



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

February 2014 – Vol. 21, No. 2

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

NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

Top Predators of the Turkey Population in the Midwest

is the title of a program to be presented on Friday, February 28, at 7 p.m. by Chris Bottom, Graduate Student with the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory at SIUC Carbondale. Join SIAS as Chris discusses the impact of the top 2 predators on the survival rates of adult hen turkeys and their nests. Can you guess what the top 2 predators are? Chris will reveal how these predators affect the turkey population in Illinois and the Midwest

All SIAS programs are now being held in the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale. The Fellowship Hall is on the lower level of the Church. Take the elevator or stairway down to the Hall.

Chris Bottom is currently a Graduate Student at SIU for the Cooperative Wildlife Research Lab with an interest in studying predator ecology, specifically the interactions between predator and prey. Chris received his B.S. in Wildlife Ecology at the University of New Hampshire in 2010. From his home state of New Hampshire to Nevada Chris has studied bobcats, black bears, coyotes and forest mammals; restored brook trout and assisted with mist-netting songbirds.



2014 Meetings Calendar

March 28th: Tom Ulrich on Costa Rica.

April 25th: Member Slide Night! **May:** Annual SIAS Picnic

Our endless thanks to all who have renewed their dues and a special thanks to all who included a donation! The date on your mailing label means you're paid up thru that year. A renewal form is at the end of the newsletter.

January Program Highlights: Buffing Up

The CP-33 buffer program is a lesser-known initiative of the US Department of Agriculture that is directed toward providing some wildlife benefit in association with active farming. The Conservation Reserve Program, which preserves marginal agricultural land as non-farmed acreage with the benefit of providing habitat for wildlife including hunted bobwhites. It is widely considered a success and CP-33 is a second effort to help quail in farming.

Brady Neiles, a graduate student with the coop wildlife lab at SIUC, is studying whether or not this program is benefitting wildlife sufficiently to justify its costs. The aim of CP-33 is to restore buffers of 50 to 150 wide semi-natural covers between row crop fields. The landowner commitment is for an extended period of maintaining this land use regime in return for payments. Brady is working with some private landowners in Randolph County and also with farming use land on the Burning Star mine reclamation area in Perry County.

Brady and his team have used several techniques to evaluate bird species use in the buffers. Auditory censuses were taken at regular pre-determined locations and time intervals; walking tours through the buffers, and nest searches for both disrupted and successful locations.

Usage data have been generated by all of these methods indicating that the buffers are beneficial for several bird species. Brady did not find any bobwhite nests last season, but the success of several passerines indicates the value of CP-33 buffers. Field sparrows, red-winged blackbirds, and song sparrows were among the successful grassland nesters and indigo buntings used the tree line edges. Hopefully Brady will be able to share further good results from CP-33 as his study continues.

-Joe Merkelbach, President

Over 50 members and friends attended the annual meeting and program. The potluck was excellent as usual. Tables of silent auction items and books for sale lined one full wall of the hall. The book sale tables were very popular and sales were brisk. A majority of the books were sold. The remainder will be made available at future SIAS meetings. Books sales benefit SIAS.

Two More Whooping Cranes Illegally Shot, This time In Louisiana

The Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division agents are looking for leads regarding two Whooping Cranes that were found shot in Jefferson Davis Parish this morning, Feb. 7, 2014.

The whooping cranes were found and recovered just north of Roanoke about five miles north of Interstate 10. Agents found a shot and killed female whooping crane and a shot and injured male whooping crane. LDWF personnel were able to retrieve the injured male crane and transport it to Louisiana State University for examination. It appears at this time to have an injured wing suffered from the shot. Agents believe that the birds were shot with bird shot sometime Feb. 6.

"Anytime we lose one of these cranes it sets us back in our efforts to restore the whooping crane population back to its historic levels in Louisiana," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham. "These were once native birds to Louisiana and the department would like to see these cranes thrive again in the future with a sustainable population." The male is from the first group of whooping cranes released in Louisiana in 2011, and the female was from the second group, released later that year, said Adam Einck, spokesman for the department's enforcement division.

LDWF's Operation Game Thief program is offering up to a \$1,000 reward for any information about this illegal shooting that leads to an arrest. A \$15,000 reward offered after a 3-year-old female, another member of the first group released, shot and killed last April, failed to bring any arrests. Teenagers in Jefferson Davis Parish shot two other birds from that group in October 2011. Since then, the department started education programs in southwest Louisiana about whooping cranes and the attempt to build a permanent flock.

