



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

January 2013 – Vol. 20, No. 1

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

NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

Common Owls of Southern Illinois

On Friday, January 25th at 8 P.M. Bev Shofstall of Free Again Wildlife Rehabilitation will discuss the common owls in southern Illinois and those owls we are more likely to encounter this winter. Join us for Bev's program on owls and see 1st hand how Bev captivates her audiences both young and old discussing our local wildlife and their survival. Bev will bring 4 of her owls used for educational purposes.

Bev began Free Again, Inc. in 1988 while working as a veterinary technician at Central Hospital for Animals in Herrin. The facility has since grown and now takes in over 400 hundred animals annually. The purposes of Free Again are:

- to rehabilitate orphaned and injured wildlife for return to their natural environment
- to study the behavior and diseases of wildlife
- to educate the public on the importance of all wildlife in our environment

Each year, SIAS contributes a portion of our monies to conservation or environmental causes including Free Again.

SIAS will be returning to the Fellowship Hall at First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale for this, our annual meeting. The evening will begin with a potluck dinner followed by a short business meeting. Set-up starts at 6 p.m. with the potluck starting at 6:30 p.m. SIAS will provide the main course and some beverages. Bring an entree to share and your own dinnerware and utensils.

This meeting will include an election of officers. The slate of officers to be elected/re-elected are: President - Joe Merkelbach, Vice President - Vicki Lang, Secretary - Mary McCarthy, Treasurer - Laraine Wright, Outing Chair- Trevor Hinckley, Conservation/Education Chair - Cathy Hutcheson, Hospitality Chair - Karen Kaufman, and Membership Chair - Rhonda Rothrock. Nominations for positions can also be made the evening of the meeting.

SIAS will hold a silent auction and a door prize(s) drawing as part of the evening's events. Members are encouraged to bring new or lightly used items for the auction or to be given as door prizes (and a little spending cash.) A selection of books and bird-related items from the estate of Genevieve Houghton will be part of the auction. Folks giving auction items are asked to suggest a value at which to start the bidding.

A portion of the auction proceeds will go to Free Again.

2013 Meetings Calendar:

February 22nd: George Waring - *Exploring Greenland, northern Quebec, Labrador & Newfoundland*

March 22nd: Ryan Tebo - *Response of wild turkeys to grassland fire management in an agricultural setting*

The Panatal – Wet and Dry

Trevor Hinckley, the SIAS traveler to South America, presented a thorough review of the natural history of the Panatal. This natural basin is not nearly as well known as the Amazon rainforest, but is a large expanse covering parts of three countries with only one riverine outlet. The natural sink holds drainage water from several rivers as a marsh during the rainy season and gradually dries to grasslands the remainder of the year. Most of the basin is in the Brazilian state of Matto Grosso del Sul, although some of the borderlands lie in Bolivia and Paraguay.

Trevor stayed at the Refugio del Illia, an 8000-acre ranch and refuge. Quite a lot of cattle grazing occurs in the panatal but the regular flooding keeps most of it as natural areas.

There were a few mammals as the tease at the beginning of program. Both the neotropical river otter and the giant otter (five to seven feet long) are found in the streams of the marshes. Several species of armadillos, including the yellow, and related anteaters, the lesser or tamandua and the greater or bandera, live in the area. Two species of peccaries occur in the panatal; the collared and the larger and more dangerous white lipped. The large capybarra rodent and the capuchin monkey are other mammal species of the panatal.

The capuchin was a segue to the flashy looking monkey catcher flower, that produces copious viscous sweet nectar that attracts both monkeys and many species of birds, including the gray-headed tanager, orange backed troupial, and white woodpecker.

The largest South American bird, the greater rhea, as well as the red-legged seriema, choco chachalaca, blue throated piping guan and southern screamer frequents the region. Storks such as the maguay and jabaru live in the wetlands and time their nesting with the optimum water level for catching fish to feed chicks.

There are many species of wading birds including herons, rails, ibises, and the lily pad treading jacana. Lots of raptors, including both hawks and owls, hunt over the grasslands for both fish and smaller mammals.

Smaller species including various nightjars, kingfishers, and the toco toucan, that uses its keel shaped bill to raid nests as well as manipulate fruits, live in the shrub savannahs of the region.

