



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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

Established in 1970

NEWSLETTER Nov./Dec. 2013 – Vol. 20, No. 8

Habitat Buffers and the Plight of the Bobwhite

is the title of a program to be presented on Friday, Dec. 6th, at 7 p.m. by Brady Neiles, Graduate Student with the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory at SIUC Carbondale.

In 2004, the Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds (or CP-33) practice was established under the federal Conservation Reserve Program with the goal of increasing native grassland bird habitat via private landowner participation. Through this program, farmers receive various incentives to establish and maintain 30'-to-150'-wide strips of preferred habitat along crop field margins for a contractual period of 10-15 years. Brady's study focuses on examining the efficacy of CP-33 buffers in southern Illinois at recruiting and sustaining northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) and other grassland bird species.

Brady graduated from the University of Wyoming in 2009 with a degree in Wildlife & Fisheries Biology & Management. He then traveled the western states working wildlife technician jobs. With four years worth of field positions, Brady had the opportunity to study many taxa such as carnivores, like the Pacific fisher and American marten, and many bird species including the Interior Least Tern and Piping Plover, Greater Sage-Grouse and an assortment of grassland birds and waterfowl. Born and raised a South Dakotan, he felt a need to come back to and work in grassland ecosystems.

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 and meetings. The Fellowship Hall is on the lower level of the Church. Take the elevator or stairway down to the Hall.



Quail habitat needs change seasonally



Protection (January)

Native grasses, forbs & shrubs provide winter cover and food.



Pairing & bonding (February–April)



Nesting (April 15–September)

Diverse native grasses



Brooding (June–October)

Native forbs and legumes



Escape (October–April)

Native-shrub islands or quail covey headquarters

Artwork Courtesy of Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

2014 Meetings Calendar

January 24th: Annual meeting with potluck, elections, silent auction, & program. Speaker to be announced.

February 28th: Program Speaker to be announced.

March 28th: Tom Ulrich on Costa Rica.

October Program Highlights - Birding on the Line

Our globe spanning members from Metropolis gave us another view of the planet at the October meeting. The entire Schwegman family made the trip to Ecuador and all contributed photos of their adventure to the show. The country is named for its location on the equator and there are lots of directions to go for birding.

The beginning of the trip was going west toward the Pacific slope of the Andes from the central basin of Quito. This was the first of the four regions visited. Hummingbirds are species found mostly in South and Central America and Ecuador is the focus of their diversity; one of John's main targets were as many as he could find to photograph. He found some in each of the areas they visited. One of the highlights on the western slopes was the large Andean condors, the South American equivalent of the North American California condor. There were also several species of tanagers of many different colors.

The Schwegmans spent one day in Quito, the old colonial capital with impressive buildings in the center, and got a photo of the family astraddle the exact equator line.

Traveling from there as a family they first visited the high paramo plateau, with several hummingbird specialists in above the tree line plants. One of the highlights of the eastern slope region was the flashy racquet tail hummer.

The final leg of the trip was a journey on a tributary of the Amazon to a birding camp in the selva (jungle). Boat trips from there revealed several species of parrots and parakeets, including macaws eating mineral laced clay from above the riverbanks.

Anpittas, a group of several bird species that follow columns of army ants, and pick off fleeing insects and other forms of life to make a living, were another of John's subjects.

Thanks to John and Martha (and the contributions from their sons) for the super programs they have brought us through the years. Looking forward to the hummer special soon. *-Joe Merkelbach, President*

What's Happening - Upcoming Events & Outings

Dec. 3 – IDNR Fracking Public Hearing at Rend Lake College

The IL Department of Natural Resources has scheduled a series of Public Hearing regarding the proposed Hydraulic Fracturing Regulatory Act administrative rules. A hearing will be held in the Theater at Rend Lake College, 468 N. Ken Gray Parkway, Ina, IL on 12/03. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Hearing runs from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. For more information, contact IDNR at their Centralia office: 618.533.8979

Dec. 5 – Holiday Open House at the Cache

Celebrate the holiday season at the Cypress Creek NWR office, Shawnee College Rustic Campus Bldg. D 0137 Rustic Campus Drive. Staff from the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture will have good food to share and festivities to go around. Bring an entre' if you wish. For more info, contact Cypress Creek Refuge at 618.634.2231.

Dec. 8 – 9th Annual SI Alternative Gift Fair in Carbondale

Enjoy mindful holidays, engage our community, help create a just economy and make a positive impact on the world with alternative gift choices this season. Stop to shop at the Carbondale Civic Center, Illinois Ave., on 12/08 from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. There will be a wide mix of participants including Friends of the Cache, Friends of Crab Orchard NWR, Free Again, GreenEarth, and many more. Also live music, refreshments, and a silent auction featuring local art and regionally made goods.

