



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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

NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

Costa Rica: A Program for All Ages, "Everything from leaf cutter ants to volcanoes"

Is the title of a program to be given by **Tom Ulrich** on **March, 25th, starting at 7 p.m.** Tom will be returning in March to take SIAS along on another of his amazing pictorial trips. This time to Costa Rica. **NOTE LOCATION CHANGE: This program will be held at the Carbondale Township Hall, 217 E. Main St., Carbondale,** (due to a conflict at the First United Methodist Church.)

Although he started his career as an educator, Tom has been a freelance photographer since 1975. Tom is highly acclaimed around the world for his nature photography skills. Numerous magazines and other publications, including National Wildlife, Audubon, Outdoor Oklahoma, Sierra, American Hunter, Ranger Rick, Alaska, National Geographic, Life and many others, have used many of his 800,000+ images.

If you'd like to experience more of Tom's wonderful photography work, he will be presenting "An Evening of Images: Stock & Whatnot" at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 22 at Lawson Hall Auditorium 161, on the campus of Southern IL University.



Afghanistan, Restored One Stone At A Time

Professor Charles Ruffner of the SIUC School of Forestry presented a very informative program on his efforts as a reserve military officer to aid the restoration of agricultural land in Afghanistan.

The country is quite mountainous with not a great amount of arable land; but before the invasion by the Russians in 1979 there were orchards and grain fields that helped to feed the country and allowed some exports. The SIUC agriculture school has had a long relationship with the country aimed at improving crops and land use and Dr. Ruffner was able to build on those in his efforts to get people back to using land more productively.

The Hindu Kush forms a spine that runs southeast to northwest down the center of the country. To the south of the mountains are mostly desert, but on the north slopes of the mountains the rather short streams carry down eroded aggregate and soil that makes alluvial flats that are excellent for growing crops. These were the important croplands of pre-war Afghanistan; that have been degraded by overgrazing due inability of rural people to care for them fully.

Professor Ruffner showed us images of highly eroded slopes damaged by overgrazing versus similar forested slopes, which had been protected from grazing. The downstream areas below heavily grazed slopes showed deeply furrowed erosion and rapid loss of soil suitable for planting. The alluvial flats below forested slopes showed arable land remaining in place for planting crops.

Dr. Ruffner, acting as a military adjunct to the teams maintaining protection for civilian populations, presented rural communities with ideas and guidance for restoring and upgrading their lands. Removing the high loads of grazing on slopes allows either natural reforestation or replanting of desired trees. Protection of the slopes from erosion then allows installation of small cross dams of native stones to choke off head cutting by too rapid downslope flow of rains. Dr. Ruffner pointed out that he did quite a lot of rock hauling and installing as examples of the technique.

Since the Hindu Kush is affected by the monsoons that bring heavy rainfall for half the year in the south Asian subcontinent, these small dams hold arable topsoil in place.

Those small dams are very like the erosion preventing installations in the Cache wetland swamps to prevent the rapid soil loss due to the flow through straightened the Post Oak cutoff.

Professor Ruffner's presentation was a very enjoyable presentation about a somewhat technical subject in a manner thoroughly relatable to the public at large. I really liked it. *—Joe Merkelbach, President*

28th Trinidad & Tobago Adventure - June 4-11

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 For details, contact:

Nelda W. Hinckley at 618.549.5588 or neldahinckley@jalc.edu

SIAS Meetings Calendar for 2016

- April 22nd:** Christopher Benda – Earth Day Special
- May 22nd:** SIAS Picnic – Evergreen Park, Carbondale
- August 26th:** John Schwegman – Mermet Lake
- Sept. 23rd:** Mark Glenshaw – Great Horned Owls
- Oct. 28th:** Cathie Hutcheson – Chile

Outings & Events

April 1-3 > INPS Indigenous Plants Symposium

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.illinps.org/index.php/events/2016-illinois-indigenous-plants-symposium>

April 22-14 > IOS Spring Birding Weekend

The Illinois Ornithological Society will be holding their annual Spring Birding Weekend at Rend Lake. The event includes field trips and a picnic banquet. SIAS's Keith McMullen, Don Mullison, Vicki Lang-Mendenhall & Rhonda Rothrock will be leading field trips. For complete details or to register, visit: <http://www.illinoisbirds.org/ios-spring-birding-weekend-april-22-24/#more-1580>

April 30 > 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. The Awards Brunch held the following day, May 1, at Crab Orchard NWR Visitor's Center, is open to the public. For all Blitz details visit: www.birdingblitz.org. Contact Rhonda Rothrock at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com to get a registration form.

