



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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

Established in 1970

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"A Naturalists' Visit to the Andes and Amazon Lowlands of Ecuador"

is the title of a program John Schwegman will present for SIAS on Friday, 10/25, starting at 7 p.m. SIAS will be returning to the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale, for this and all future programs/meetings. The Fellowship Hall is on the lower level of the church. Take the elevator or stairway down to the Hall. The evening will begin with a potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m.

This program covers a birding trip with John A. Logan College to the Andean uplands of Ecuador and a Schwegman family extension of that trip to the Amazon Lowlands. Highlights of the program include photos of the Andean Cock of the Rock, the Condor, and many Hummingbird species of the uplands, a Parrot clay lick, and many rain forest birds in the Amazon Basin. The latter include such interesting birds as the Wire-tailed Manakin, Hoatzin, and Scarlet Macaw. Four species of monkeys from the Rain Forest will also be discussed. These include the Noisy Night Monkey that graced the January 2013 cover of *National Geographic* containing a story "Rain Forest For Sale" about Ecuador's Yasuni National Park.

All photos in this presentation will be by the John Schwegman family. This talk does not go into great detail of the birds of the region that John's individual talks on the Andes and Amazon cover, but provides a good overall look at the biological diversity of 2/3 of Ecuador. John adds that persons planning to attend the talk might want to read the January 2013 *National Geographic Magazine* for background.

John is a lifelong naturalist who had a long career as a botanist with the IL Dept. of Conservation and IL Dept. of Natural Resources. He was instrumental in forming the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, and has been serving on the board of the commission. Since his retirement, John has continued to study wildlife, including mussels, dragonflies, birds and plants. He also enjoys sharing his photography and stories.

Potluck set-up begins at 6 p.m. with the potluck starting at 6:30 p.m. Members are asked to bring an entree to share and their own

August & September Program Highlights

August: Photo safari to the Okavango

A once in a lifetime trip to one of the wilder, or at least under populated, regions of Africa was the subject of our August meeting. Dennis and Esther Hays made the trip in 2012 to the wildlife regions of landlocked Botswana and Zimbabwe in the middle of the southern part of the continent.

The safari began in Maun, Botswana, a small outfitting town that has an outside role in the ecotravel writing and documentaries about Africa. It seems to me that lots of books and films have started in Maun.

The small group that the Hays were a part of, six folks and a highly respected guide, spent nearly two weeks exploring the wildlife habitats of northern Botswana. Their base was a magnificent tent in a permanent campsite. From that location they made various daytrips to see animals in natural habitats.

The unique region of the area is the inland delta of the Okavango River. The river rises in the hills of southern Angola and instead of flowing to the Atlantic descends southward to the lowlands of Botswana. This reliable flow of water to the region is the base of rich and complex ecosystems. Features that are constant in the landscape are hard exterior chimney like termite mounds; built by grass rather than wood eating termites. They are homes for other insects, reptiles, birds, and mammals as well as the termites.

One of the interesting daytrips was through the waterways made by hippos at night in the marshy areas. The group traveled by canoe through narrow corridors in the reeds to visit slight rises in the marsh. Crocodiles, wading birds, and raptors like eagles and fishing owls were some of the creatures seen on these trips.

Great images of giraffes, elephants, lions and others were part of this visually exciting program. Thanks to Dennis and Esther for taking us along vicariously.

-Joe Merkelbach, President

September: Night Fliers - Bats of the Cache Watershed

Karen Mangan, biologist for Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, presented a program about the lesser-known fliers of southern Illinois at the September meeting. There are twelve bat species found in Illinois, and nine of these occur in the Cache watershed. Since all are insectivores, it is not too surprising that they frequent lowland areas with plenty of water and hatching food. The number of pest insects that bats consume is prodigious; they really make an underappreciated ecological contribution.

Most bats roost singly or in small nursery colonies in foliage or under loose tree bark during the warm months, but either move into caves or mines in larger groups or migrate south during the winter.