Parrots and parakeets were the finale of the tour, including the large and gaudy macaws. Red and green and yellow collared macaws feed on palm fruits. The very rare hyacinth macaw, up to three feet in length is now being aided with nesting boxes to rebuild its population.

The wildlife wonders of the panatal are numerous and intriguing; thanks to Trevor for presenting this appreciation.

-Joe Merkelbach, President

What's Happening - Upcoming Events & Outings

Jan.-March – Pere Marquette Bald Eagle Programs

Enjoy watching bald eagles on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers near Pere Marquette State Park this winter by participating in one of the park's popular Bald Eagle Days tours. The site interpreter at Pere Marquette presents informative programs about bald eagles with all programs beginning at the Pere Marquette Visitor Center at 8:30 a.m. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 618.786.3323. Programs are on select dates through early March. To check the schedule of program dates, go to the Pere Marquette State Park web page and click on "Bald Eagle Days" at this link: <http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/parks/R4/PEREMARQ.HTM>

Feb. 2nd – Volunteer Orientation for Frog & Toad Call Surveys

Crayfish, Bird-voiced, Cricket, and Tree are all names of frogs found in the Cache River Watershed. Learn about the 19 frogs and toad species found here and how you can help protect these critters. Interested volunteers will learn how to conduct frog and toad four surveys from Feb. thru June. Orientation is from 1-3 p.m. For more info, phone the Wetlands Center at 618.667.2064.

Feb. 2nd – Heartlands Conservancy's Eagle Trek, Modoc, IL

Join the Heartlands Conservancy and their partners for eagle watching at Kaskaskia Lock & Dam, 4800 Lock And Dam Rd., Modoc, IL...rain or shine. Meet feathered inhabitants of the World Bird Sanctuary (10 & 11 a.m. & 1 p.m.). Tour Kaskaskia Lock & Dam, enjoy children's activities, & go home with an eagle souvenir. This is a free event, all families and leash-trained dogs welcome.

Feb.-May – Movie Nights at the Cache River Wetlands Center

Movie Nights will be held the first Thursday of the month from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Cache River Wetlands Center, 8885 State Rt. 37 South, Cypress. Movies about nature will provide viewers of all ages with a fun way to learn about the outside world. The AmeriCorps staff will hold a short discussion about the movie after each presentation. For more info, phone the Wetlands Center at 618.667.2064.

Feb. 9th – Introduction to Beekeeping Seminar @ Plantscape

Local bee enthusiasts, Angie Kuehl and Scott Martin will present a seminar on the basics of beekeeping in southern Illinois and how those who are interested can get started with the hobby. The seminar will start at 10 a.m. and will include a question and answer session and a display of beekeeping equipment. Those planning to attend are encouraged to view a WSIU InFocus documentary on beekeeping as an advanced introduction to the seminar. View the documentary at <http://www3.wsiu.org/television/infocusarchive/detailinfo.php?record=440>

Feb. 21-May 9 – Southern Illinois Master Naturalist Program

This program, sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension Office, trains and educates adult volunteers so they are better equipped to share natural resource information with others in their communities and to assist with environmental conservation and restoration activities. For the cost of \$250, participants attend one course each Thursday for 12 weeks to earn the title of Master Naturalist. Participants must be willing to devote time to volunteering and to continuing education. For complete details, phone 618.687.1727. **Registration deadline is Feb. 8th.**

March 15-17th – Indigenous Plant Symposium

An indigenous plant symposium sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners, SIU Dept. of Plant Biology, and the Southern Chapter of the Illinois Native Plant Society will be held at John A. Logan College Center for Business and Industry. **Registration deadline is Feb. 1.** For complete details and/or to register, phone 618.687.1727 or visit <http://web.extension.illiois.edu/fjprw/>

Seeing Birds...

As of this writing, I still have not completed compilation for the Mermet Lake (Massac County) and Jackson County Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) but some interesting birds were seen on these counts, mostly at Mermet Lake.

