

August 26th: to be announced

Sept. 23rd: Mark Glenshaw - The Owls of Forest Park

Outings & Events

March & April > Movie Nights at the Cache

Bring your family and friends for a relaxing evening of nature movie watching on the 1st Thursday of each month. March 3rd: *The Secret World of Bats*; April 7th: *Venom: Nature's Killer*. Movie Nights are held at the Cache River Wetland Center from 6-8 p.m. and are free of charge. For more details, call Cypress Creek Refuge at 618.634.2231

March 5 > Annual Kaskaskia River Eagle Fest

This eagle fest is held at the Kaskaskia River Recreation Area, 4800 Lock and Dam Rd., Modoc, IL, running from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Activities at the event are highlighted by World Bird Sanctuary presentations. Other activities include short interpreted walks both upstream and downstream from the dam and eagle watching with spotting scopes. The event is sponsored by the HeartLands Conservancy and hosted by the Army Corps of Engineers, IDNR, the USFWS, Cliftop and others.

SIAS will offer carpooling to the Eagle Fest. Meet at 8 a.m. at the northwest end of the Murphysboro Walmart parking lot, between Carbondale & Murphysboro at IL Rt. 13 and Country Club Rd. Bring your lunch & refreshments. Plans are to return by 4. Phone Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 by Friday, the 4th, if you plan to join the carpool.

March 12 > Raptors of So. IL - at Giant City St. Pk.

Bev Shofstall of Free Again Wildlife Rehab is giving a program about some of her live raptor friends at Giant City State Park from 1-3 p.m. This program will be held outdoors by the Giant City Nature Trail Shelter #3. Phone the Park at 618.457.4836 for more details.

March 12 > Native Plant Seminar at Cape Nature Center

The Missouri Dept. of Conservation and the Cape Girardeau County Master Gardeners will be hosting their 11th annual native plant seminar from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Cape Conservation Nature Center, north of Cape Girardeau. To learn more about the event activities, guest speakers, and native plant sales, call 573.290.5218.

March 13 > CCC in the Cache River Watershed

Author and regional historian Kay Rippelmeyer-Tippy will provide an illustrated history of the Civilian Conservation Corps in southern Illinois from 1933 to 1941, especially the camps that were established by the CCC in Johnson, Pope, Gallatin, Saline, Massac and Union counties, and the projects done by those enrollees. Program will take place at the Cache River Wetlands Center. For more details, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

March 15 > TNC Strike Team

The IL Native Plant Society Southern Chapter will have The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Strike Team give a presentation on what they do and where they work. This program by Strike Team members Caleb Grantham and Nick Seaton will be held at the Carbondale Township Hall, 217 E. Main St., Carbondale. starting at 6:30 p.m.

March 20 > Wildlife at Mermet

John Schwegman, the first manager of Mermet Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area from 1965-1968, will present a program on the variety of wildlife he has photographed at Mermet over the past 50 years, including many rarely-seen species. Program will take place at the Cache River Wetlands Center from 1-2 p.m. For more details, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

April 1-3 > INPS Indigenous Plants Symposium @ JALC

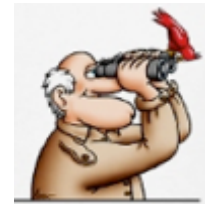
Mark your calendar. This native plant symposium, sponsored by the Illinois Native Plant Society Southern Chapter, offers speaker presentations, nature hikes, and a native plant sale. It will be held at John A. Logan College, Carterville. For details or to register, visit <http://www.ill-inps.org/index.php/events/2016-illinois-indigenous-plants-symposium>

April 30 & May 1 > Birding Blitz of Southernmost IL

Form a team and compete in the 2016 Birding Blitz! Spend Saturday, 04/30, birding in the midst of songbird migration with some of your friends. Try a new category you've not participated in before. For all details visit: www.birdingblitz.org



Volunteers are needed to help with the Cache River Nature Fest on Saturday, May 7th. If you would like to help at this fun event, phone Tara Gracer at Cypress Creek NWR, 618.634.2231



Seeing Birds...

As stated in the January newsletter, the 2015-16 Christmas Bird Count season was one to remember. The Crab Orchard NWR CBC species total came in at 102. The Mermet Lake CBC, which includes a part of Kentucky, tallied 94 species, a total of 41436 birds. Four warbler species (Pine, Yellow-rumped, Palm, and Orange-crowned) brought the Jackson County CBC total to 84 species. The Middle Mississippi River NWR CBC tallied a 15 waterfowl species high because the historic flooding provide lots of waterfowl habitat not usually present in the circle this time of year. The Middle Miss count totaled 86 species.

An Eastern Phoebe set up shop briefly at Laraine Wright's house on the morning of 01/20, just after the snow.

