



Southern Illinois Audubon Society Newsletter

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Southern Illinois Audubon Society (SIAS)
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Established in 1970

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SIAS is the sponsor of
The Birding Blitz of Southernmost Illinois
Over 21 years of team birding for a cause!
Details can be found at:
www.facebook.com/group/s/317666471615613/

Dragonflies by Mary McCarthy and Pat Dunbar

Join SIAS on Friday, August 25th, for an interactive power-point presentation on Dragonflies that will be given by two of our active members Mary McCarthy and Pat Dunbar, starting at 7 p.m. in the meeting room at Carbondale Township Hall*, 217 E. Main St. Carbondale. Pat and Mary are imparting their knowledge and experience by developing this program that they will be sharing as we launch our after summer, in-person programs at the Township Hall in Carbondale.

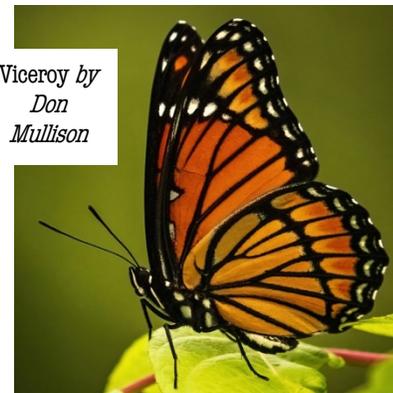
Mary is a Master Naturalist, doing butterfly and dragonfly surveys for the last 4-5 years as well as long time monitoring a bluebird trail for Crab Orchard NWR. Mary has a BS in Environmental Chemistry and MS in Environmental Biology. She worked in the Forensic Science division of IL State Police for 22 years. Following retirement she has taught biology at the community college level and now at high school level at Mary Logan High School, a program for kids who have left their home high school (sometimes voluntarily, sometimes not).

Pat is a Master Naturalist, volunteer at Crab Orchard NWR in the Pollinator Habitat Garden, and co-director of the butterfly and dragonfly monitors for IBMN/IOS (Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network, Illinois Odonate Survey). Pat, now retired, is from Detroit and worked as an Internist for 45 years.

*Entrance to the Township Hall is from the rear of the building (216 E. Monroe St.) where two parking lots are available for use. Mask wearing is encouraged but not required.



Blue Dasher
by
V. Berardi



Viceroy by
Don
Mullison

SIAS Program Calendar

- Sept. 22nd** – Justin Dodson on the Shawnee National Forest
- Oct. 27th** – Adrian Macedo on amphibians in the Cache
- Nov/Dec on Dec. 1st** – Mark Vukovich on cerulean warblers
- Jan. 26th** – Mark Vukovich on red-headed woodpeckers
- Feb. 23rd** – Joy O’Keefe on bat boxes

April SIAS Program Highlights (cont. from May):

Hellbenders are surely one of nature’s more unique and amazing creatures. They were likely given their name by slaves. There are two subspecies, the Ozark hellbender and the eastern hellbender. Not only are they both federally endangered species but they are also protected by Cities (Conference on International Trade of Endangered Species) from being collected.

Hellbenders are cold water creatures. While they do have lungs, they breathe through the wrinkly, bumpy skin on their sides. This skin allows for oxygen transfer and absorption.

Hellbenders are ambush predators. They live in streams where they conceal themselves under rocks, sitting and waiting for their favorite food to pass by. Crayfish are their favorite food, making up 95% of their diet.

Hellbenders have been studied since the 1970s. Studies found that they lived 30 years on average and one studied lived to be 36 years old. But a variety of factors have hurt them in the wild including habitat alteration and degradation, worsening water quality, disease, predators, and over-collecting. In the early 2000s, the Missouri Dept. of Conservation began working with the St. Louis Zoo and other agencies to breed hellbenders in captivity. In 2008-2009 captive bred hellbenders were released in the wild. Scientists have recently confirmed that a male released has successfully reproduced in the wild.