The Schwegamans located several species uncommon to winter bird counts at Mermet Lake including Chipping Sparrows, 3 Least Sandpipers, a Spotted Sandpiper, & a Short-billed Dowitcher! A 2nd Spotted Sandpiper was seen by visiting counters Kelly McKay & Danny Atkers along the Ohio River at Ft. Massac State Park. Also at the park was another flock of Chipping Sparrows.

Other great finds during the 23 days of CBCs were a Merlin spotted by Vicki Lang at Horseshoe Lake during the Alexander Co. CBC and, during the Union Co. CBC, Trevor Hinckley located a Spotted Towhee along the Mississippi Levee Rd. Two Sandhill Cranes were seen flying over the Union Co. Refuge by Vern Kleen's birding team and a Northern Shrike was seen along Clear Creek Levee Rd. by Steve Bailey who also located a Harris Sparrow along Reynoldsville Rd. east of Reynoldsville.

But these were not the only special species seen this winter, as reported by Les Winkeler in the Southern Illinoisan. While on a hunt for the Northern Shrike, Cathie Hutcheson spotted 2 Whooping Cranes along Clear Creek Levee Road on Jan. 10th! Cathie was able to find data on the 2 Whoopers via The Operation Migration website. The twosome were banded, captive raised members of the Wisconsin reintroduction program. The pair consisted of an adventurous male, #19-11, hatched in 2011 and a female, #9-10, hatched in 2010. Why they were hanging out in Union County is unknown but after Mr. Winkeler's story appeared in the newspaper, a photographer who stated she'd seen what she believed to be the same two birds on Dec. 16th contacted Cathie. The Whoopers were seen by 3 birders early on the morning of Jan. 11th but have not been located since. It's likely they headed out of the area ahead of the storm front that arrived on the 12th. That said, keep on the lookout for 2 really large, white birds with colorful leg ornamentation. -*Rhonda R.*

You can find Whooper 19-11's bio at:

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/crane/11/BandingCodes.html>

and Whooper 9-10's bio at:

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/crane/10/BandingCodes.html>



Seeing Birds... con't.

On 12/14 David Brewer and Ryan Tebo located 197 Trumpeter Swans at the Burning Star #5 near Hurst. David had record band numbers from 24 swans he'd seen the day before and upon checking with the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, David was told that nearly all the swans came from the central WI area and from just a few sites. An outing to view swans at Burning Star #6 is being discussed but details have not yet been confirmed.

Carolyn Ferdinand was excited to notice a male Eastern Towhee at her bird feeding station, on 12/28, the first she'd seen in the yard. Carolyn stated that the Towhee ate for a long time then came back 5 minutes later to complete his meal. She also noticed a very vocal Yellow-shafted Flicker fascinated with the gutters on her house...maybe hunting for hidden insects.

While Steve Juhlin was out on a bird count on 12/29, his daughter Rachel took various pictures in their backyard of snow, sledding, ice, and a few birds. Later as Steve flipped through Rachel's photos, he found 4 images of a bird that he identified as a Loggerhead Shrike! This shrike was in their back yard. What a great yard bird.

Neither snow, nor sleet, nor gloom of night, nor flu keeps some birders from their appointed CBC duties, Frank Bennett specifically. Even though he was ill on Mermet Lake CBC day, 12/30, Frank still went out to count birds in his yard. He tallied 34 species just on his property and in his yard, including Barred and Great-horned Owls and 23 Pine Siskins.

While birding along the shoreline of Mississippi River during the Middle Miss. NWR CBC in western Jackson County (the morning of 01/02), Vicki Lang, Kate Hellgren, John Hartlieb, and Rhonda Rothrock were surprised to see a Short-eared Owl flying up the river. They were even more surprised as the owl flew directly toward a perched immature Bald Eagle. The "B-eagle pup" jumped in fright then flew off.

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

-- Join SIAS

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.

25th Annual Tropical Adventure Trinidad & Tobago!

May 23 - 30 2013

Learn about Tropical Ecology in this Beautiful Two-Island Nation in the Caribbean. Visit the Asa Wright Nature Center and Lodge, go snorkeling in coral reefs, and enjoy to field trips via a glass bottomed boat! Experience a tropical evergreen rain forest, a mangrove, tide pools, a tropical deciduous forest, a giant Leatherback Turtle watch, and West Indian cuisine.