The federally endangered Indiana bat, *Myotis sodalis*, has been the focus of recent work on CCNWR. A cooperative group of biologists and students from the U.S. Forest Service and SIU Carbondale have mist netted, measured, and temporarily radio tagged bats to study their movements. The bats gathered in small maternity colonies that sheltered in cavities or under loose bark of mature trees. Visual observations

What's Happening - Upcoming Events & Outings

Note: Outings & activities relating to the U.S.F.W.S. & U.S.F.S are subject to the effects of Government Shut-down, please contact those offices for status of their previously scheduled events.*

Oct. 27 – Discovery Tours at CONWR*

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge will open up the restricted portion of the refuge for self-guided tours. Tours begin at the Wolf Creek Causeway and run from 1-4 p.m. Call the Visitor Center for more information 618.997.3344 ext. 1.

Nov. 2 – Cane Talk and Autumn Walk at the Cache*

Come learn about the biology and ecology of native bamboo, also known as giant cane, at the Lower Cache Access, Access Rd., south off Perks Road. Cane formerly covered vast areas (canebrakes) in southernmost Illinois. With SIUC researchers, we'll discuss this important wetland habitat and techniques being developed to restore cane back to the land. We will also teach basic tree and woody plant ID skills, while focusing on species unique to wetland habitats. For more info, contact Cypress Creek NWR at 618.634.2231.

Nov. 9 – SIAS Outing to Big Oak Tree & 10-mile Pond, Missouri

Vicki Lang-Mendenhall and Rhonda Rothrock will lead an outing to some amazing wildlife places in the Bootheel of Missouri. We'll visit 10-mile Pond State Conservation Area, Big Oak Tree State Park, and an area along the Mississippi River that has never been closed by a levee. These locations are in the vicinity (just north) of the Bird's Point flood control levee that was blown open during the Flood of 2011 and are now at risk if a newly re-proposed New Madrid Floodway Project goes forward (see follow-up article in this newsletter; note comment deadline now extended to Nov. 25th.)

Meet for carpooling at the north end of the Anna Walmart parking lot. This Walmart is located off IL Rt. 146, just east of Rt. 51. Meet here at 8:30 a.m. [For folks wishing to carpool to Anna from Carbondale, contact Trevor Hinckley at 618.967.1157.] From Anna, we'll be taking I57 south to Charleston, MO. We'll pull off at the Boomland restaurant and gas station. Folk wishing to meet up with us there can expect us at around 9:30 a.m. From there we'll head to the floodway. We expect this outing to last into the early afternoon so bring water and a lunch as well as your binoculars, scopes, etc.

Dec. 5 – Holiday Open House at the Cache*

Come one, come all to celebrate the holiday season! Staff from the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture will have good food to share and festivities to go around. For more info, contact Cypress Creek Refuge at 618.634.2231.

Dec. 14 - Jan. 5 – 114th Christmas Bird Count Season

The 114th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count will take place Dec. 14, 2013 to Jan. 5, 2014. The longest running Citizen Science survey in the world, the Christmas Bird Count provides critical data on population trends. The tens of thousands of participants know that it is also a lot of fun. Data from the over 2,300 circles are entered after the count and become available to query to the world.

Details for local circles will follow in the Nov./Dec. newsletter

26th Annual Tropical Adventure / May 23-June 6, 2014

Trinidad & Tobago: Learn about tropical ecology and natural history in this beautiful two-island nation in the Caribbean.

Experience a tropical evergreen rain forest, a mangrove, tide pools, a tropical deciduous forest, a giant Leatherback Turtle watch, and West Indian cuisine. For complete itinerary and cost of this great trip, Professor Emeritus Nelda Hinckley at 618.549.5588 or email Nelda at neldahinckley@jalc.edu.

