



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

August 2012 – Vol. 19, No. 6

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

## NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970



Southern Illinois Audubon Society is honored to screen the film

**“Opposable Chums - Guts & Glory at the World Series of Birding”** by Filmmaker Jason Kessler.

This screening will take place on **Friday, August 24<sup>th</sup> at the Carbondale Township Hall, 217 E. Main St., Carbondale, starting at 7 p.m.** Running time: 65 minutes.

*NOTE: the Southern Illinois Audubon Society has changed its monthly program/meeting start time to 7 p.m.*

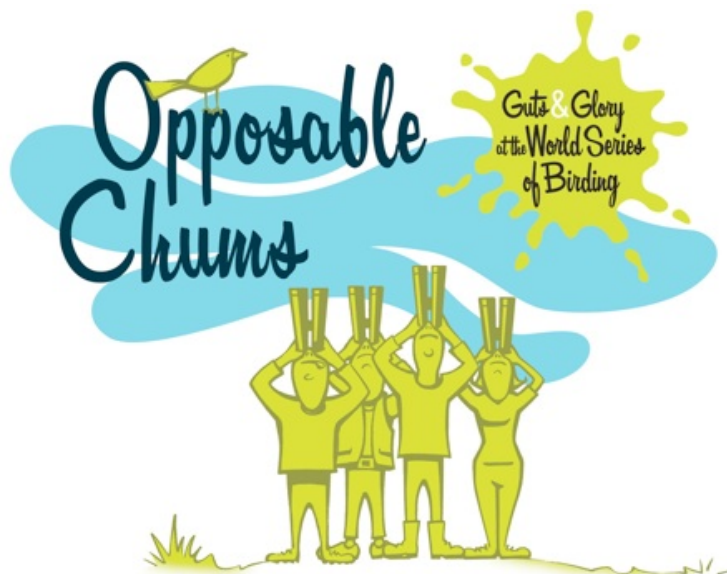
Birdwatching, or Birding as it's now referred to, is many things to many people. Depending to whom you speak, it's a hobby, a passion, an obsession, or a sport. I view birding as a many-leveled thing, with levels in levels like that on a dartboard. Some birders are impassioned with watching the birds that visit their backyard feeders while others birders drive to their favorite local nature spots to look and listen to the birds that reside there. Then there are those birders who participate in seasonal bird counts or yearly bird surveys. And some travel to far away countries or out of the way locations to catch a glimpse of a specific bird species thus adding it to their “life list” of all the different bird species they've seen in their lifetime.

When it comes to birding, there are countless activities and options many that involve a birder keeping a life list. One such activity is a “Big Day” in which birders, usually as a team, spend one day looking and listening so to identify as many bird species as they can in that 24-hour period. And there are multiple types of Big Days, be it in a county, in a state, by foot, or by bicycle, or a combination of these, to name a few options.

Every year, hundreds of birders take Big Days a step further by using their passion as a way to raise money for bird conservation. In the case of the New Jersey Audubon Society this activity evolved into what is called “The World Series of Birding”, a one day Big Day contest that brings more than 120 teams of birders from around the world to the state of New Jersey to see which team can locate and identify the most bird species in 24 hours within the New Jersey state boundaries. Teams must keep a record of all the species they see and hear in that 24-hour period. Teams acquire sponsors and collect pledges for conservation. The more bird species recorded, the more money raised. Sound familiar?

Filmmaker (and birder) Jason Kessler describes The World Series of Birding as, “Equal parts scavenger hunt, science expedition, and endurance test...also a fundraiser, generating millions of dollars for conservation.” His movie “Opposable Chums”, over seven years in the making, is a window into all aspects of The World Series of Birding and the birders that participate from start to finish. Past participants have included some of the most renowned birders in the world, such as Roger Tory Peterson, David Allen Sibley, Kenn Kaufman, and Pete Dunne.

Mr. Kessler has given the Southern Illinois Audubon Society permission to screen his truly entertaining movie. We are grateful to Mr. Kessler for this wonderful opportunity. Copies of “Opposable Chums –Guts & Glory at the World Series of Birding” can be purchased at Mr. Kessler's website <http://www.opposablechums.com>.



