



Annual May Picnic will be in August!

As of this writing, national news reports nearly 50% of the U.S. adult population have received their first coronavirus vaccination shots. In southernmost IL, the number is only 25% of adults but everyone now qualifies for shots. While a double mutant CoVid variant is causing cases in other states to spike, the rate of new infections locally is at 1.7%. We're baby-stepping to a less atypical pattern of day-to-day life.

The recent snow storm and two days of below freezing temps aside, it seems that the place to be is outside. As much as we all want to be outside and meet with friends, the SIAS board has postponed our annual May picnic until August.

The date for the postponed picnic is Saturday, August 28th. Times and location are yet to be confirmed but location will most likely be in the Carbondale area. Another reason the Board chose to have an August picnic rather than a program with speaker is because after over 16 months apart, we figured we'd all need plenty of time for greetings and chatting. Picnic details will follow in the August newsletter. -Rhonda R.

What Happening in Southernmost IL...

...besides days getting longer, temps getting warmer, snakes coming out of hibernation, ephemeral wild flowers blooming, & songbirds migrating

Shawnee Group Sierra Club Plant Sale

May 1st, 9 am – 1 pm, at the Carbondale Townsquare Pavilion
Wide variety of plants available; cash or check only. Plants provided by Southern Illinois vendor. Masks and social distancing will be observed.

Providing Suitable Woodland Habitat for Secretive Animals

April 28th, 2-3 pm, IL Spring Extension Forestry Webinar Series
Woodlands across Illinois are home to many secretive animals like salamanders, snakes, and bats. Discover how you can provide habitat for these animals in your woods. This webinar is free. Register for it at go.illinois.edu/SpringForestry or <https://bit.ly/3lbo7uQ>

Illinois Counties Spring Bird Counts, May 8th & 9th

Details and contacts for some local counts in the column to the right.

Invasive Species in Restoration and Management

May 13th, 7 pm, IL Spring Extension Forestry Webinar Series
Chris Evans, University of IL Forestry Research Specialist will speak on this topic via Zoom. Sign in at www.sierraclub.org/illinois/shawnee

Spring Bird Count(s) - Your Help Needed!

The Spring Bird Count(s) will take place on **Saturday, May 8th and Sunday, May 9th** in counties throughout Illinois. Although not all state and federal public lands are open, our southernmost counties have plenty of accessible areas full of birds just waiting to be counted, many in our back yards. **You can help by contributing any amount of time you can. And/or consider feeder watching for two hours.**

Compilers of local counties are below. Please provide compilers at least seven days advance notice of your interest in participating. As per the state coordinators, participants are asked to follow CDC and State of Illinois CoVid-19 guidelines and stay vigilant because while more people are now vaccinated, there are still those who are not.

Alexander Co., 05/08: Allen Gathman - agathman@gmail.com
Gallatin Co., 05/08?: Tara Beveroth - beveroth@illinois.edu
Hardin Co., 05/08?: Elizabeth Raikes
Jackson Co., 05/08 & 05/09: Rhonda Rothrock - 618.684.6605
Johnson Co., 05/08?: Dave Enstrom - *Massac Co., Needs a Compiler!*
Pulaski Co., 05/09 Rhonda Rothrock - 618.684.6605
Pope Co., 05/08?: Andrea Douglas - anderatd@yahoo.com
Saline Co., 05/08?: Cathie DeNeal -
Union Co., 05/08: Vern Kleen - vkleen@comcast.net
Williamson Co., 05/08: Vicki Lang-Mendenhall - vickil@siu.edu

Support IL House Bill 1827 To End Bobcat Hunting & Trapping

In 1977, after being nearly wiped out in the state due to overhunting and trapping, bobcats were listed as a threatened species. This ended the hunting and trapping but their protection ended in 1999. They had only begun to make a slow and modest return when the state reopened hunting in 2015.