SIAS Elections 2014

The SIAS Election of Officers for 2014 is just a few months away. Volunteers are needed for a nominating committee. These volunteers will search for individuals who are willing to run for office. The nominating committee typically approaches individuals who they agree would be good leaders. They are also able to inform interested individuals of the duties involved in each office and accept nominations from members who wish to become more involved.

SIAS membership contains a wide variety of talents and skills. If you would like to be a part of selecting new officers this committee is for you. Please consider stepping up as a committee member or as a candidate. Contact any current board member for more details. Contact information can be found at the end of the newsletter.

SAVING THE CANADA LYNX

Canada lynx are made for hunting in deep snow, with thick cushions of hair on the soles of their feet that act like built-in snowshoes. Appropriately enough, this adaptation helps them stalk their favorite prey, the snowshoe hare. Unlike any other cat, the Canada Lynx relies almost exclusively on the snowshoe hare for food. But Lynx aren't only predators; they've also fallen prey to trapping, especially when wearing spotted cat fur became all the rage in the '60s and '70s. Today, Canada Lynx are still caught in traps set for other species, and their habitat is fast disappearing. Luckily for the Lynx, vast swaths of its habitat will soon get protection.

After work in court by the Center for Biodiversity and allies, in September 2013 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to designate 26 million acres of federally protected critical habitat for the species. This is much more than was originally proposed in the spring of 2000 - when the Lynx was finally granted Endangered Species Act protection after one petition and two lawsuits were filed on the Lynx's behalf. The Center is pushing the Service to issue a recovery plan.

The Center has done plenty of other work to help this valiant but vulnerable predator. For example, in March 2008, thanks to a Center lawsuit, a judge had ruled that Minnesota was in violation of the Endangered Species Act by allowing traps that harm and kill Canada Lynx. The court ordered the state to take all action necessary to ensure that no more Lynx are killed by traps within core lynx habitat.

www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/mammals/Canada_lynx/index.html

Former SIAS member Dr. Wally Jakubas, Scientist with the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, has worked with a team gathering information on the Canada Lynx in Maine as part

What is the “St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway Project” & why should it be stopped

A floodway exists in the Bootheel of Missouri that was designed, in times of big floods, to allow for the Mississippi River to escape into this floodway and relieve the system thus preventing flooding of small towns up and downstream of the floodway.

Now the Corps of Engineers are attempting to revive the decades-old St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway Project, a project that would modify the current floodway plan by preventing some of the current important functions of the floodway, like backwater flooding. This project would also provide for more increased resistance for the use of the floodway in times of extreme floods, as in 2011, when the Corps activated (opened up) the floodway at Birds Point.

During the Flood of 2011, the Mississippi had already begun flooding a number of towns north of the Ohio River confluence, prior to the Corps blowing the Birds Point Levee, a levee built specifically for the purpose of being removed (activated) in times of such flooding. By blowing this specifically purposed strip of levee, as part of a pre-designed plan, a portion of the floodwaters were able to escape into what was once a natural and fully accessible floodplain thus lowering the water levels at Paducah, KY, upstream on the Ohio, by 2 feet in under 48 hours. It prevented the flooding of Cairo and Metropolis IL, and likely prevented the downstream flooding of other small towns like Wickliffe and Hickman, KY. If it had been activated in a timelier manner, the relief might have prevented the flooding of Olive Branch, IL. If it had not been activated, Paducah and many other towns likely would have suffered a flood of consequences.

The proposed St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway project would construct a levee at the southern end of the New Madrid floodway, effectively closing it off from natural backwater flooding. This would also result in the elimination of an enormous acreage of functional and important wetlands by cutting them off from any nourishment from incoming water. These wetlands, some of which are in good vegetated condition, and some of which are farmed, all provide important functions to the landscape and to the river system, holding floodwaters, treating the water, and providing critical fish and wildlife habitat including migratory stop-over and over-wintering grounds for shorebird, waders, and tens of thousands of ducks and geese.