### SIAS Meeting/Program Schedule:

**September 28th** – Program to be announced

**October 26th** – Program to be announced

## **April Program Highlights**

### **Fabulous Fur Balls**

For our April meeting we had the pleasure of hosting Dr. George Feldhamer of the SIUC zoology department with a program about the mammals he has worked with in southern Illinois and nearby areas. Most of these species are quite small and reclusive so that we do not see them nearly as often as birds. The first examples were the most numerous mammals of all, though we seldom see them. Shrews are insectivores that move through leaf litter and vegetation seeking insects to fuel a metabolism that runs at high speed, comparable to that of hummingbirds. The southern short-tailed shrew is the most common mammal in our area and almost all of us can be assured that we have some shrews in our backyards.

Moles are also insectivores, but more notable than shrews, at least by their tunneling works. They spend almost all of their lives underground, digging with spade like front legs, in search of earthworms and insect grubs. Their tunnels disrupt perfect lawns, but serve to aerate the upper layer of the soil. The star nosed mole, with a set of tentacle looking sensory tubercles is a really fabulous looking fur ball.

Golden mice, arboreal living relatives of white-footed mice, were thought to be threatened or endangered in the state; but George's work indicated that they are common enough that they probably do not belong on the list.

Likewise the eastern woodrat, another Illinois T and E species, has been returned to some bluff locations in southeast Illinois and is no longer in precarious condition.

The most recent subject of George's studies have been flying fur balls, the insectivorous bats native to our area. The concerns of white nose syndrome, a fungus that has recently come to north America from Europe, and is devastating bats in the east is driving a lot of study concerns. The small bats that live in colonies in caves are the most vulnerable to WNS. The federally endangered Indiana bat, as well as large and small brown bats, have been recent study species. Locating and monitoring colonies, some in limestone quarry caverns, has helped provide data for following WNS nationwide.

Fabulous fur balls are not as colorful as most birds, though the golden mouse is very handsome, but they have many traits that make them worthy subjects for nature study.

*-Joe Merkelbach, President*

## **Recent Donations Total \$450**

We are very grateful to a local organization and four individuals who have donated \$450 to SIAS in the last few months.

The Neighborhood Coop, an independent grocery specializing in organic food and located at Murdale Shopping Center in Carbondale, gave us \$200 in May to commemorate Earth Day. The money came from part of the store's proceeds on that day. SIAS actually was established from actions of individuals on the first Earth Day in 1970. Some of our co-founders took active part in a movement to stop a dam from being constructed on Lusk Creek in southeastern Illinois. The next time you visit the Neighborhood Coop, please thank a staff member for this most generous donation!

SIAS was mentioned in the obituary of Ginny Gelman, widow of an SIAS co-founder, Ben Gelman. Ginny died on May 4, and four people sent us checks, totaling \$250, in her memory. We were able to add this money to one of our C.D.'s used for special conservation projects in memory of Ben (and now Ginny, as well). We thank these donors, whose names will be included in our annual list of donors in January's newsletter.

*-Laraine Wright, Treasurer*

## **Upcoming Events & Activities**

### **Sept. 8 > Cache River Days -All Day**

Don't miss the 18th Annual Cache River Days in Ullin! Food, music, exhibits, and family activities are just part of the fun. Enjoy guided canoe tours through the Cache River Wetlands. Reserve your spot beginning August 8th, by calling Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at .618.634.2231. Location: City Park in Ullin, Illinois

### **Sept. 9 > Fall Mushroom Hike, 1 to 3:00 p.m.**

Join Joe McFarland, local author of Edible Wild Mushrooms of Illinois and Surrounding States, for a presentation on common mushrooms found in Illinois. He will be giving a stunning photo presentation on the different types of fungus found in this area, at the Cache River Wetlands Center. After the presentation he will lead a guided hike to forage for wild mushrooms. For more info, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064. Location: Cache River Wetlands Center

### **Sept. 21-23 > IAS Fall Gathering & 115<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

Join in on the Illinois Audubon Society's Fall Gathering. Weekend activities include a Friday Night Social at Adams Wildlife, Saturday Morning Field Trips, Annual Board Meeting & Board of Directors Meeting, Afternoon Information Sessions, Presentation by Dr. Brian Anderson, Saturday Night Pizza Party (additional \$5), More Field Trips Sunday Morning. Basic Registration is \$15, includes breakfast and lunch. Registration Deadline: Sept. 17. Register at <http://www.illinoisaudubon.org/>

