



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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

## NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

### Chile, A Three-week Excursion

Cathie Hutcheson will take us along on her three-week excursion through Chile on Friday, Oct. 28th at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of First United Methodist Church 214 W. Main St., Carbondale. Experience Chile from the Atacama Desert to the Straits of Magellan. Cathie will share a few of the 4000 photos taken during her trip. Images will include birds, plants, animals and general vistas of Chile.



### In Memoriam: Jim Cather

SIAS member Jim Cather died recently in Carbondale. We extend our deep sympathy to his wife, Lilly Crane. Together, they traveled to many countries around the world, enjoying natural areas and each other's company. We will greatly miss his company, too, in our meetings ahead.

### Three teachers receive donations from SIAS

Some of the donations to SIAS in memory of Esther Edelman and Susie Utgaard, who died in 2014, have been passed along to a great cause. This spring SIAS sent \$100 each to three local elementary school teachers who wanted to plant pollinator gardens for students to learn about plants and butterflies.

Cathie Hutcheson got information from SIUC about these teachers, and the SIAS board felt giving them money would be a fitting way to honor Esther and Susie. The teachers are at Carruthers Elementary in Murphysboro, Marion Middle School, and Trico Elementary near Ava.

We received a package of wonderful thank you notes from the latter classroom. The kids listed some of the plants they were able to buy, including prairie coneflower, Ohio goldenrod, aster, common milkweed, and butterfly weed.

– Laraine Wright

**Do you travel to Missouri to see its lovely natural areas?** If you want to view birds, too, the state has announced an expansion to its birding trail website at [greatmissouribirdingtrail.com](http://greatmissouribirdingtrail.com)

The site includes an interactive map of the best birding sites. The most recent additions are of southeast and central Missouri. Good birding!

– Laraine Wright

### Please Write a Letter Opposing the Shawnee Parkway!

SIAS thanks IDOT's Carrie Nelson for her presentation on the Shawnee Parkway Study. I believe those in attendance will attest to the shortcomings of the proposed Project. It's a pork-belly project with Cape Girardeau, Missouri as beneficiary. Goals of the project are becoming more vague. Presented as some sort of economic savior for the citizens of southernmost IL, IDOT offers no real supporting evidence. It appears that the project could be destructive to part of the Shawnee National Forest. Please post a comment against the project at the Parkway website: [www.shawneeparkway.org](http://www.shawneeparkway.org) Click on the [contact us](#) link. –Rhonda R.

### A Chance to See the U.S. Capital Christmas Tree

The U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree is coming to Noble Park, Paducah, KY, on Tuesday, 11/22, from 9-11 a.m. There will be photo opportunities, music, featured speakers, U.S. Forest Service displays, Smokey Bear, Woodsy Owl and Santa Claus.

The 2016 national Christmas Tree will be harvested from the Payette National Forest in Idaho and stop in Paducah as it travels across the nation. Don't miss this unique opportunity to see the tree that will be displayed on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

[www.capitolchristmastree.com](http://www.capitolchristmastree.com)

**Mark your calendar for the Geminids Meteor Shower that will peak the second week of December**

### SIAS Meetings Calendar for 2016

**Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Nov./Dec. combined meeting, program speaker: Steven Holman on Climate Change

**Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>:** Annual meeting with potluck, program & silent auction. Speaker to be announced.

## Upcoming Events & Activities

### Oct. 27 > Cache Guided Van Tours

Learn more about the wildlife, fall flowers & foliage, history, and hydrology of the Cache River Watershed on this guided van tour for senior citizens and persons with physical limitations. Four trips are scheduled throughout the day. Meet at the Tunnel Hill State Trail Office in Vienna. Advance registration is required. For more info or to register, phone 618.657.2064.

### Nov. 5 > Winter Tree I.D.

From 1-3 p.m. join Land Conservation Specialist, Margaret Anderson, as she shares easy and fun tips to discover trees in winter on a 1-mile hike of Giant City Nature Trail. Please register by calling 618.457.4836.

### Nov. 5 > Hike Pomona Cave Valley & the Natural Bridge

The Sierra Club is sponsoring this Pomona Natural Bridge and Cave Valley trail hike. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Pomona natural bridge parking lot. To get there, take 127 south from Murphysboro, turn for Pomona and follow signs to the natural bridge. We will hike the natural bridge and nearby cave valley trail. This will be a moderate hike of just under two miles. Wear hiking shoes and bring water and a hiking staff. Call Steve Eberhart at 618.967.8690 in order to go on the hike.