Several reports of Sandhill Cranes came in on 01/29. Cathie Hutcheson heard but didn't see Sandhill's flying over her area of Makanda that morning while out with her dogs. Anne Parmley of Metropolis counted 75 flying over at 1:45 p.m. Frank Bennett saw and heard a couple groups flying over the Bennett place east of Mermet Lake. Tracy Evans reported that she and Andrzej both heard and saw 6 Sandhill Cranes at 11 a.m. upstate over Rochester on 01/31.

SIAS friend Jim Tudor located 3 great species at wetlands along the Big Muddy River in Jackson County on 01/29. Jim found 3 Cackling Geese, a Tundra Swan, and 17 Trumpeter Swans.

On 02/14, Mark Seiffert had a Redpoll at his feeder in Carlyle.

In January several folks from the Reed Station Road area, east of Carbondale, reported seeing a "parrot" visiting their bird feeders. The bird was identified as a Rosella Parakeet, a species native to Australia but often kept as a pet. It was assumed the Rosella had either escaped from its owner or it was possibly set free. Those observing the bird at their feeders were naturally concerned about the bird's welfare and survivability in the wild. Cathie Hutcheson and Rhonda Rothrock went to investigate and determined that, however it ended up in the wild, it had embraced its freedom and showed no interest in being caught.

As Rosellas are native to an area of Australian that experiences some cold weather, the bird would be naturally built to withstand our colder temps, especially if it's able to find



a place out of the weather at night. Luckily for the Rosella, this winter has seen few days of sustained below freezing temps. As of 02/16, the Rosella was still visiting the Reed Station area bird feeders, appears healthy, holds its own with the Cardinals and Blue Jays, and is still enjoying its freedom. Maybe Freedom should be its name.

Picture above is a close up of a Rosella but not the actual bird. Below is the actual bird at a Reed Station Rd. bird feeder.



28th Trinidad & Tobago Adventure - June 3-1, 2016

Experience a tropical evergreen rain forest, a mangrove, tide pools, a tropical deciduous forest, and stay at the 200-acre, world-renowned Asa Wright Nature Centre and Lodge. Land Cost: \$1595 (with 8 participants, includes all meals, lodging, and fieldtrips with local naturalist guides).

For details, contact: Nelda W. Hinckley at 618.549.5588 or neldahinckley@jalc.edu

Lanny Chambers, a hummingbird bander from St. Louis, runs a website that documents the migratory arrival of male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Add your hummer sightings and view their migratory advance at www.humminbirds.net/map.html Mr. Chambers asks that folks only document male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. He reminds folks that you recognize the males by their bright ruby gorgets (throats) and their sudden arrival. In 2015, the 1st recorded male Ruby-throated arrived in Illinois on April 4th

IDNR Bobcat Hunting Law Comment Period Ends 03/11

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has recently proposed changes to two sections of the Illinois Administrative Code that will allow for hunting and trapping of bobcats in southern and western Illinois. This rule is on first notice and you will have 45 days to comment before the comment period ends on March 11th.

The IDNR's proposed rules will allow a person to trap or hunt bobcats during the proposed hunting season. The season limits one bobcat per person, at a fee of \$5 per permit, but the proposed rules allow the IDNR to use its discretion in determining the number of permits that will be issued. The Sierra Club states that IDNR does not have a management or sustainability plan for bobcats and is currently working off of a geographically limited study regarding bobcat populations, habitat, and overall viability of harvest. There is tremendous concern that this proposal does not take into account ecological science for best practices for bobcat protection throughout the state.

Though species can be delisted from the threatened and endangered species list upon reaching a certain level of recovery, instituting regulations allowing harvest before the species has reconstituted its available habitat range is premature and likely to reverse any progress bobcats have made.

The Illinois Wildlife Code requires that the harvest of bobcats in the state shall be non-detrimental. This requires that biological and management information demonstrate that harvesting bobcats is sustainable and that the removal of bobcats from the wild would not contribute to the over-utilization of the species, would pose no net harm to the status of the species, would not lead to long-term declines that would affect the viability of the population, and would not lead to significant habitat range loss or restriction. The Sierra Club states that IDNR has not demonstrated ability to meet any of these requirements.

At a fee of only \$5 per permit, how can the revenue generated support the program or future studies to monitor bobcat populations?

You are highly encouraged to submit your own comment by mail to: Daniel Nelson, Legal Counsel Department of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271

Or you can sign on to the Sierra Club's petition at: <http://sierra.force.com/actions/Illinois?actionId=AR0035109>



Please help meowt by signing the Sierra Club's petition. I need a foothold in Illinois, not a leg trap.

Keep an Eye Out for Armadillos...

...and if you see any, report your sightings to Dr. Agustín Jiménez, Associate Professor in Zoology at SIUC. Dr. Jiménez has been studying parasites of armadillos for nearly 15 years. He will be tracking armadillos in southern IL to estimate their migration "pace". He and his assistants collect roadkills to examine them for parasites and to preserve their tissue. If you come across a roadkill, keep a record of the location and forward that information to Dr. Jiménez by phone at 618.453.5540 or via email at agustinjz@siu.edu. If you notice one alive, he might be interested in where as well.