Bobcats are shy and elusive and do not pose a threat to humans. Even when they live semi-close to humans they rarely come into conflict with them. In fact, spotting a bobcat in the wild is an incredibly rare event and one that is to be treasured. A poll held in 2015 showed that a whopping 78% of Illinois voters opposed the use of steel-jawed leghold traps to kill bobcats and 66% opposed all hunting and trapping of bobcats.

In February, Rep. Daniel Didech (D-IL) introduced House Bill 1827. It would make it unlawful for any person to hunt or trap bobcats in Illinois. Please let your state lawmakers know that you want to again see bobcats protected in the state and urge them to vote "yes" on HB 1827. These beautiful wild animals give back generously to the ecosystems they call home, and their presence is vital for the health of wild lands and other inhabitants. They do not deserve to be slaughtered for a pelt or for fun.

Contact your state house representatives by phone or letter. If you are not sure who they are, find your state legislators at: https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/?lat=37.647072&lon=-89.375803&address=62975&state=



SIAS CWRL bobcat tracking outing 02.04.13



Seeing Birds

While it seems like spring bird migration started sooner than expected this year, a quick flip through W. Douglas Robinson's *Southern Illinois Birds: An Annotated List and Site Guide* for arrival dates suggests bird movement has been on par with past years' records.

The warmer late March and early April days deceived many of us into believing spring had sprung early. The afternoon of Tuesday, 04/20, was warm and balmy. The grass was green and needed mowing, columbine was blooming, and male hummingbirds were dutifully fighting over the feeders. Then it snowed.

The following morning (Wednesday), as I performed my morning ritual of putting feeders back out, I was really surprised to find that the 33 degree dawn temp was not slowing down the morning chorus of spring bird song. Even the male hummers were up and fussing over the feeders earlier than I would have expected.

There have been a lot of newly arriving songbirds to see. Many reports are showing up on eBird. Keith McMullen has been canvassing southernmost IL in his annual fashion. As of 04/16, Keith had tallied 16 species of warblers. Amazing images are being posed on Facebook and sent out via email. Don Mullison has been graciously and generously sharing some of his fabulous photos of warblers, shorebirds, and the anhinga that has taken up residence at Oakwood Bottoms Greentree Reservoir. *FYI: In case you haven't tried photographing birds, it is no easy task. If you think it's difficult to get children to hold still for pictures, you don't want to take up bird photography.*

-Rhonda R.

Karen Kaufman reports that phoebes are taking up residence at her house. Amber Hanson reported her first ruby-throated hummingbird, a male, on 04/14. Laurel Toussaint and other eBirders have long lists of species they're finding at Carbondale's Evergreen Park. Lots of shorebirds were passing through and were possibly stalled by the cold NW winds. They are showing up at fuddles (flooded fields) in western Jackson and Union Counties, off IL Rt. 37 near Mounds, and at other similar areas of southernmost IL. Grab your binoculars and go outside!

Red in Beak and Talon

This past Monday I witnessed a common enough event, but one that I doubt that many of us have ever seen.

As I was walking toward the mailbox about 11:00 am or so, I heard a short startled shriek followed by a call that sounded like kik-kik-kik. Immediately after a bird flew up from the ground hidden from my view by brush and landed on a low branch in a tree about sixty or so feet away. It landed with its back to me and I first guessed perhaps a mourning dove, based on size, color and length of tail, but the behavior soon convinced me otherwise. As I watched feathers started flying as the bird repeatedly dipped and lifted its head; not expected behavior from a dove. As the cloud of feathers descended I realized I was looking at a successful bird predation.

The size made me think that this must be a sharp-shinned hawk and when it changed position on the branch I saw its horizontally striped orange-red breast. The bird had a very bright spot of scarlet in its talons and it continued to lower its head to take bits of flesh. Since the bird was not disposed to fly away from newly captured prey, I was able to walk closer and take some bad screened images. The torn feathers fell mostly in my neighbor's fenced yard, but the one flight feather I retrieved looked as if it might have come from a robin.

Since I live on the outskirts of Centralia with several patches of woods nearby I fairly often see and hear both red-shouldered and Cooper's hawks. I have never identified a sharp-shinned at my house before, but the habitat would be good for them as well. If the bird was a Cooper's hawk it must have been a male as it was quite small.