### **Nov. 23 - Dec. 8 > Vern's 16-Day Expedition to Brazil's Pantanal**

Where else can you be eye to eye with dozens of blue Hyacinth Macaws, scores of Jabirus, elegant pairs of Bare-faced Curassows, many capybaras, more egrets, ibises and caiman than you ever thought possible, an Anaconda and perhaps even a Jaguar? As you travel across the landscape, birding along the famous Transpanataneira highway—one of the richest and most-famed places for wildlife on earth, the action is non-stop. Should all go as planned, it is possible for the trip list of birds to exceed 500 species. In addition to the traditional on-road and off-road adventures, there'll be boat excursions, views from moveable observation towers, and numerous walking trails with local guides. For all details, including costs, contact Vern at 217-787-3515 or [vkleen@comcast.net](mailto:vkleen@comcast.net)

# Seeing Birds

On 08/12, Mark Seiffert relayed a message from Leroy Harrison. Leroy had just located a Reddish Egret at Rend Lake's Ward Branch area. Leroy was viewing it from the Turnup Patch boat launch area, directly south of Ward Branch. Viewing it from that boat launch location provided for good viewing without going to Ward Branch which might flush the bird. The last reported sighting of the Reddish Egret was Wednesday afternoon, 08/16.

On 08/15 Cindy McKee saw what she believed to be an Ash-throated Flycatcher in Lee County.

Many folks reported high numbers of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds visiting their feeders during the drought weeks in July. Frank Bennett stated he was going through 1.5 gallons of sugar water a day. Rhonda Rothrock reported a similar volume of consumption by hummers at her feeders. Cathie Hutcheson banded 24 previously unbanded hummers at Amber Hanson's Carbondale home on 08/02.

## New Contractor for Keystone XL Impacts Study

WASHINGTON, D.C. -(ENEWSPPF)-August 16, 2012. The State Department recently announced on its website that it has chosen a new third-party contractor to conduct the next round of review for TransCanada's controversial re-application to build the Keystone XL tar sands oil pipeline from Alberta, Canada to Steele City, Nebraska.

The new contractor, Environmental Resources Management, replaces Cardno Entrix, a firm that was at the center of the scandal\* surrounding the State Department's flawed Keystone XL review process last fall. However, while the department has hired a new contractor, it has also signaled that it will lean heavily on the flawed environmental impact statement largely prepared by Cardno Entrix, a study that independent experts concluded grossly downplayed the harm the pipeline is likely to cause.

"With the next round of review for Keystone XL, President Obama has the opportunity to prove that business-as-usual has not completely won the day at his State Department. We'll be watching the administration and ERM's every move to ensure that the bias, lobbyist influence and conflicts of interest that marred the State Department's previous impacts study don't contaminate this new round of review," said Kim Huynh, tar sands campaigner at Friends of the Earth.

For the full story, visit:

<http://www.enevspf.com/latest-news/science-a-environmental/35659-state-department-selects-new-contractor-for-keystone-xl-impacts-study.html>

## Introducing Mill Creek Natural Area

HeartLands Conservancy and Clifftop <http://www.clifftopalliance.org/> have jointly worked to purchase and permanently protect a unique tract of land in Randolph County. The 115-acre parcel of land contains sandstone canyons and gorges and cliff systems that host unusual plant communities. A significant stretch of Mill Creek also winds through the property and planned restoration will benefit both the creek and the Mary's River watershed. The newly named "Mill Creek Natural Area" hosts plant species now found much further north, but which demonstrate the power of ancient geologic forces.

"The opportunity to bring this tract of land, with its unique geology and plant communities, into permanent protection was a must-do deal for both our organizations," said Dave Eustis, Executive Director of HeartLands Conservancy.

The organizations applied for funding assistance through the Vital Lands Illinois initiative, an innovative grant program of the Grand Victoria Foundation, which includes a provision for just such a quick turn-around. The balance of the funding was obtained from private sources locally.

If you would like to learn more about Mill Creek Natural Area, contact Dave Eustis at [dave.eustis@heartlandsconservancy.org](mailto:dave.eustis@heartlandsconservancy.org).

