



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society Newsletter

**Nov/Dec 2023  
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Southern Illinois Audubon Society (SIAS)  
P.O. Box 222  
Carbondale, IL  
62903-0222  
*Established in 1970*

<http://www.siaudubon.org>  
Email SIAS at:  
siaudubonsociety@gmail.com

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## Status of Cerulean Warblers on the Shawnee National Forest

Join SIAS on Friday, Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 p.m., for this presentation by Kevin Sierzega, biologist with the IL Nature Preserves, and Mark Vukovich, wildlife biologist with the Shawnee National Forest, in the meeting room at **Carbondale Township Hall\***, 217 E. Main St. Carbondale

Although cerulean warblers are listed by numerous organizations as a species of conservation concern and are currently threatened in Illinois, there is limited information of their current distribution and population size in Illinois and on the Shawnee National Forest. The objectives are to update and check known records, map the distribution, and estimate the population size of the cerulean warbler on the Shawnee National Forest.

Based on known records, Kevin and Mark conducted playback transects surveys along creeks and floodplains to elicit responses from males in the summers of 2021-2023 and covered an estimated 4,212 acres. They documented and mapped 106 singing male cerulean warblers with the largest concentration located in the Cave Valley and Cedar Creek area of the Shawnee National Forest in Jackson County. This presentation will discuss survey methods, cerulean warbler distribution and population sizes, and known and future habitat analyses and planned work and projects on the Shawnee National Forest.



Kevin Sierzega is the Natural Areas Preservation Specialist in southern Illinois for the IL Dept. of Natural Resources. He received his B.S. at the University of IL Urbana-Champaign and his M.S. at SIU Carbondale where he studied habitat selection of neotropical birds and food availability differences between successional forest types in the Shawnee Hills.



**\*Entrance to the Township Hall is from the rear of the building where two parking lots are available for use.**  
**(216. E. Monroe St.)**



Mark Vukovich states that his wildlife background has been mostly focused on birds and forest and grassland management but also game management and wildlife techniques. He's worked on a wide range of game and non-game species like white-tailed deer, wild turkey, wild pig, northern harriers, short-eared owls, golden eagles, and red-headed woodpeckers but also has investigated bird community-level effects on forest management. Mark received his undergraduate degree in environmental studies at the University of North Carolina at Asheville and master's degree in biology at Eastern Kentucky University.

### SIAS Program Calendar

- Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>** – annual meeting with potluck – Mark Vukovich on red-headed woodpeckers
- Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Dr. Joy O'Keefe on bat boxes
- Mar. 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Dr. Nancy Garwood
- Apr. 26<sup>th</sup>** – Member slide show night
- May** – SIAS annual spring picnic

### Birds Named after People Will Get New English Names

Standard English names for North American birds will soon focus on the animals rather than people.

That day is one step closer with an initiative from the American Ornithological Society (AOS), which oversees the official English-language names of birds in the Americas. On November 1, 2023 the AOS association announced that it would phase out what are known as eponyms—names that honor specific people. Next year the group will select between 8 and 10 birds to rename. In subsequent years it will then tackle the rest of the 70 to 80 species of U.S. and Canadian birds that are currently named for people. “Eponymous names don’t do anything for the birds themselves,” says Judith Scarl, executive director and CEO of AOS. (Most North American birds named for people, she notes, nod to white men and carry their last name. The handful that honor women instead use their first name.)

Excerpts from: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/birds-named-after-people-will-get-new-english-names/?fbclid=IwAR2t1MYodSkOsK1XrvQxyrEyKRtTtaZ7qGkWi4EKXMCLQjZ-pd51IIHsTNE>

### Volunteers Sought for Annual Bald Eagle Survey

For 43 years each early January, volunteers have been counting bald eagles along the Mississippi River to monitor their recovery and health. SIAS members have participated for most of these years. Now new volunteers are needed starting in 2024.

The data must be recorded electronically (not on paper forms as before). If you are interested in doing the count for Jackson, Union, and/or Alexander County, please contact Michael Vissichelli at [michael.g.vissicelli@usace.army.mil](mailto:michael.g.vissicelli@usace.army.mil) or 718-775-5571. To learn more about the project, give me a call or a text at 618-201-1515, let me know your email address, and I will send you a copy of his recent email to volunteers.