SIAS again thanks Dr. Jeffrey Brigger for such an interesting program.

In Memoriam: Jim Smith

Member Jim Smith, 96, passed away peacefully at home on Thursday, June 22, 2023. He lived in Homer, IL on the farm he grew up on. Jim and his wife Eleanor, who preceded him in death, didn’t attend our meetings but for many years they drove the 240+ miles down to southernmost IL to participate in multiple downstate Christmas Bird Counts.

Jim (& Eleanor) were farmers, raising row crops, cattle, and poultry. But they were also very conservation minded. Jim often incorporated recycled materials into his barns and outbuildings or purchased used sheds and repurposed them on his farm.

Jim also set up bluebird boxes on his farm and established a network of nest box trails in both Champaign and Vermillion counties. He invited others to become involved with monitoring bluebirds.

The Salt Fork of the Vermilion River flows through Jim’s farm. Jim and Eleanor set aside some of their land along the river into an Illinois Land and Water Reserve so that it will be preserved in its natural state.

Jim (& Eleanor) were members of the Illinois Audubon Society as well as several other such organizations.

What's Happening in Southernmost IL...

...we're saying goodbye to the dog days of summer

INP Herron Pond Nature Preserve Tour

August 26th, 9:00 a.m.- noon

Location: Heron Pond Lane, Belknap

This hike will be co-led by Kevin Rohling (Forestry Research Technician, UIUC Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences), Kimberly Rohling (Extension Educator), and Christina Feng (heritage biologist for IDNR). Tour attendees should plan to meet at the Todd Fink Heron Pond Trail head parking area. The hike around Heron Pond will be about 2.5 miles and will include a visit to the Heron Pond boardwalk and the state champion cherrybark oak tree. The trailhead is located at (37.35749, -88.91237). Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/678850107947>

INP Round Bluff Nature Preserve Tour

August 26th, 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.

Location: Round Bluff Trailhead, 90 Office Dr., Goreville

The moderately challenging hike around this sandstone mesa features a variety of habitats. Many plants and animals can be observed along this trail with interpretation provided by the hike leader, Chris Benda. The trailhead is located in Ferne Clyffe State Park, at (37.532402, -88.979045). Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/682368250807>

Nature Walks at SunnySide On Hickory Ridge

Prairie Plants – Sunday, August 27th, 9:00 a.m.- noon

SIAS Outings Chair Rhonda Rothrock (and her hubby Robert) invite you for another nature walk on their 40-acre property, a combination of woodlands and a prairie planting, in rural Jackson County, just two miles north of the Little Grand Canyon on the same road.

As August rolls on you'll observe how later season species are over all bigger than early season species. Many plants will be going to seed so bring a couple small paper bags if you have them and want to collect a bit of seed. Or, if you prefer, you can just sit and observe the dozens of hummingbirds that visit the seven feeders in the front yard.

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/pyY1ZNABEC7npPMHA>

Rothrocks request that interested folks register, either by calling our land line at 618.684.6605 or emailing Rhonda at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com.

SNF Fall Trash Blast at Bean Ridge

September 1st, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

The University of Illinois Extension is again partnering with Friends of the Shawnee and the USDA Forest Service to host three trash blasts in the Shawnee National Forest. The first of three is this September cleanup and it will take place at Bean Ridge, Alexander County.

Anne Townsend < cupquake@illinois.edu > will coordinate small teams of volunteers to collect litter. To be prepared, volunteers should wear sturdy shoes, bring their own work gloves, wear long pants and closed toed shoes. Buckets and trash grabbers will be provided. Registration required. To register and for directions to the Ripple Hollow location, visit go.illinois.edu/TrashBlastsSpring2023

The second trash blast will be at Grantsburg Swamp in Johnson County on October 6th. The third trash blast will be at Dutchman Lake, Johnson County on November 3rd.

IOS Big Sit Fundraiser & SIAS Fall Picnic (TENTATIVE)

Sunday, Sept. 24th at Evergreen Park, Carbondale

Full details will follow in September newsletter.