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. **Local counts with dates:**

Rend Lake- Dec. 14 - Advanced registration required, contact compiler Keith McMullen at 618.632.1057/ warbler7@sbcglobal.net.

Mingo NWR (MO)- Dec. 14 - Advanced registration required, contact compiler Dr. Bill Eddleman at weddleman@semo.com. Meet at 6 a.m. at Mel's Diner in Puxico for breakfast & assignments.

War Bluff Valley - Dec. 15 - For details contact Andrea Douglas, compiler at 618.564.2079 / anderatd@yahoo.com.

Cypress Creek NWR- Dec. 16 - Meet for assignments at Shawnee Comm. College Bldg. D, Rustic Campus Drive, Ullin, at 6:00 a.m. For details, phone Cypress Creek NWR 618.634.2231.

Big Oak Tree St. Pk. (MO)- Dec. 19 - Meet on Count Day at 6:00 a.m. at the restaurant at Boomland, on the southeast corner of the interchange at the Charleston, MO, off I-57. Contact compiler Dr. Bill Eddleman at weddleman@semo.com.

Marion County- Dec. 21 - Meet in the parking lot of the Raccoon School, just west of I-57 at the Centralia exit at 6:00 a.m. Contact compiler Joe Merkelbach at 618.532.3112/ jemerkm@ecologyfund.net.

Crab Orchard NWR- Dec. 22 - Advanced registration required, contact compiler Vicki Lang-Mendenhall at 618.687.9868. Meet for assignments at the Refuge Visitor's Center, 8588 Route 148, at 6:00 a.m.

Middle Mississippi River NWR- Dec. 23 – Meet at Middle Miss office, 1293 Rocky Hollow Road, Rockwood at 6:30 a.m. Contact compiler John Hartleb at 618.763.4420 or Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605.

Arklands/Pyramid St. Pk.- Dec. 27 - Meet on site at the intersection of Pyatts Blacktop and Panda Bear Rd. at 6:00 a.m. Contact compiler Joe Merkelbach at 618.532.3112 / jemerkm@ecologyfund.net.

Horseshoe Lake (Alexander Co.)- Dec. 28 – Advanced registration required. Meet in parking lot at the intersection of Rt. 3 & Miller City Rd., Olive Branch, at 6:30 a.m. Contact compiler Vern Kleen at 217.787.3515 / vkleen@comcast.net. Alexander and Union participants can use the Wicker Club at Horseshoe Lake for Thursday, 12/27, and Friday, 12/28, night accommodations. Beds are available, but bring blankets, pillows, etc. Persons unable to meet at the Wicker Club will get their assignments at “onsite” meeting locations.

Union County- Dec. 29 – Advance registration required. Meet at the intersection of IL Rt. 3 and IL Rt.124 (in Ware) at 6:30 a.m. Contact compiler Vern Kleen at 217.787.3515 / vkleen@comcast.net. See lodging options for Horseshoe Lake.

Mermet Lake- Dec. 30 - Advance registration required. For assignments contact assistant compiler Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 / woodthrusheola@hotmail.com.

Jackson County- Jan. 1 - Advance registration required. For assignments contact compiler Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 / woodthrusheola@hotmail.com. Compilation and soup (made by Chef Anton) at the home of David and Anton Kvernes, Skyline Dr., Carbondale, at sunset. Jackson County CBC feeder watchers wanted!! Email your feeder bird list to Rhonda at the end of count day or send it via the U.S.P.S.

What's Happening – con't.

Dec. 19 – IDNR Fracking Public Hearing at SIUC

The IL Department of Natural Resources has scheduled a series of Public Hearing regarding the proposed Hydraulic Fracturing Regulatory Act administrative rules. A hearing will be held in Ballroom B of the SIUC Student Center, 1256 Lincoln Dr., Carbondale. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. Hearing runs from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. For more information, contact IDNR at their Centralia office: 618.533.8979.

Jan. 3-10 – Birds & Natural History of Belize

Explore Belize, a country that offers a rich blend of Mayan ruins and lush forests that are still wild enough to host the illusive jaguar, a rich diversity of tropical birds, and other creatures. Join Professor Emeritus Nelda Hinckley for an in-depth exploration of Belize's biological treasures and fascinating culture. For complete itinerary and cost this great trip, please phone Nelda at 618.549.5588 or email her at neldahinckley@jalc.edu.

Jan 11th – Mid Winter Eagle Surveys

Eagle Survey(s) will be held on Saturday, 01/11. Rain date: Sunday 01/12. SIAS coordinates two routes, one each in Union and Alexander Counties. For Union Co. contact Cathie Hutcheson at 618.529.2022 for arrangements. For Alexander Co. contact Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 or meet under the Murdale True Value sign, W. Main St., Carbondale, at 8 a.m. for carpooling.