April 29 – May 1 > IAS Spring Fling

Springfield Audubon will be hosting the Illinois Audubon Society's Annual Spring Gathering. Take part in field trips, presentations and a banquet! For complete details or to register visit: <http://www.illinoisaudubon.org/PROGRAMSEVENTS/SpringGathering.html>

May 7 & 8 > Spring Bird Counts

Your Help needed! The Spring Bird Count takes place on Saturday, May 7th. Local counts and contacts are: Williamson Co. - Vicki Lang-Mendenhall 618.697.9868; Jackson Co. - Rhonda Rothrock 618.684.6605; Union Co. - VernKleenat217.787.3515. Pulaski Co. will be held on Sunday, May 8th, contact Rhonda Rothrock 618.684.6605

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 _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Phone Number _____
 Email _____

**Mail to: Southern Illinois Audubon Society
 Attn: Membership
 P.O. Box 222
 Carbondale, IL 62903-0222**

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



Saturday, May 7, 2016, 10:00am to 4:00pm

Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center, Cypress, IL
 Now in its 15th year, Nature Fest features a full day of fun, educational and FREE activities for nature-lovers of all ages. Participants from throughout the U.S. and around the world come to southernmost Illinois to experience on of Nature's masterpieces, the Cache River Wetlands.
 Visit <http://www.cacherivernaturefest.com> to check out the day's exciting line-up of programs, exhibits, hikes and canoe tours!

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



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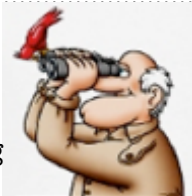
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*Affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society,
 the Illinois Environmental Council,
 & the North American Bluebird Society*

Seeing Birds... Migration! Migration!

Tens of thousands of waterfowl have been flying back north over the last 4 weeks. Am. Woodcocks have been performing the evening aerial dances since February. And, recently several folks have been seeing Sandhill Cranes flying over Jackson and Union Counties. -*Rhonda R.*



On the afternoon of 03/12 Mike McNerney spotted 2 Whooping Cranes in a flooded field near Boaz off Karnak Rd. John Schwegman managed to snap a picture of the banded pair.

Henry Detwiler reported hearing a Chipping Sparrow and seeing Tree Swallows on 03/14.

Four Fish Crows flew over SIU Campus on Election Day, 03/15. Multiple Purple Martins were checking out a Martin box at a home on the north side of Gorham late that afternoon.

On 03/15, SIAS friend Dan Kassebaum located shorebird habitat at the north end of Carlyle Lake with 7 species present. Dan tallied American Golden Plover, Long-billed Dowitcher, Pectoral Sandpipers, Dunlin, and Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs.

The first migrant Louisiana Waterthrush could be arriving any day, maybe by the time you receive this newsletter. Yippee! Keep an eye out for them arriving at Giant City State Park, LaRue Pine Hills, Heron Pond, and Mermet Lake. One early arrival record in Jackson County was March 19th!

Seeing Wildflowers... Spring ephemerals!

Spring ephemerals, wildflowers that emerge quickly in the spring then die back to the ground after going to seed, are now blooming! Harbinger of Spring are in bloom along the trail at LaRue Pine Hills McCann Springs as are Spring Beauties and Yellow Corydalis. Soon we'll be seeing Trout Lily, Virginia Bluebells, Toothwort, Dutchman's Breeches and Squirrel Corn.

The Illinois Native Plant Society produced 2 great southern Illinois wildflower hike guides listing trails to visit and what you will find there. These guides are free line to download from their website: <http://www.ill-inps.org/index.php/publications/other>

"Not Yet. Don't fly off until the moment they raise their binoculars."