### Nov. 12 > IAS War Bluff Legacy Celebration

The Shawnee Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society, stewards of War Bluff Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, invite everyone to participate in a day of stewardship and discovery at War Bluff Sanctuary, Golconda, from 9 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. The day will begin at the sanctuary with hot beverages and breakfast in Kestrel Hall. Participate as a group in a designated stewardship project that morning. After lunch everyone will have a chance to explore more of the property on guided hikes along the trails. Cost is \$25 for members or \$35 non-members and includes snacks, water, breakfast, lunch & dinner. Register online at [www.gifttool.com/register/ShowRegistrantInfo?ID=2046&EID=21467](http://www.gifttool.com/register/ShowRegistrantInfo?ID=2046&EID=21467)

### Dec. 14 – Jan. 5 > Christmas Bird Count Season

Christmas Bird Count Season is less than two months away! This is the 116<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.

### January > Eco-Trek to Panama!

Join Professor Nelda Hinckley on this Central America adventure to learn about the Natural History of Panama, Jan. 5-13, 2017. Experience the Canopy Lodge where you'll awake to bird song, live among the birds at Canopy Tower, a repurposed radar tower, where you'll have a 360 degree view of the forest and a view of the Panama Canal. For complete details, including tour cost, contact Nelda at 618.549.7335 ext. 8820, 618.549.5588, or [neldahinckley@jalc.edu](mailto:neldahinckley@jalc.edu)

## Chipmunk problems? Some tips

Oh, they are so very cute, but they also can be so damaging to flower gardens, prairies, bulbs, and bird feeders. I do like chipmunks, and my dogs love to chase them, but I also don't mind discouraging "munkies" from over-encroaching. Here are a few tips, from the National Wildlife Association, for doing just that:

- Chipmunks like to hide and don't like to cross big expanses of lawn. So keep your feeders and your bulbs and flower areas away from woodpiles, hedges, and wooded areas. Feeders and flowers in the middle of lawns may be the best.

- Discourage munkies from eating at your feeders the same way you discourage squirrels, of course (hanging feeders in the open from tall poles covered with slippery pieces of PVC pipe). Once established in your yard, chipmunks will feed all year long, foraging from underground compounds. In winter, I scatter a lot of food on wooded edges. I generally don't put out seed in the summer, anymore.

- Hang wind chimes, small cloth banners, or anything else that can move in the wind near places where chipmunks gather to eat; they are easily spooked by movement.

- Here's a non-toxic solution that is benign on plants but that is foul tasting to munkies and squirrels. Crush a few garlic cloves and chopped chili peppers and steep them in hot water. Strain the liquid into a spray bottle, add a little vegetable oil and dish soap, shake bottle, and spray on plants. You could also leave off the dish soap and spray it directly on the seed in your bird feeders. Birds do not have receptors for "hot" spices, so the garlic and pepper tastes won't drive them away.

- Laraine Wright

## Identifying Native Wildflower Seed in Fall & Winter

Fall and winter are not the seasons most popular for viewing native wildflowers. However, many are still visible and holding their seeding bodies making it possible to identify them or collect seed. If seed collecting is of interest to you, I'd like to suggest a book by Caroline Levine:

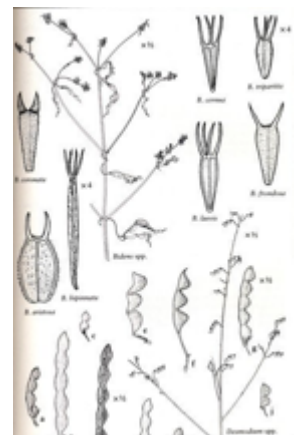
### [A Guide to Wildflower in Winter](#)

When Rob and I first began our foray into growing native plants, we spent many hours looking for seed to collect. We encountered many species still holding their seed in the fall but I found it extremely difficult to ID them in their browned-out stages.

Carol Levine's guide presents the plants in line drawings as they appear in winter. The guide is limited in scope, covering only 391 species including some ferns, grasses and sedges and briefly covers 191 similar species. It introduces seed shapes by families and also offers images of fall leaf rosettes for a few species. For me, the biggest help in identifying fall plants is the guide's detailed drawings of fruiting bodies, seedpods, and seeds.

Plants are listed by both scientific and common names with range and habitat also provided. [A Guide to Wildflower in Winter](#) is a bit too big to be a pocket guide but not too big to stash in a backpack or shoulder bag. It is available at Amazon.com.

-Rhonda R.



## Seeing Birds...

It's time we wish a safe flight to the last of the summer migrant songbirds and hummers heading south to their tropical wintering grounds while we extend our welcome to the waterfowl and sparrows that will be spending the winter here with us. Last week I was greeted by a small flock of white-throated sparrows as I stepped out at 7 a.m. I assume they had just arrived earlier that morning. They were happily singing and calling. The next day I spotted 3 golden-crowned kinglets bouncing around in the branches of our large spruce tree. A few days later the common yellowthroats were gone from the field and white-eyed vireos were no longer around asking for someone to pick up the beer check. *-Rhonda R.*



On 09/28, Kathryn Jenkel reported that approximately 50 American White Pelicans were visiting the Carbondale Reservoir Lake, off McLafferty Road. She spotted them from the Water Treatment Plant where she works.