– Laraine Wright

## **What's Happening in Southernmost IL...**

*...lots of pine siskins have made their way south for the winter.*

### **It's Hunting Season - Be Aware (& wear blaze) if you're out in nature!**

Illinois is in the middle of hunting season. Archery season runs to Jan. 14 but is closed during firearm deer seasons. Next firearm season is Nov. 30 – Dec. 3, with muzzleloader season Dec. 9 - 10.

### **Shawnee National Forest Christmas Tree Permits**

Now Through Dec 31st

For a \$5 fee, folks can cut a Christmas Tree, specifically an eastern red cedar, within designated areas of the Shawnee National Forest. As it can be hard to find the “perfect” tree, the Forest Service recommends a preliminary scouting trip to identify an area with a good selection of red cedars. To get a perm & to check locations, visit: [www.recreation.gov/tree-permits/shawnee](http://www.recreation.gov/tree-permits/shawnee)

### **Invasive Species removal at Garden of the Gods**

Saturday, Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 2 :00 p.m.

Friends of the Shawnee National Forest and partners will hold another autumn olive removal. Autumn olive is an aggressive invasive species that has infested Garden of the Gods. Volunteers should wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes and bring water and a snack. Safety glasses, gloves, helmets, and other tools will be provided. This project is in cooperation with the USDA Shawnee National Forest, UofI Extension, and the Nature Conservancy of Illinois. Registration required at [go.illinois.edu/NNISR2023Shawnee](http://go.illinois.edu/NNISR2023Shawnee)

### **Illinois Botanizer's Best of Illinois Nature 2022**

Sunday, Dec. 3rd, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Botanist Chris Benda (a.k.a. Illinois Botanizer) travels throughout Illinois every year, visiting nature preserves, leading nature tours for the public, and encountering all kinds of neat plants and animals.

Join Chris at Giant City State Park Visitor Center (1-235 Giant City Rd., Makanda) as he presents photographs highlighting his best nature encounters of 2023. Call 618.457.4836 to register.

### **18<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern Illinois Alternative Gift Fair**

Sunday, Dec. 3rd, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Gifts that make your community and your world a better place. The Gift Fair will be held at the Carbondale Civic Center, 200 S. Illinois Ave., Carbondale. For more details, visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernIllinoisAlternativeGiftFair/>

### **Monthly Birding with SIAS Is Back!**

Monthly Outings at Evergreen Park, Carbondale

Saturday, Dec 9<sup>th</sup> & Jan 13th, from 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Meet at the Red Oak Shelter that sets along Carbondale Reservoir lake in Evergreen Park on the south side of Carbondale.

Directions (from IL Rt. 51 a.k.a. South Illinois Avenue): Take IL Rt. 51 south from Carbondale to the stop-light intersection with Pleasant Hill Rd., turn west onto Pleasant Hill Rd., follow it to west most park entrance, turn south, follow road south then east to the small shelter near the water. For more info call Kirsten Trimble at 618.521.4166

### **Illinois Centennial Soil Archive Project**

Monday, Dec. 11th, 5:30 p.m.

How have Illinois soils changed over the last century? During a free program at the Giant City Visitor's Center, 1-245 Giant City Rd, Assist. Professor Andrew Margenot will share recent findings and discuss how local residents can get involved with the Illinois Centennial Soil Archive Project. To register, visit [go.illinois.edu/SoilArchiveProject](http://go.illinois.edu/SoilArchiveProject). To learn more about the project or to discover a map with the location of sample sites, visit [margenot.cropsciences.illinois.edu](http://margenot.cropsciences.illinois.edu).