A never before seen event for me to be sure.

-Joe Merkelbach



World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is a day to raise awareness about complicated issues that hinder the bi-annual journeys. Of migratory birds.

With this year's theme "Sing, Fly, Soar – Like a Bird"

increasing knowledge of what makes each bird species unique will hopefully deepen love for these birds and help conserve them and habitats!

Officially, WMBD is the second Saturday in May to highlight spring migration, and the second Saturday in October to recognize fall migration. However, birds may also migrate at other times, so celebrate when it best suits you!

7 Simple Ways To Help Birds:

- All pets must be on a leash
- Buy bird-friendly products
- Clean bird feeders
- Keep cats indoors
- Reduce plastic use
- Make windows visible to birds
- Plant native plants

Cicadas Leave Their Mark on Forests & Birds

Next month, billions of cicadas will erupt from the earth across parts of the eastern US, crawl up trees, shed their skin, and begin a loud hunt for mates. These particular insects are part of a group known as Brood X that emerges once every 17 years. And when they do, the lacy-winged critters hang around for two to four weeks before dying, assuming they don't get nabbed by birds, pet dogs, or a hungry zoo animal first. But while their lives in the sun may be just a noisy blip, the members of Brood X will certainly leave a mark on forests from Tennessee to New York.

For most of their lives, either 13 or 17 years, depending on the type, periodical cicadas are out of sight, residing underground and slurping up fluid from tree roots. Then, when the soil temperature hits about 64 degrees, they emerge by the billions. Scientists believe this mass eruption is strategic. Their defense strategy is to flood the forests so that predators become so full that they literally can't stomach another bite. That leaves plenty of insects to mate and lay eggs that will become the next generation of cicadas.

A cicada surge likely drives an increase in birds. A study based on 37 years of population data for 24 predatory birds, found that cicada eruptions "significantly influenced" almost two-thirds of them. Eight species, such as the redheaded woodpecker and common grackle, saw a population bump of 10% on average, following the cicada emergences. But the data showed that fewer birds overall were around at the time of emergences.

The vast majority of cicadas are able to evade predators and go on to mate, lay eggs, and eventually fall, as carcasses, to the forest floor. And while their decay acts like fertilizer for trees, female cicadas can harm young or fragile trees when they deposit their eggs in the young branches. The branches are damaged, weakened, and often die. So, it could be worth holding off on new plantings until past this egg laying time. From: www.vox.com/22385700/brood-x-cicadas-birds-forest-ecosystem

Bird Song Mnemonics Birds are lovely to behold. The songs of many are equally as lovely. When I was new to birdwatching, it was apparent that a moderate amount of watching and identifying many species of birds involved not just recognizing their appearance but listening to and learning their vocalizations (songs and calls.)

During the height of spring songbird migration here in southernmost IL, the trees are blooming and leafing out. It greatly benefits the small, 5-inch migrating warblers but makes spotting them in the tops of 40 plus foot tall trees quite challenging. The cacophony of bird song during late April and early May can make one's head spin. Even those species just passing through to their northern breeding grounds are in top voice. Identifying who is singing what is a wonderful challenge that helps in locating them in the trees.

I started listening to tapes of bird songs and calls. Starting in mid-February, I'd play recordings over and over anytime I was driving somewhere, mostly on my commutes to work and back. But unlike memorizing music, bird songs are short phrases, somewhat random, and sometimes similar. In certain songs, it's the cadence that's more defining than the notes or pitch. It was necessary for me to find some type of association learning method.

Most field guides list phonetic spellings of bird songs. It was Lang Elliott's recordings that really turned these phonetic spellings into mnemonics and tied them to actual audio of songs. Listening to his recordings made it all come together for me. And while the CD of his that I possessed employed many, well-known mnemonics for bird songs, there were a few missing.

So, I began filling in the gaps. I made an Excel file, compiling all

Bird Mnemonics

the mnemonics I liked from Elliott's CD, some I found in books, and a few I made up myself, then printed it out to carry with me in the field.