At a time when we are losing significant amounts of wetlands to crop farming, it is important that these wetlands remain functional. By federal law, the wetland impacts require full mitigation, i.e., the Corps has to figure out how to replace the wetland acreage by restoring wetland elsewhere, in a reasonable vicinity...something that is both impractical and would cost the federal government (and taxpayers) an exorbitant amount of money.

The most glaring yet hidden adverse effect of moving forward with this project, and closing off the backwater flooding, is it will likely lead to increased farming and land development in an area that really just wants to welcome in water as was intended. It's reasonable to believe that landowners within the floodway who already raise a fuss about the activation of the floodway when needed will raise even more of a fuss about the floodway being used in the future.

The science and understanding of river systems has evolved substantially over the past century; hydrologists, ecologists, biologists, botanists, and geomorphologists, and other scientists are fully aware of the crucial importance of connecting a river to its floodplain. The Mississippi River only has 4 of these connections remaining. one of which is the St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid

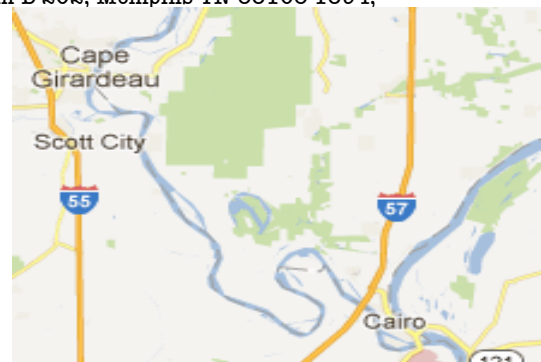
The draft summary says the revised plan calls for “waterfowl management during waterfowl season in both basins, and manages flood risks in a manner that recognizes the benefit of the flood pulse to the remaining natural environment.” The cost of the project is estimated at \$164.78 million, with the Corps claiming a combined cost/benefit ratio of 2:1. Spending watchdog groups question that analysis.

Local officials say the project – first proposed in the 1950s, authorized by Congress but struck down by a federal judge in 2007 because of its earlier, flawed EIS – is needed to stop the backwater that seeps into the area. But environmental and conservation groups reiterated their previous statements.

“There is no reason to spend millions of taxpayer dollars to prevent a floodway from flooding,” said George Sorvalis, water campaign manager for the National Wildlife Federation. “This project would sever the last remaining connection the Mississippi River has to its floodplain in Missouri, devastating fish and wildlife populations. The Obama administration needs to put this boondoggle to rest once and for all.” Brad Walker, the Missouri Coalition for the Environment’s wetlands and floodplains director, has called for de-authorizing the proposed project. “This folly of a project has never been built for one simple reason: It is a subsidy for a handful of wealthy farmers that is not in the best interest of the American people he said in a statement Friday.

A 2006 report of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) said the Mississippi River-New Madrid Floodway “connection (to the Mississippi River) is absolutely vital to maintaining a healthy, sustainable fishery in this section of the Mississippi.” And a letter from the Interior Department in 2011 warned, “altering the hydrologic regime of the floodway produces a suite of complex and unsolvable challenges in providing adequate mitigation for the wetland, fishery and floodplain impacts.” In its draft “Coordination Act Report” included in the Corps proposal, the FWS’s ecological field service in Columbia, Mo., said, “The Service opposes the New Madrid Floodway component of the preferred alternative” because it would “cause substantial, irretrievable losses of nationally significant fish and wildlife resources, and greatly diminish rare and unique habitats found in southeast Missouri.”

Now that the revised draft EIS has been published, the Corps is seeking public comments. The comment deadline has been extended to November 25, 2013. Send your comments to Mr. Danny Ward, Project Management Branch, 167 N. Main, Room B-202, Memphis TN 38103-1894,



Keystone Threatens Endangered Animals, Plants

No matter how you look at it, Keystone XL will be bad for wildlife, especially for endangered species. Many imperiled species live along the 1,700-mile pipeline's path and in areas where tar sands oil is produced. If the pipeline is built, most will have nowhere else to go. The Center for Biological Diversity has released a new report called *In Harm's Way: How the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Have Ignored the Dangers of the Keystone XL Pipeline to Endangered Species*.