David Brewer spent the morning of 09/29 at Kaskaskia Island in Randolph Co., photographing the "DAR cohort" (DAR=direct autumn release) 4 direct-released whooping cranes. The foursome have taken quite a fancy to the Island. David initially spotted them flying into a marsh off Grabe Road. Later they were in a harvested field to the south of the main road to the Church. When they left that spot, they flew to the oxbow off Cemetery Road. All in all, he garnered almost 400 images for his archives. David also spotted about 4 dozen American white pelicans off "A Grand Rue", a male Northern Harrier, and the usual assortment of Egrets, Herons, and shorebirds.

While attending the a Master Naturalist class at Carlyle Lake on 10/01, Joe Merkelbach saw his seasons first red-breasted nuthatch.

More American white pelicans were reported by Cathie Hutcheson on 10/10, who saw about 100 floating in circles just south of Boskeydell. Cathie stated that they seemed to be heading north, although the way they floated around in circles, it was hard to discern a direction.

Another red-breasted nuthatch was reported by Richard Thomas on 10/11. His wife Nancy Garwood spotted a yellow-bellied sapsucker that day. Both birds were seen at Richard & Nancy's home in rural Makanda.

Amber Hanson reported her first dark-eyed junco of the season arrived in her yard on 11/18, a treat now that her hummers have left.

The DAR cohort of 4 whooping cranes was still present at Kaskaskia Island on 10/13.

## A Sea of Garbage: Plastic Rings to Balloons

A staggering amount of solid garbage makes its way to the ocean. Over 80% of marine pollution comes from land-based activities. Plastic bags, balloons, glass bottles, shoes, packaging material, and fishing nets gone loose – if not disposed of correctly, almost everything we throw away can reach the sea. About the worst, plastic garbage decomposes very slowly & is often mistaken for food by marine animals.

High concentrations of nondigestible plastic material, particularly plastic bags, have been found blocking the breathing passages and stomachs of many marine species, including whales, dolphins, seals, puffins, and turtles. Plastic six-pack rings for drink bottles can also choke marine animals. And some of this garbage makes its way back to shore, where it pollutes beaches and other habitats.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which starts a few hundred miles off the coast of North America and stretches to a few hundred miles off the coast of Japan; is estimated to contain 480,000 pieces of plastic per square kilometer.

Scientists believe the world's people need to be persuaded to stop littering. Whether it's a bottle cap dropped along the sidewalk or balloons released for some event, it is all litter. To help reduce the mess: buy and use less plastic, carry purchases in reusable bags, reuse what you buy, recycle, say "NO" to balloon releases, and stop using products (body washes, facial scrubs & makeup) that contain microbeads. [www.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/blue\\_planet/problems/pollution/](http://www.panda.org/about_our_earth/blue_planet/problems/pollution/)



Note the colored identification bands and radio tracking device with wire on this whooping crane's legs.

Don't forget to report your whooping crane sightings at:

[www.fws.gov/midwest/whoopingcrane/sightings/sightingform.cfm](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/whoopingcrane/sightings/sightingform.cfm)



The Kaskaskia Island DAR cohort - Images by David Brewer



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

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**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.)

**The Administration’s Nonexistent “War on Coal”**

In a resent message to his electorate, Representative Mike Bost said he was against “this Administration’s War on Coal”, insinuating that President Obama and EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) regulations are responsible for miners losing their jobs and for retired miners losing their pensions and healthcare.

For the record, coal-mining jobs have been in decline since the early 1980s. The Coal Industry itself has admitted a large number of coal mining jobs have been lost to automation, adding that will continue. Also, PolitiFact stats: “We talked to coal industry experts who told us that the primary forces working against coal are market-based, notably the growth of natural gas as a cleaner, cheaper alternative.”

In addition to low natural gas prices, Politifact reports that West Virginia University law professor Patrick McGinley cites

a “depleted supply” of Appalachian coal and “growing demand and diminishing costs for renewable energy, like wind and solar power,” as significant factors in the coal industry’s decline.  
 One cannot ignore how coal companies are bought, sold, and merged as ways to both increase assets and reduce debt. They also use the bankruptcy system to escape their pension and reclamation obligations thus really making it a War on Taxpayers. *-Rhonda R.*



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



The 4 Whooping Cranes on Kaskaskia Island

Image by David Brewer