Let's hope that Illinois need not resort to aerial spraying for West Nile Virus like they're currently doing in Texas.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/news/local-news/20120814-is-aerial-spraying-for-west-nile-safe-for-people-pets-and-the-environment.ece>

Let's hope no Illinois farmers use Avitrol avicide for pest bird management like Ingraldi Farms just did in New Jersey. <http://www.thedailyjournal.com/article/20120816/NEWS01/308160039>

✂—cut here and return with dues—cut here and return with dues—✂

### -- Join SIAS or

To join or renew your membership, fill in the following form and return it along with your dues to:

**Southern Illinois Audubon Society** Individual member \$15  
Attn.: Membership Additional member in a family \$10  
P.O. Box 222 Student voting member \$ 5  
Carbondale, IL 62903-0222 Amt. Enclosed:\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annual membership renewal month is January and coincides with board elections held at the annual meeting in January. Member address labels reflect current dues status.

✂—cut here and return with dues—cut here and return with dues—✂

### Renew Your Membership --

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I/we would like to receive my newsletter via email. YES or NO  
**Interested on being on the Board? Contact a Board Member!**

**Hydraulic Fracking-** Hydraulic fracturing is a method of natural gas and oil extraction that injects a host of toxic chemicals into the ground and unleashes still other substances (radioactive elements, salts, heavy metals) from underground formations. Evidence indicates that this process is problematic, from well casings leaking, to not-infrequent spills of toxic fluids, to extremely difficult waste water disposal problems, to air pollution from processing and drilling, to deep declines in property values due to ground water and soil contamination, and even to health issues experienced by residents living in proximity to drilling activities. It takes large quantities of fresh water and makes it foul.

Southern Illinoisans Against Fracturing our Environment is a group of ordinary citizens dedicated to preserving and protecting Illinois from the devastation that hydraulic fracturing is causing in communities around the U.S. and from continuing and repeating the history of contamination from fracking already documented in Illinois. A Saline County, Illinois judge's ruling allows a private company, Next Energy LLC, to lease mineral rights from owners without their consent.

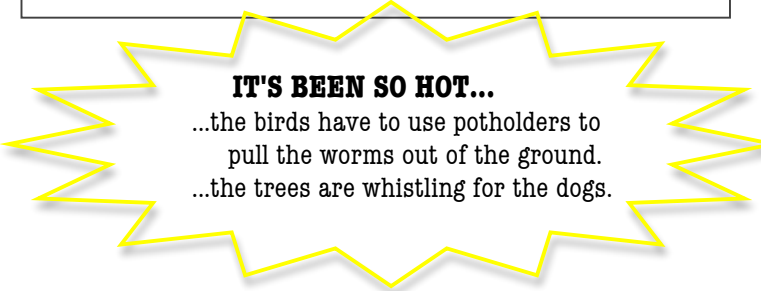
Mr. Jack Overstreet, owner of the company Next Energy, LLC, is quoted as saying, "There has been very little evidence of contamination from that technology." On the contrary, there is substantial evidence of contamination of land and water.

<https://dontfractureillinois.org/> offers enlightening information about fracking. Activists and researchers have been able to identify some of the chemicals used during the process. Chemicals include such substances as benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene, boric acid, monoethanolamine, xylene, diesel-range organics, methanol, formaldehyde, hydrochloric acid, ammonium bisulfite, 2-butoxyethanol, and 5-chloro-2-methyl-4-isothiazotin-3-one. According to Theo Colborn, a noted expert on water issues and endocrine disruptors, at least half of the chemicals known to be present in fracking fluid are toxic; many of them are carcinogens, neurotoxins, endocrine disruptors, and mutagens. But Colborn estimates that a third of the chemicals in fracking fluid remain unknown to the public.

Southern Illinoisans Against Fracturing our Environment has an online petition supporting a ban on hydraulic fracking in Illinois. Sign on to the petition as this link: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/2/ban-hydraulic-fracturing-in-illinois/>

**SIAS Board of Directors**

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 woodthrusheola@hotmail.com  
 SIAS Website: <http://www.siaudubon.org>



**IT'S BEEN SO HOT...**

...the birds have to use potholders to pull the worms out of the ground.  
 ...the trees are whistling for the dogs.

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**P.O. Box 222  
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*Affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society,  
 the Illinois Environmental Council,  
 & the North American Bluebird Society*

Don't Forget to Save Your Stamps for the IAS Land Acquisition Fund. ☑

Bring them to any IAS meeting.

For more info visit: [www.illinoisaudubon.org](http://www.illinoisaudubon.org)



**Reddish Egret**