<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/news/37399>



Upcoming Events & Outings

Feb. 22 & 23 – Maple Festival 2014-Touch of Nature

Touch of Nature Environmental Center (TNC) is hosting a Maple Festival from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. This educational family event features maple syrup demonstrations at 11 a.m. & 2 p.m., and tree ID hikes at 10 a.m. & 1 p.m., also blacksmithing, furniture making and other local artisans and vendors. Contact TON at 618.453.1121 by 2 p.m. on 2/21 to pre-register for the home-cooked pancake breakfast running from 9-1 each day

Feb. 22 – Butterflies at the Cache

Learn to identify some common butterflies and their larva (caterpillars). Receive information on flower garden food plants for the larva as well as flowering plants rich in nectar for the adult butterflies. The program will be held at the Cache River Wetland's Center, 8885 State Rt. 37 South, Cypress, starting at 1 p.m. For more info, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

Feb. 25 – INPS Spring Wildflower Hikes in SI Presentation

The Southern Chapter of the Illinois Native Plant Society is hosting a program featuring a new guide to spring wildflower hikes co-written by Chris Benda and Chris Evans. The new guide books feature seven hikes, are free, and will be available at the presentation to be held at the Carbondale Township Hall, 217 E. Main St., Carbondale starting at 6:30 p.m.



March-May – Movie Nights at the Cache Wetlands

Movie Nights will be held the first Thursday of the month from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Cache River Wetlands Center. March 6 - The Private Life of Deer; April 3- Bees: Tales from the Hive; May 1 - The Secret World of Bats. A discussion will follow each movie. For more info, phone Cypress Creek NW Refuge at 618.634.2231.

March 8 – Native Plant & Garden Seminar at Cape Girardeau

The Missouri Dept. of Conservation and the Cape Girardeau County Master Gardeners will host their 9th annual native plant seminar from 8 a.m.- 3 p.m. at the Cape Conservation Campus Nature Center. Vendors will be present. Required registration ends February 28. Call the nature center at 573.290.5218 about session times, guest speakers, and to register.

March 15 – Create Nature Note Cards at the Cache

Learn how to use flowers and other plant parts collected from trees, vines, and other natural items to create personal note cards at the Cache River Wetlands Center. This workshop runs from 10 a.m. to noon. Call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064 for details.

March 21-13 – IL Indigenous Plant Symposium

The UofI Extension Office, SIU Dept. of Plant Biology, & IL Native Plant Society are hosting this symposium at John A. Logan College, Carterville. Activities will include lectures and guided hikes. Registration required, by March 8, by phone at 618.687.1727 or online at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/fjprw>

April 5 – Wildflowers of Southern IL Class at JALC

Take this class learn how to identify wildflowers. View the wildflowers on the John A Logan College campus, take closer looks at wildflower specimens under a microscope, and take a field trip during the second session. No tests or quizzes—just interesting facts and information. Fee: \$25.00. Phone the college for details or to register.

April 12 – LaRue Pine Hills Appreciation Day

The celebration of LaRue Pine Hills takes place once every 3-4 years and this is the year. Details will follow in the March newsletter.

April 26 – The 13th Annual Birding Blitz of Southernmost IL

Birding for a cause! <http://www.birdingblitz.org>

May 30- June 6 – 26th Annual Tropical Adventure with Nelda

Explore Trinidad & Tobago! See Leatherback and Hawksbill sea turtles, beautiful rainforests, hundreds of tropical birds! Contact Nelda Hinckley at neldahinckley@jalc.edu or 618.549.5588 for full details, including costs, and to register!

Seeing Birds



Well, it's no secret that harsh weather is hard on wild birds. The boreal species that come down to southernmost IL to escape the colder northern climes have met with less than hospitable conditions here this winter. This winter has set records for sure. Our resident species seem to be coping. Hopefully those that are more fragile to the cold, like Carolina Wrens, are toughing it out. I'm still hearing Carolina Wrens scolding others, which is a good sign.

Lately I've felt a bit like a cook at the orphanage in the story of Oliver Twist...all the small songbirds coming up to the feeding station with their big, sad eyes looking up at me and asking, "can I have some more please?" And as I'm sure all would agree, it's been quite a job keeping the feeders full. The semi-transient, trouble-making starlings haven't made it any easier for me or the ground feeding sparrows. So much seed has been scattered around the yard, I envision lots of yard work as well as a fine harvest of millet and milo come summer.

With all the difficulties the snow and ice have brought, it's been kind of wonderful to see that stock of wild bird feed in local stores has been running low. I see this as a sign that, with regard to bird feeding, folks have stepped up for the birds in a big way...at a time birds really needed the aid. How awesome is that?!?! Wild birds were extended a huge helping hand, rewarding all with the chance to view their beauty. -RR

On the afternoon of 02/07, John Schwegman was at Mermet Lake where he saw a group of waterfowl at the only open water (about half way out to the pump station) and he snapped a picture of the birds. Later, when he downloaded the image and enlarged it he was surprised to see an adult White Winged Scoter in with the group. John added that the ice made for good bird photographs of Lapland Longspur and White-crowned Sparrows to name a few.