The Center's analysis finds that at least 12 threatened and endangered species in four states will be put in harm's way by the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. They include Whooping Cranes, Interior Least Terns, American Burying Beetles, Northern Swift Fox, Greater Sage Grouse, Piping Plovers, Pallid Sturgeons, and Black-footed Ferrets. Threats from this project include habitat destruction from the massive ground disturbance this pipeline would cause, bird deaths from power line collisions, and the potentially catastrophic impacts of pipeline spills.

Under the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Dept. of State and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are required to analyze the potential impacts of the Keystone XL pipeline on threatened and endangered species. The Center believes that in analyzing the proposed pipeline's impacts, the State Department and FWS summarily dismiss or ignore some of the most significant harms that these species would face if this pipeline is approved and built; failing to fulfill their duties under the Act and to the American public, which overwhelmingly supports the protection of wildlife.

The Center found that both agencies excluded consideration of the impact of pipeline spills on endangered species, despite otherwise acknowledging that spills are all but certain to occur.** They also failed to consider the impacts of related infrastructure like power lines and roads, improperly downplayed the impacts of ground disturbance, and ignored the impacts of increased tar sands production on endangered species in Canada.

Visit the Center's website for the full article and/or to download a pdf copy of their report.

http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/no_keystone_xl/in_harms_way.html

http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/no_keystone_xl/pdfs/In_Harms_Way.pdf

**On 09/29/13 a Tesoro Corp. pipeline ruptured, spewing over 20,000 barrels of crude oil across a North Dakota wheat field. It was the farmer who found the spill. Officials waited two weeks before going public about it.

Forest bolsters bird abundance, pest control and coffee yield

A recent study found that low intensity agricultural practices might not sacrifice yields if they support biodiversity-driven ecosystem services. Experiments in Costa Rica showed birds reduced insect infestation by 50%, bats played a marginal role, and farmland forest cover increased pest removal. The study found higher abundances of a specific insect predator on more forested plantations and estimated that forest patches doubled pest control by providing habitat for the insect-consuming birds. Retaining forest and accounting for pest control demonstrates a win-win for biodiversity and coffee farmers. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ele.12173/pdf>

Newsletter contributions welcome,
contact Rhonda Rothrock at:

618.684.6605 or

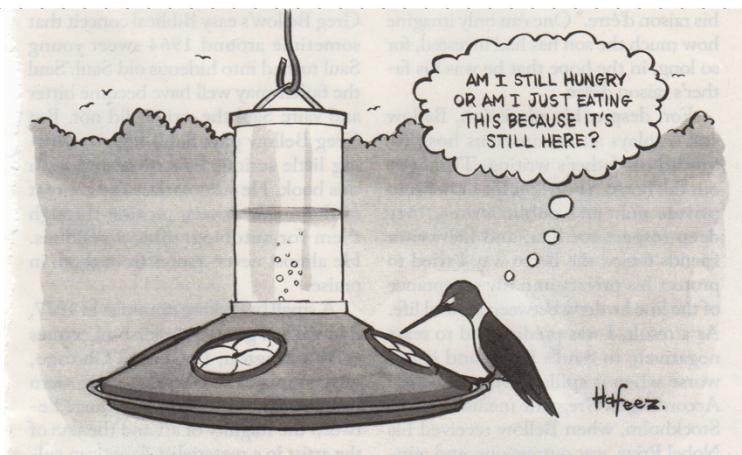
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To join or renew your membership, fill in the following form and return it along with your dues to:

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Attn.: Membership Additional member in a family \$10
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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.

Southern Illinois Audubon Society

P.O. Box 222

Carbondale, IL 62903-0222

Affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society,



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