Feb. 9-18, 2014 – Vern's Birding Tours: Costa Rica

This 10-day excursion to Costa Rica, the wildlife sanctuary of the Americas, has again been designed especially for Vern's Birding Tours. For full details and reservations, contact Vernon Kleen, 1825 Clearview Drive, Springfield, IL

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

Trinidad & Tobago: Lean 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, contact Professor Emeritus Nelda Hinckley at 618.549.5588 or via 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.

2013 Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Bluebird Trail Report – by Laraine Wright, Trail Coordinator

Most of the 12 people monitoring the eight sections of the Crab Orchard NWR bluebird trail expressed disappointment with this year’s results. However, the overall numbers actually were better this year than last: a bluebird-fledging rate of 58% this year versus 52% for 2012.

Anne Johnson’s trail, primarily in the pasture areas around A41 pond, as well as the Manns’ site in the east side closed area, posted the worst data. “The number of eggs and young I lost to predators (snakes and raccoons) was alarming,” Anne said. Marvin and Carolyn Mass said, “This was our worst year! We had 13 dead birds. We also had someone messing with our houses (mainly in the cow pasture) by opening the doors and then putting nails back in ... something raccoons can’t do. Along with these issues, we had more predation resulting in low numbers – very discouraging!” Anne, Marvin, and Carolyn are longtime volunteers. Dealing with cows, predation, and people seems to be endemic in their sections.

We now must ask CONWR staff who work with the cattle farmers to demand that they leave the bluebird boxes alone. Genevieve Houghton, who had boxes for many years in the area next to the Manns, regularly noticed and complained about human destruction of nests and boxes in the cattle area. It might be time, also, to post a notice on the Manns’ boxes about it being a violation of federal law to interfere with songbird nesting. (The bluebird trail at Giant City State Park uses such notices.) If we leave out the sections monitored by Anne and the Manns, the bluebird-fledging rate stands at 67%. In fact, four of the eight sections this year posted more than a 70% rate of fledging.

This season we added two new areas for monitoring. One is inside the refuge: 12 boxes were set up at the Girl Scout Camp off Rocky Comfort Road. The Scouts made the boxes themselves – based on the new slot design – under the supervision of CONWR’s Kim King-Wrenn, and they did a great job. The other new addition is technically not in the refuge boundary but close enough to include the results here, although I kept the data separate. Mary and Walter McCarthy began monitoring the 10 boxes already in place at the Little Grassy Fish Hatchery west of the spillway off Grassy Road. However, they removed most of the old boxes and installed ones with the new slot design, and they will add a few more boxes in the area next season.

We need two more volunteers for our trail: one to monitor the Girl Scout Camp and one to take over the 20-box trail that runs along Wolf Creek Road and into the south closed area. Jerry O’Malley and I will work on the latter this winter to move many of the boxes to more accessible areas. As for the Girl Scout Camp, I found it an especially attractive area and a lot of fun for those who like to birdwatch. The area is full of warblers, tanagers, orioles, and other breeding migrants in the woods along the lake’s shoreline. If you know of interested volunteers, please ask them to call me at 618.451.8769.

This season 147 bluebirds fledged in seven of the eight sections by on or about May 10th. Some of we who have been monitors for several decades feel that bluebirds are fledging earlier these days than in the past. Corresponding with this, it seems as though egg laying is beginning to stop a bit earlier in the year. Are these yet more signs of climate change or are they simply an aberration? I will try to get more information or at least professional opinions by January.

As always, we thank everyone for participating this year. And our gratitude continues to go to the Friends of Giant City and the Southern Illinois Audubon Society who provide money (about \$600 total this season) for the purchase of new boxes and metal cone guards. Both are essential as we continue to modernize and improve the trail sections, and both are made by Orland Cline of rural Anna, who has become our treasured partner in this continuing project.

Our efforts help in the maintaining of healthy numbers of bluebirds and tree swallows that rely on cavities for nesting. Note, too, in this year’s data another cavity nester: the highest number of prothonotary warblers ever recorded in our boxes was by Anne Johnson in her area at A41 pond.