Land Stewardship Field Day

September 1st, 9:00-11:00 a.m. or 12:30-3:00 p.m.

Join UofI Extension Forestry and Ozark Koala Ecosystem Services (O.K.E.S.) on a field-day to see first-hand some incredible land stewardship. Explore private landowner John Havlik's property, 70 Shelby Rd., Vienna, where O.K.E.S. is in the midst of a multi-stage effort to restore savannah habitat, reduce invasive species, and create wildlife habitat through the installment of an ephemeral pond and native landscaping. Jeremy Schumacher of O.K.E.S will discuss the management that has taken place, results of management so far, and what the next steps are to meet those goals. He will also discuss how land management practices can be used to help you achieve your personal land goals.

Two time options are available. Each session will cover the same content so select the time that works best for you. Event is free but registration required. To register visit: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhsy5ct>

Which Grass is Which at Giant City State Park

September 8th, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Join Erin Garrett with the UofI Extension Office on a hike to learn tips and tricks to help you identify warm-season grasses in southern Illinois. Registration required. For more information or to register, phone 618.457.4836. Or visit <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofgiantcity>

Sixth Annual Southern Illinois Conservation Workshop

September 15th, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

New this year, at Dixon Springs Agricultural Center, Simpson, the workshop will include both indoor presentations and outdoor hands-on demonstrations and workshops. Come learn from speakers with expertise on different aspects of landowner conservation, including prescribed fire, cultivating mushrooms, pond management, tree ID and planting, managing forests for wildlife, and more.

Required registration is \$20 and lunch is included. Register online at go.illinois.edu/2023consworkshop. For more info, contact Erin Garrett at emedvecz@illinois.edu or 618.524.2270.

Grab Orchard NWR Clean-Up day

September 16th

Contact the Refuge Visitor Center at 618.997.3344 for complete details.

Identifying Aquatic Plants: A Framework for Choosing Aquatic Plants for Garden Ponds and Water Features

September 16th, 1:00 p.m.

Location: Barkhausen Cache Wetlands Center.

Master Gardener Karen Glynn will present why aquatic plants are important; how to identify appropriate aquatic plants; and where best to locate aquatic plants in garden ponds and water features. For more details, call 618.657.2064.

Monarch's Incredible Journey

September 23rd, 10:00 a.m.

Location: Barkhausen Cache Wetlands Center.

Each year the fourth generation of the magnificent monarch butterfly may migrate up to 2,500 miles in North America to central Mexico for the winter. The Monarch Watch Association, a citizen science project, has tagged and monitored migrating monarchs since 1992. Join us for a program on the natural history of monarchs. The rest of the day will be spent capturing, identifying butterflies, tagging the monarchs for Monarch Watch, and releasing butterflies. For more details, call 618.657.2064.

Illinois Nature Preserves Month

In honor of the 60th Anniversary of the Illinois Nature Preserve System, House Resolution 149 has declared August 2023 as Illinois Nature Preserves Month.

Illinois Nature Preserve status is the most powerful level of protection a natural area can receive from the state of Illinois. Since its creation 60 years ago, 622 preserves, a total of 121,492 acres, have been dedicated by their landowners and legally protected by the state. Scattered throughout Illinois, these natural areas represent the breadth and quality of the different ecosystems of the state.

View a map of IL Nature Preserves, at <https://tinyurl.com/yc55wp2d>

See "What's Happening" section on page 2 of this newsletter for details of two Illinois Nature Preserves System outings taking place in southernmost Illinois on Saturday, August 26th. Outings sponsored by the Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves.

Why Are They Called the "Dog Days" of Summer?

The term "Dog Days" traditionally refers to a period of particularly hot and humid weather occurring during the summer months of July and August in the Northern Hemisphere. It's considered the 40 days beginning on July 3rd and ending on August 11th.