Land Cost: \$1375 (with ten participants, includes all meals, lodging, and field trips with local naturalist guides). For information and current air-fare, contact: Nelda W. Hinckley at 618.549.5588 or neldahinckley@jalc.edu



Sick Siskins-Succumbing to Salmonella

For over a month now, upstate birders have been reporting Pine Siskin deaths. It's believed that an outbreak of salmonella is killing large numbers of Pine Siskins. The Wildlife Rescue Association website www.wildliferescue.ca/ states that dense flocks of Pine Siskins seem particularly vulnerable to outbreaks of salmonella transmitted at feeders.

Most salmonella outbreaks in birds are caused by contaminated bird feeders, and pine siskins, are particularly susceptible to the infection. They get sick by ingesting contaminated water and food, and by direct contact with feces or other contaminated birds. Under normal circumstances, feeders should be cleaned once a week, but with the salmonella outbreak it is advised that the public to clean feeders every day. They should be cleaned with a 10% solution of bleach and left to air dry before refilling. Food on the ground should be cleaned up regularly and disposed of in secure garbage. The feeders should also be moved between locations to prevent the build-up of feces. Anyone who sees sick or dead birds around their feeder should take the feeder down for at least a week to encourage the birds to disperse and reduce infection amongst flocks.

Ironically there have been no recent reports of other species currently succumbing to the salmonella. And only one incident of Pine Siskin deaths has been reported in southernmost Illinois but we should, none-the-less, remain vigilant...keep a close watch on our feeders and keep them clean.

Although the risk of infection to humans is extremely small, always remember to wash your hands after handling birds and bird feeders. By being vigilant and pro-active, you can help reduce the spread of infection and limit the risk to visiting Siskins.

✂—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!

Killing Bees: Are Government and Industry Responsible?

Honey bees, the essential pollinators of many major US crops, have been dying off in massive numbers since 2006. This threatens the American agricultural system and the one in twelve American jobs that depend on it. There is growing evidence that a new class of pesticides – nerve toxins called neonicotinoids, which are used on most US crops including almost all corn – may be toxic to bees. The Environmental Protection Agency allowed neonicotinoids on the market without adequate tests to determine their toxicity to bees. Environmentalists want neonicotinoids banned until needed safety tests are done. While the US government is slow to act and neonicotinoid sales reap billions for the chemical industry, bees continue to die. Earth Focus reports. <http://www.linktv.org/video/8123/killing-bees-are-government-and-industry-responsible>

Welcome new members

Jared and Maryann Dorn of Carbondale,
Margaret Krueger of Dongola,
and Justin Walker of Murphysboro.

Call on President Obama to Stop the Pebble Mine!

The EPA has determined that the proposed Pebble Mine would spell disaster for Alaska's Bristol Bay – its legendary salmon runs, its pristine environment and its Native communities.

This colossal gold and copper nightmare would generate an estimated ten billion tons of exposed waste and devastate the world's greatest wild salmon runs, which are the lynchpin of a spectacular American ecosystem and the generator of 14,000 jobs and \$480 million in annual revenue. More than 80 percent of Bristol Bay residents – including its Native peoples and commercial fishermen – oppose this monstrous project and have asked the Environmental Protection Agency to stop the mine.

Call on President Obama to save this national treasure by directing his EPA to use its authority under the Clean Water Act to stop the Pebble Mine! Sign the petition at: <https://secure.nrdonline.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=2951#.U03Y-vphKbI.email>

A Big Thank You to all SIAS members who have already renewed their membership dues for 2013. If you haven't yet renewed you dues, please don't forget to...we count on all of you! (A renewal form is printed on the previous page.)



SIAS Board of Directors

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Newsletter contributions welcome, contact Rhonda at:

618.684.6605 or woodthrusheola@hotmail.com

SIAS Webmaster: Jim Shofstall

SIAS Website: <http://www.siaudubon.org>

What's a sea serpent's favorite meal?

Fish 'n Ships.

Southern Illinois Audubon Society

P.O. Box 222

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



Whooping Cranes as photographed by Cathie Hutcheson.

Don't forget to save your stamps for the IAS Land Acquisition Fund. ☞

Bring 'em to any SIAS meeting!

For more info visit: www.illinoisaudubon.org