SIAS Receives Large Donation of Birding and Nature Related Books

This fall SIAS was offered and enthusiastically accepted a large donation of birdwatching and nature related books from the estate of Terry L. Moulton from southern Illinois. Most of the books are in new, unused condition and there are multiple copies of many. Books will be offered for sale to members and others at SIAS meetings, starting Dec. 6. Some books will be sold as sets, others individually. Books make excellent Christmas presents for family and friends. Also included in the donation were several birding CDs. An itemization of books has been included with this newsletter so folks can prepare their shopping lists. Prices are yet to be determine but will be well below retail costs. Whether it is to

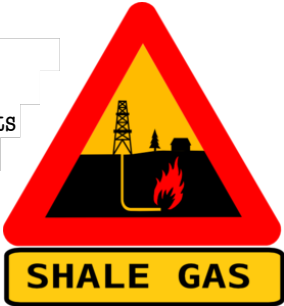
It’s Time We Lit a Fire Under The Folks Writing Fracking Regulations

The IL Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR) is accepting public comments on it’s proposed fracking rules through Friday, January 3, 2014. IT IS INCUMBENT UPON ANYONE, ANYWHERE, WHO CARES ABOUT THIS ISSUE, TO COMMENT ON THESE RULES. The more comments, the better – we need to submit many comments to IDNR from now, through the January 3, 2014 deadline. IL Against Fracking has set up a website to make comment submission very simple, with suggested comments from careful analyses of the proposed rules. Please take the time to submit your comments. IL Against Fracking is suggesting folks submit one per day by going to their website and following the instructions: <http://www.ilagainstfracking.org/>

As Per IDNR’s Website: The IDNR will be holding a series of public hearings for the purpose of facilitating submissions of views and comments regarding specific aspects of the proposed administrative rules implementing the Hydraulic Fracturing Regulatory Act. The Proposed Administrative Rules are available on their website for review, visit: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/OilandGas/Pages/HydraulicFracturing.aspx>

A Hearing Officer will conduct the hearing. Staff from IDNR will be present to listen to comments, but IDNR states that the staff probably will not be able to respond to each comment due to time limitations. The Department will have a sign-up sheet at each location for people who would like to make a public comment. The Hearing Officer will use a lottery system to determine the order of the speakers. In order to listen to as many comments as possible, the Hearing Officer will limit each person to four minutes. The Department recommends that commenters reference the section of the proposed rules that relates to their comment so that the Department can better understand the recommendation.

Each person who intends to provide comments should bring a written copy of his or her remarks so that the Department has a record of the testimony. If anyone is unable to speak due to time constraints, the Department will accept written comments at the end of the hearing. If you cannot attend either public hearing, the Department will continue to accept comments through Friday, January 3, 2014. Written comments carry the same weight as oral testimony at a hearing, and IDNR staff will consider both equally during the rulemaking process. Comment via postal mail to: Robert G. Mool, Office of Legal Counsel, Department of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271 or through an online submittal form at <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/OilandGas/Pages/OnlineCommentSubmittalForm.aspx>



Join SIAS or Renew Your Membership

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 along the line below to mail in with payment. Thanks!!)

To join or renew your membership, fill in the following form; return it along with your dues at the next SIAS meeting or mail to return address to the left:

Your name:

Street Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

I/we would like to receive my newsletter via email. YES or NO

In 1851, Charles S. Ellet Jr., a civil engineer, wrote in a report to congress. "Don't build levees along the Mississippi." Building levees, Ellet warned, would constrict the river and actually increase the height of flood levels, and it would encourage farming and development along a natural flood plain that no number of levees and dams could ever fully protect.

Wind Energy Company Pleads Guilty to Eagle Deaths

The government for the first time has enforced environmental laws protecting birds against wind energy facilities, winning a \$1 million settlement from a power company that pleaded guilty to killing 14 eagles and 149 other birds at two Wyoming wind farms. The case against Duke Energy Corp. and its renewable energy arm was the first prosecuted under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act against a wind energy company. "In this plea agreement, Duke Energy Renewables acknowledges that it constructed these wind projects in a manner it knew beforehand would likely result in avian deaths," Robert G. Dreher, acting assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division, said in a statement. An investigation by The Associated Press in May revealed dozens of eagle deaths from wind energy facilities, including at Duke's Top of the World farm outside Casper, Wyo., the deadliest for eagles of 15 such facilities that Duke operates nationwide. The other wind farm included in the settlement is also in Converse County and is called Campbell Hill. All the deaths, which included golden eagles, hawks, blackbirds, wrens and sparrows, occurred from 2009 to 2013. "We deeply regret the impacts of golden eagles at two of our wind facilities," said Greg Wolf, president of Duke Energy Renewables Inc. in a statement. "Our goal is to provide the benefits of wind energy in the most environmentally responsible way possible." For the complete story visit: <http://news.yahoo.com/wind-energy-company-pleads-guilty-eagle-deaths-215603008->

Don't forget to save your cancelled stamps for the Illinois Audubon Society Land Acquisition Fund.

Newsletter contributions welcome, contact Rhonda Rothrock at: 618.684.6605 or woodthrusheola@hotmail.com SIAS Webmaster: Jim Shofstall SIAS Website: <http://www.siaudubon.org>

Printed on recycled paper!



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"You can always pick out the migrants."

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