## **Christmas Bird Count Season > Dec. 14 - Jan. 5**

**Help Needed!** You can participate all day or for just part of a day. If you don't want to commit to a bigger area in the count circle but you live within the circle area, you can survey your property and/or do a feeder watch. Contact the count compiler to verify that you live within their count circle or check the CBC map at the National Audubon Society site: <https://audubon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=ac275eeb01434cedb1c5dcd0fd3fc7b4>

**Crab Orchard NWR- Dec. 15** – Advanced registration required. To register and for area assignment, contact compiler Vicki Lang-Mendenhall at 618.687.9868 prior to Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Rend Lake- Dec. 16** - Advanced registration required. Contact compiler Keith McMullen at 618.632.1057, email at warbler7@sbcglobal.net

**War Bluff Valley- Dec. 16** - For details contact compiler Andrea Douglas, at 618.564.2079, email at anderatd@yahoo.com

**Cypress Creek NWR- Dec. 18** - Advanced registration required. Contact compiler Jeff Hoover via email at hoover\_jeff@hotmail.com or cell phone 217.417.8277, prior to count day. Areas to cover will be assigned prior to the count and results are to be emailed to Jeff at the email address above.

**Big Oak Tree St. Pk. (MO)- Dec. 18** - Advance registration required by Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>. Contact compiler Dr. Bill Eddleman at weddleman@semo.com to register and details.

**Arklands/Pyramid St. Pk. - Dec. 27**- Advance registration required by Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. Meet at 6 a.m. on count day, at the parking lot in the Arklands Denmark Unit. (Turn south at the intersection of Pyatt-Culter Rd. & Denmark Rd., drive approx. .5 mile south to parking lot on right/west side of road.) Contact compiler Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605, text 618.543.8659, or email at woodthrushesola@hotmail.com.

**Horseshoe Lake (Alexander Co.)- Dec. 28** – Advanced registration required. Details subject to change but as per past counts, meet in parking lot at the intersection of Rt. 3 & Miller City Rd., Olive Branch, at 6:30 a.m. Free lodging at the Wicker Club for Wednesday and Thursday nights. Contact compiler Vern Kleen at 217.787.3515, email at vkleen@comcast.net

**Union County- Dec. 29** – Advance registration required. Contact compiler Vern Kleen at 217.787.3515, email at vkleen@comcast.net to verify details for meeting location.

**Mermet Lake- Dec. 30** - Advance registration required by Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. To register and for assignments contact compiler Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605, text 618.543.8659, or email at woodthrushesola@hotmail.com. Feeder watchers wanted!\*

**Jackson County- Jan. 1 (2024)** - Advance registration required by Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. To register and for assignments contact compiler Rhonda Rothrock via phone 618.684.6605, text 618.543.8659, or email at woodthrushesola@hotmail.com. Feeder watchers wanted!\*

**Middle Mississippi River NWR- Jan. 3 (2024)** – Advance registration required by Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. To register and for assignments contact compiler Rhonda Rothrock via phone 618.684.6605, text 618.543.8659, or email at woodthrushesola@hotmail.com. Feeder watchers wanted!\*

**\*Feeder watchers wanted.** Contact Rhonda to confirm that you live within one of the circles she compiles. If you live near Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, contact Vicki Lang-Mendenhall regarding being a feeder watcher during that count day.

To be a feeder watcher, just record the highest total number of each species observed at any one time at the feeder/feeder area during the day of the count. Record the number of hours spent during the day counting, no more than 2 hours.

## **October SIAS Program Highlights- Beauties of the Water World**

The program presented by Adrian Macedo at the October 24 meeting of SIAS was strong evidence for the herps being some of the most colorful, beauties of the water (moist) world.

Adrian, a Californian who has studied in the Klamath region of Oregon and northern California, a noted biodiversity region, is now pursuing a PhD degree at SIUC. He is working on the subject of climate change influence on herptile habitats of deep southern Illinois. One of the requirements for this study is a survey of the herptile populations of the region. He presented us with wonderful images, including frogs, toads, salamanders, turtles, lizards, and snakes.

Habitats for these include most lands in southern Illinois that have not been converted to agriculture; from hilltop prairies to forested swamps and including both still ponds and lakes as well as running streams, creeks, and large and small rivers.

The frogs he showed included cricket frogs, spring peepers, chorus frogs (3 species). Tree frogs included bird voiced, Cope's gray and green all exhibiting gray, green and in some cases orange colorations. Larger species included bullfrogs, greens, leopards, and crawfish frogs. Toads included Fowler's and American which can be differentiated by the number of warts within their DARK spots. The narrow-mouthed toad (not really a toad) represented as an auditory bleat that sounds very much like a lamb.