Over the years, I've mention my list to the birders I encountered and brought copies to pass out to those who wanted one. As it is again spring time, I thought maybe some of you might find these mnemonics helpful. Note, there are many songs that can only be described by the actual sounds.

Probably the best one from Lang Elliott's collection, and all-over top winning mnemonic uses words to mimic the cadence of the song. It is for the warbling vireo and goes: "If I could see one, I would seize one, and I'd squeeze it till it squirts!" Not only does it work as a memory cue, it provides the most perfect visualization of what happens to a little caterpillar when stalked and then caught by a songbird.

Runner up is the mnemonic for Swainson's warbler. I had made up my own, "No one will Be-Lieve You." But the following, historic one is perfect and uses words that both mimic the actual song notes and duplicate cadence. I can't find the names of the gentlemen that I believe coined this brilliant mnemonic. It's

"Ooo Ooo Ooo, stepped in Poo."

-Rhonda R.

WARBLERS:	
American redstart	(high thin notes followed by wheezy downslurred note) ce-ce-ce cebeet OR sweet-sweet-sweet smack
bay-breasted	(high-pitched double notes) teasy teasy tease
black-and-white	wee-see wee-see wee-see
blackburnian	(short series of high seet-say notes followed by a high trill)
blackpoll	(series of high tseet notes) tseet tseet tseet tseet
black-throated blue	(short fast accelerating 1-pitch buzzy notes ending in single buzz) "I am so la-zee"
black-throated green	"trees trees murmuring trees" or zeee zeee zee-zo-zee
blue-winged	bee-buzzz
Canada	(1 or more short sharp chip notes into a rich/highly variable warble)
Cape May	(high & thin in the cadence of cape-may-warb-ler) seet seet seet seet
cerulean	"here here here in the sycamore treeeezzz"
chestnut-sided	"please please pleased to meetcha"
common yellowthroat	wichity wichity wichity which
connecticut	(loud repeats of explosive notes almost like connec-ticut connec-ticut connec-ticut)
golden-winged	bee-bzz-bzz-bzz
hooded	to-weet to-weet to-weet tea-oh; alternate song: woo woo wee-tea wheat
Kentucky	churry churry churry or tuc-ky tuc-ky tuc-ky tuc-ky
magnolia	weety-weety-weeto
mourning	(slurred 2-note phrase series followed by 2 lower phrases) bade bade bade ba-ba
Nashville	(series of high see-weets followed by a lower short trill) sing-it sing-it sing-a trilllll
northern parula	(rising buzzy trill like a zipper going up; alternate song resembles the William Tell Overture)
orange-crowned	(high-pitched staccato trill)
palm	(rapid buzzy trill that increases then decreases in volume, like the dopler effect)
pine	(twittering musical trill somewhat similar to chipping sparrow song but shorter)
prairie	ze ze ze ze (a sweet series of rising zes) (a prairie warbler will often sing right after a field sparrow sings, so listen for the field first)
prothonotary	zweet-zweet-zweet-zweet (in a hard-driving tone)
swainson's	"Ooh Ooh Ooh, stepped in Poo" (somewhat similar to Louisiana waterthrush)
Tennessee	"chica-chica sweet-sweet tenna-ce-ce-ce"
Wilson's	(series of chee notes dropping rapidly)
worm-eating	(rapid buzzy trill, similar to a chipping sparrow but faster and more insect like)
yellow	"sweet sweet sweet I'm so sweet"
yellow-rumped	(slow warble/trill notes, usually rising or falling at the end)
yellow-throated	chu-e chu-e chu-e chu-e (clear downslurred chu-e notes ending on rising note)
ovenbird	"teacher teacher teacher teacher" (rising in volume)
Louisiana waterthrush	"seeit-seeit-seeit where-where-where toowhitoo-wit"
northern waterthrush	(even spaced notes, loud/emphatic possibly:"sweet-sweet-sweet where-where-woo-woo!")
VIREOS:	
bell's	dedalee dedalee dee (rising in a questioning tone followed by) dedalee dedalee dee (in a dropping answering tone)
Philadelphia	(like red-eyed but slower, thinner & higher)
red-eyed	"here-i-am where-are-you"
solitary	"chewyy cheerios"
warbling	higgle-de piggle-de week or "If I could see one, I would seize one, and I'd squeeze it 'til it squirts!"
white-eyed	"quick, pick up the beer check" or "quick, pick off the deer tick"
yellow-throated	"will-you---marry-me" or "three-eight three-eight"
MISC.:	
Carolina Wren	"teakettle-teakettle-teakettle or cheerycheery-cheery" (also other sounds, one like running your finger down a comb)
Bewick's Wren	(high thin buzz & warbler) twe-twe-twe tru-tur-tur or "breee birdy-birdy-birdy
house Wren	(bubbling whistled notes)
marsh Wren	(loud, rapid, reedy notes & liquid rattles, reminiscent of a purple martin or tree swallow)
sedge Wren	(a few single notes followed by a weak staccato trill or chatter reminiscent of a dickcissel)
orchard oriole	(loud, rapid burst of varied whistled notes, downslurred at end; and chattering call notes)
northern oriole	"fruity-fruity-fruit fruit" (musical, irregular series notes)
scarlet tanager	(raspy "zuereet-zuery-zueree-zurear-zuerou"; call: chip-bur)
summer tanager	"truth-truth-thrush ain't-it-the-truth (robin like; call: picky-tuck)
rose-breasted grosbeak	(melodious, robin-like song; some say a robin in a hurry with a cold; call: an explosive chink)
blue grosbeak	(rich rising & falling warbles; call a chink-like sound)