Dr. Jiménez states that armadillos seem to be quite abundant in the counties adjacent to the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act Turns 100

In the 1800s, the unregulated killing of migratory birds put many species at risk throughout North America. Feathers from waterbirds such as egrets and herons were highly prized by the fashion industry; while other species, including waterfowl and shorebirds, were pursued extensively by market hunters. In August 1916, the U.S. and Great Britain (on behalf of Canada) signed the "Treaty on the Protection of Migratory Birds in Canada and the U.S." We now know it as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. It prohibits the hunting, killing, capturing, sale, possession, transportation, and exportation of birds, feathers, eggs, and nests.

Oppose the Shawnee Parkway!

This Shawnee Parkway project must be stopped! It proposes a road be built connecting Cape Girardeau, MO to I57 through the Shawnee National Forest. The project must be killed in the feasibility study stage.

For over 20 years, going back before the I66 Corridor project, the Cape Girardeau Chamber of Commerce has been pushing for a road to funnel all traffic and business through Illinois into Cape via the big new Emerson Bridge. The federally funded I66 Corridor project, with its \$4.5 mill budget, was their first real attempt but it was canceled on 7/9/15 when Kentucky dropped out. IDOT then proposed this smaller, \$1.5 mill Shawnee Parkway feasibility study. And again, it is Cape Girardeau and Cape businesses that would reap the benefits at a huge cost to the residents, businesses, public lands, and economy of southernmost Illinois.

As part of the feasibility study, IDOT is currently accepting comments on their road Purpose and Need Statement. The proposed benefits for Illinoisans are questionable. And Illinois doesn't need yet another unmaintainable road. We need the roads, bridges and infrastructure we already have repaired.

An IDOT representative has spoken publicly in support of the project, all the while tell those of us voicing opposition to the study to be open-minded. She has stated there is no economy left in southern Illinois so there is none to lose by building a road bypassing the area's towns and business. She has stated with this road, Illinois could become a bedroom community for Cape Girardeau. We disagree!

We who oppose the proposed road will continue speaking out in defense of this place we love and our way of life. We don't need to build yet another road. Our existing roads need to be repaired and some raised so they remain open during flood episodes. We opt to protect our neighbors and farmlands and defend those special places and things that bring tourists here to hike, bike, fish, bird, camp, hunt, drink wine, view nature and shop in the Shawnee hills and surrounding bottomlands.

So, please help by visiting the Citizens for Southernmost Illinois website and sign the online petition opposing the Shawnee Parkway project. Consider downloading a paper petition to help get signatures from others.

http://citizensforsouthernillinois.org/?page_id=363

Or declare your support of the NO-Build option directly to IDOT and the Project Study Group at their website:

<http://www.shawneeparkway.org/comment.aspx>

-Thanks, Rhonda Rothrock

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

Individual Member \$15
 Family \$25
 Student Voting Member \$ 5
 Donation _____
 Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Your Name _____
 Street Address _____
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I/We would like to received our newsletter via email: YES / NO

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Member mailing labels reflect current dues status.
 If you receive your newsletter electronically,
 contact Laraine W. or Rhonda R. to check your dues status.
 (Annual membership renewal month is January.)

St. Johns Bayou Project Update-EPA Veto Needed

Down in the bootheel of Missouri is one of the last remaining gaps in the complex of levees that divide the Mississippi River from the floodplain. By working as a check valve and storing massive amounts of water during storms, this gap helps protect towns up and down the river, like Cairo and Olive Branch from destructive flooding.

This natural flooding through the gap in the levee has created the most important backwater fisheries habitat in the Middle Mississippi River. Without the gap, bootheel wetlands would die, along with many of the fish that rely on them.

The Army Corps of Engineers is in the process of completing a Final Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed levee project that will determine the agency's next course of action, such as whether or not to move forward with construction. Agencies have stated they shouldn't.

Senator Dick Durbin of IL, Congressman Mike Bost of IL, the IL Dept of Natural Resources, and the Association of State Floodplain Managers have recently written letters in opposition to the project. "I believe that construction of the St. Johns Bayou project could further complicate the U.S. Army Corps decision-making on a potential future activation of the floodway, especially during rapidly unfolding emergencies like the Flood of 2011," said IL Rep. Bost, "The New Madrid Floodway was authorized and constructed to reduce water levels during periods of extreme flows down the Mississippi River and the overall system should be managed by primarily for that purpose. For this reason, I urge you to consider a recommendation of no action on the construction project."

Contact the Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Sec. of the Army Corps, to voice your opposition to the project at 108 Army Pentagon, Washington DC 20310-0108 or ASACWPOC@conus.army.mil
 Or sign the petition (click participate) at
<http://act.americanrivers.org/page/speakout/mer-mississippi>

Welcome New Member: Henry Detwiler of Yuma, AZ.



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



Common Redpoll, Adult male
 Small, stocky finch with red cap and rosy wash on breast and flanks - Cornell Lab of Ornithology