The fanciest colored amphibians are the salamanders. An exception is the lesser siren, dark colored and with only two front legs; a true water dweller that has the body form of an eel. The eastern newt has a life cycle that begins as a larva, then becomes a land-dwelling eft for a few years before converting back to an aquatic spotted adult. The Ambystomids are burrowing larger species including tiger, spotted, mole, small mouthed, and marbled. The last breeds in the fall, and its young feed on the larvae of other spring breeding species. The smaller Plethodontid salamanders are identified by a nasolabial groove on their snout and a thin appearance. They include zigzag, two-lined, long tailed and cave in various tones of brown, beige, orange, and yellow with various spot patterns.

Adrian showed a few turtles including snapping, soft shell, red-eared slider, cooter, map and musk species as well as the familiar eastern box. Lizards pictured were the five-lined and broad headed skinks.

Snakes were represented by cottonmouths, copperheads, and timber rattlers (all venomous) as well as common water snakes (often incorrectly identified as cottonmouths), racers and garter snakes. The small ribbon, flat-headed, and Dekay's brown snake were also shown. Finally, though not actually the finale of the show, were the spectacular (keeled) green snakes.

Adrian has identified threats to these species as habitat loss and degradation, pollution, and pet trade collection. Amphibians are vulnerable to chytrid fungus and snakes are susceptible to Snake Fungal Disease.

This was an enjoyable and informative presentation, and we thank Adrian.

Joe Merkelbach

**Have You Seen A Limpkin?** The limpkin is a large wading bird related to rails and cranes. They specialize in eating apple snails. Not considered migratory, they are found mostly in wetlands in warm parts of the Americas, from Florida to northern Argentina. More recently they have been dispersing as far north as Minnesota and as far west as Boulder, Colorado. If, like me, you haven't yet seen a limpkin, you (and I) still might have a chance to spot one in Illinois! As of this writing, limpkins are still being seen in various counties upstate including Cole, DuPage, Kendall, Lake, Richland, Will, and Cook counties. If the upstate areas freeze, maybe they'll shift south! Here's a video about 'em: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=NM5wUK7xvAk> - Rhonda R.

**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	\$ _____

**Mail to:** Southern Illinois Audubon Society

**Attn: Membership**

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

Your Name _____
Street Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone Number _____
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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.

## **Old Audubon Magazines:**

### **Spotlights to Past and Future** *-By Laraine Wright*

Cleaning out my house and downsizing after 40 years in semi-rural Carbondale, I discovered so much tucked away from my early days in birdwatching. I wanted to learn directly in the field and through reading myself to sleep at night. Birds, birds, birds.

I sit here now with a tall pile of "Bird Lore" magazines from the early 1900s ("A Bi-monthly Magazine Devoted to the Study and Protection of Birds, Official Organ of the Audubon Societies," edited by the famous Frank M. Chapman. Subscriptions cost \$1.00 annually.

In the September-October 1915 issue, a field observer of the Bald Eagle discusses its successful preying on lambs and newborn "half-wild hogs" and its theft of fish from ospreys. "We cannot well blame men for occasionally killing these raiders of the sheepfold," says this Audubon scientist from the past. But "the old story that they sometimes carry off children must be dismissed ..." Not mentioned, though, is the disappearance of footloose chihuahuas in yards bordering nesting eagles.

Althea R. Sherman of National, Iowa, makes a strong plea for record keeping in her article, "The Great Destruction of Warblers: An Urgent Appeal." "I do not hesitate to voice my belief that millions of birds lost their lives in the cold month of May, 1907..." in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, states that do not have birdwatchers who record data (unlike those in New England). She describes warblers arriving in her yard in a dazed condition, unable to find food, "chilled and starving." I was reminded of our recent severe cold spell in early spring where many millions of insect-eating bluebirds, thrushes, wrens, swallows and others died in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

Also in this 1915 magazine is an article about making a pet of the California Condor housed at the New York Zoological Park; an ad for Chapman's newly revised "Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America" (561 pages, \$3.50 net); and the book "Wild Bird Guests" endorsed by Colonel Roosevelt.