This period of sweltering weather coincides with the year's heliacal (meaning "at sunrise") rising of Sirius, the Dog Star. Sirius is part of the constellation Canis Majoris—the "Greater Dog"—which is where Sirius gets its canine nickname, as well as its official name, Alpha Canis Majoris. Not including our own Sun, Sirius is the brightest star in the sky.

In ancient Greece, Egypt, and Rome, it was believed that the dawn rising of Sirius in mid-to-late summer contributed to the extreme weather of the season. In other words, the "combined heat" of super-bright Sirius and our Sun was thought to be the cause of summer's sweltering temperatures. The name "Sirius" even stems from the Ancient Greek seirios, meaning "scorching." For the ancient Egyptians, the dawn rising of Sirius (known to them as Sothis) also coincided with the Nile River's flood season. They used the star as a "watchdog" for that event.

The Greeks and Romans also believed the Dog Days to be a time of drought, bad luck, and unrest, when dogs and men alike would be driven mad by the extreme heat! Today, the phrase doesn't conjure up such bad imagery. Instead, the Dog Days are associated purely with the time of summer's peak temperatures and humidity.

Of course, the appearance of Sirius does not actually affect seasonal weather here on Earth, but its appearance during the hottest part of summer ensures that the lore surrounding the star lives on!

"Dog Days are approaching; you must, therefore, make both hay and haste while the Sun shines, for when old Sirius takes command of the weather, he is such an unsteady, crazy dog, there is no dependence upon him." —*The Old Farmer's Almanac, 1817*

<https://www.almanac.com/content/what-are-dog-days-summer>

Indiana Biologists find Young Hellbender in Wild for First Time Since at least the 1980s

It's been decades since a young Eastern hellbender has been reported in Indiana, but researchers say a recent find in southern Indiana could be the first evidence that conservation efforts and a reintroduction program are on the right track.

Hoosier biologists are celebrating the June 21, 2023 discovery of a larval-stage hellbender, the first of its kind officially documented in Indiana since at least the 1980s. The hellbender, about two and a half inches long, was found in the Blue River.

The recent discovery is important because hellbenders are an indicator species — one of the first animals that disappear when water quality starts declining. Biologists from Purdue University and DNR found the young hellbender in a section of the Blue River that winds through Washington, Harrison and Crawford counties. According to DNR, hellbenders are currently found only in an about 70-mile segment of the river. The amphibian was in its larval stage, which lasts about two years. The scientists estimated it was about eight months old.

For the full story, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/mr27xf3c>

George Catlin's Original National Park Featured Native Americans

The first articulation of the 'national park' theme was expressed by western artist George Catlin. Catlin was so impressed with what he saw on the Great Plains that he suggested some of it be set aside, to preserve a snapshot of the American West in the early nineteenth century. He wanted to preserve the landscape in its entirety, including the animals and people living upon it. Therefore, he wished for the creation of a "nation's Park containing man and beast, in all the wild and freshness of their nature's beauty!"

This idea was echoed by other thinkers, writers and explorers of the day. In 1837, Washington Irving called for a preserve which was "an immense belt of rocky mountains and volcanic plains, several hundred miles in width," which "must ever remain an irreclaimable wilderness, intervening between the abodes of civilization, and affording a last refuge to the Indian." Other notable persons expressing similar views include John James Audubon and Osborne Russel.

Henry David Thoreau, likely the most influential nature writer in American history, was the last advocate of national preserves which included native peoples. He greatly admired "Indian wisdom" as it related to the landscape, and his national preserve ideal included "the bear and panther, and some even of the hunter race..." His ideas about wilderness out-lived him and continue to inspire readers and provoke commentary. Unfortunately, his views of Native Americans in wilderness did not.

John Muir's vision of "Uninhabited Wilderness", that reflected his near disdain for native peoples, came later and it prevailed.

Excerpts from:

Ethnic Cleansing and America's Creation of National Parks by Isaac Kantor 06.2007
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1267&context=plrlr>

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