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I/We would like to receive our newsletter via email: YES / NO
 If you receive your newsletter electronically,
 contact Laraine W. or Rhonda R. to check your dues status.



Have You Heard of Save the Frogs!?

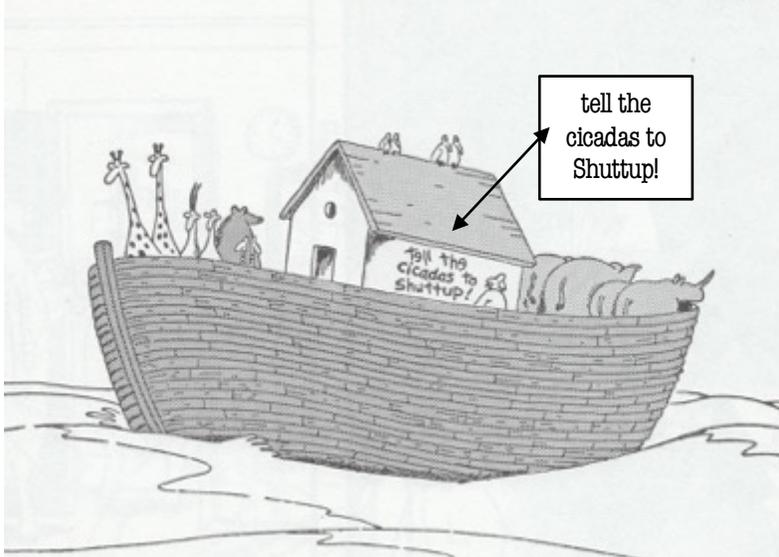
The mission of Save The Frogs! is to protect amphibian populations and to promote a society that respects and appreciates nature and wildlife. They work in California, across the USA, and around the world to create a better planet for humans and wildlife. Since 2009 supporters have held over 1,400 Save The Frogs Day educational events in the USA and 57 other countries.

These events have helped educate tens of thousands of people about the importance of frogs and ways to protect amphibian populations! Because of Save The Frogs Day and a worldwide network of volunteers, the frogs now have assistance all around the planet, and the next generation of humans is growing up with the knowledge needed to protect amphibians from extinction. <https://savethefrogs.com/day/>

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Welcome New Members:
 Stephanie and Matthew Jacob of Millstadt.



tell the cicadas to Shuttup!

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