I also have a few other magazines of later years. On a positive note, in the March-April 1956 issue of "Audubon" there is the news that Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., will build an ornithology center in its nearby Sapsucker Woods. The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology will house its growing collection of vinyl records of bird sounds and a darkroom for printing photographs. No doubt it also offered a phone booth for operator-assisted calls.

If you see a limpkin,  
let me know.  
I'd like to invite it to  
a SIAS program!



## These Critters Give New Meaning to the Thought of a Good Night Kiss!

By Richard Thomas

I want to introduce everyone to an interesting critter, the cone-nosed kissing bug (*Triatomata saguisuga*), which has been found recently in our area. A photo of the species we have here is shown below to the left in this article. They feed on the blood of a wide range of mammals, and that can include us humans, as Nancy and I have found out over that last couple of years. We are biologists who've worked in some of the hotter parts of North and South America where we've become acquainted with this group of bugs.

It's particularly important that humans become aware of this bug because they are a vector for Chagas disease, which is caused by a type of trypanosome, a single-celled parasite that is transmitted through the bug's feces ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chagas\\_disease](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chagas_disease), <https://kissingbug.tamu.edu/>). When we found some of these bugs in our home we were interested to find out if they had fed on us, and more importantly, if they were carrying the trypanosome parasite. Fortunately, our friend and colleague at SIU, Dr. Jiménez, is a parasitologist with an interest in these sorts of things and who had recently detected these parasites in raccoons at the university farm. His colleagues at Tulane University tested 5 bugs we caught in our house, and of those 5, all had fed on humans (us), as well as raccoons and squirrels. Two were carrying the trypanosome parasite.

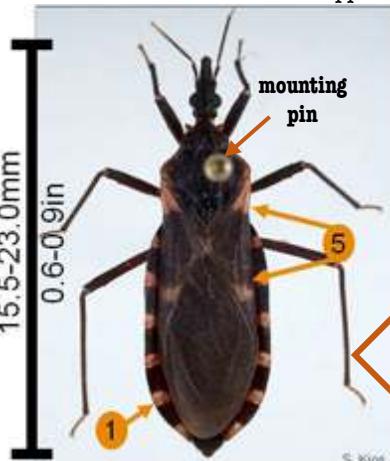
Nancy and I now have the distinction of being the first recorded instances of humans being fed upon by kissing bugs in Illinois! We are very unlikely to have been infected with the Chagas parasite, in part because the bug species found here poops off the host (unlike ones much further south), so the parasite is less likely to find a way into us, and we have also not experienced any symptoms of the acute phase of a Chagas infection. However, human infections have been recorded in individuals in Louisiana and Texas who have not traveled to areas where Chagas is known to be endemic, so it looks like transmission to humans can happen.

First off, Don't Panic!, and second, if you do happen to see one of these bugs (remember the orange and black pattern on the back end) you can help out in the research on this disease. Please catch it without touching it or squashing it and contact me or Nancy. We'll see that it gets to the right people.

Richard Thomas: 618.214.5765

Nancy Garwood: 618.214.5760

1. Orange-red to yellowish horizontal markings running along abdominal segment
5. Distinctive orange-red to yellowish markings on wings



**Southern Illinois Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 222  
Carbondale, IL 62903-0222**

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

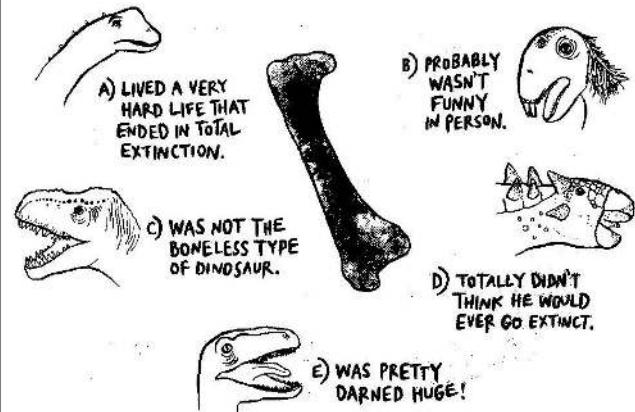


Have you seen this bird?

Limpkin image  
by Sleepy Seahorse Photography

## PALEONTOLOGY QUIZ

BASED ON THIS BONE,  
YOU KNOW THAT THIS DINOSAUR...



-DGR-