Frank Bennett visited Mermet Lake the morning of 02/08, after getting a call about a White-winged Scoter being there. Frank stated that it was a funny/odd place to see a White-winged Scoter, right by the pumping station in a ditch (part of the impoundment system at Mermet Lake), but this was the only open water. Present also were a hundred plus Mallards, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, more ducks at this spot than were on the lake itself. On his ride back home, Frank spotted two Snow Buntings that were in with a group of Lapland Longspurs and Horned Larks.

eBird – Global Tool for Birders / Critical Data for Science

Do you eBird? During his program for SIAS in January, Brady Neiles made several references to eBird. eBird is a real-time, online checklist program launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

The goal of eBird is to maximize the utility and accessibility of the vast numbers of bird observations made each year by recreational and professional bird watchers. It is amassing one of the largest and fastest growing biodiversity data resources in existence and has revolutionized the way that the birding community reports and accesses information about birds. For example, in March 2012, participants reported more than 3.1 million bird observations!

How Does It Work? - Through ebird, birders can keep track of their bird lists, explore dynamic maps and graphs, share their sightings and join the ebird community, and contribute to science and conservation. A birder simply enters when, where, and how they went birding, at the simple and intuitive website, then fills out a checklist of the birds seen and heard during the outing. eBird offers various options for data gathering including point counts, transects, and area searches. Data quality filters developed by regional bird experts review all submissions before they enter the database. Local experts review unusual records that are flagged by the filters.

The observations of each participant join those of others in an international network of eBird users. Data are stored in a secure facility and archived daily. eBird then shares these observations with a global community of educators, land managers, ornithologists, and conservation biologists. In time these data will become the foundation for a better understanding of bird distribution across the western hemisphere and beyond. <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about/>

50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act

Sept. 3rd, 2014 marks the 50th year anniversary of President Lyndon Johnson signing of the 1964 Wilderness Act. This historic bill established the National Wilderness Preservation System and set aside an initial 9.1 million acres of wildlands for the use and benefit of the American people. Over the past 50 years, and as a result of America's support for wilderness, Congress has added over 100 million acres to this unique land preservation system.

There are 8 designated wildernesses in Illinois, all located in southern Illinois, managed by either the Shawnee National Forest or Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. Wilderness, as defined by the Wilderness Act, are areas where the earth and its communities of life are left unchanged by people, where the primary forces of nature are in control, and where people themselves are visitors who do not remain. Wildernesses are managed under specific guidelines where the goal is to maintain and perpetuate their wilderness values now and for future generations. For more about the Wilderness Act and the National Wilderness Preservation System, visit <http://www.wilderness.net>, the official wilderness information website providing information about each of the 757 wilderness areas.



50th Anniversary poster by Monte Dolack

Proposed Commercial Thinning in the Shawnee

The Shawnee National Forest has proposed restoration actions in the 53 acres of the Ramsey Branch east of Eddyville that includes commercial thinning (timber harvest). The public comment period has passed. For more details contact the Shawnee National Forest Hidden Springs District Ranger office or visit: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/> and follow the directions to the Shawnee National Forest.

- B** -Feeding hummingbirds does not stop them from
- I** migrating. In fact, leaving your feeders out longer may
- R** help provide that last bit of energy they need to make
- D** their migration successful.
- F** -Birds do not choke on peanut butter, but you can add
- A** some grit or corn meal to yours to keep it from
- C** clumping just in case.
- T** -Birds' feet are not likely to stick to cold metal perches.
- S** -Birds do not become dependent on bird feeders.

Encroaching Competitor Adds to Spotted Owl's Struggle - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified competition from Barred Owls as one of two main threats to the Northern Spotted Owl's continued survival (habitat loss is the other). They displace spotted owls, disrupt their nesting, and compete with them for food. Barred owls are native to eastern North America. It is believed they began expanding west of the Mississippi River around the turn of the 20th century. This could have been a natural range expansion or human-caused, or a combination of both. The most common theory is that the barred owl's westward movement was caused by changes to the environment in the Great Plains as people increasingly settled there and dramatically altered the landscape. The U.S.F.W. Service has decided to conduct an experiment to test the effects of removing (killing) Barred Owls from certain areas of Spotted Owl habitat to see if it will benefit Spotted Owls. <https://www.fws.gov/>

Want to help ensure maximum penalties are applied to person(s) illegally shooting Whooping cranes?

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) and members of the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership are deeply concerned about the recent reports of Whooping Cranes being shot in Kentucky and Louisiana, adding to the disturbing series of shootings of these highly endangered birds. In the past five years, at least 16 Whooping Cranes have been shot. These disturbing acts of vandalism have happened in all three Whooping Crane populations - from breeding grounds in Wisconsin, to wintering areas in Texas, and all along the cranes' flyways. For the population re-introduced in the eastern U.S. migratory flyway, about 20% of all crane deaths have been from shootings.

Court sentences to date have clearly been an insufficient deterrent to these shootings. In one case, a juvenile was charged in Indiana state court with a misdemeanor and a \$1 fine. The actual cost of rearing and releasing one crane is estimated to be over \$100,000. In a TX case, prosecutors chose not to bring charges under the tougher Endangered Species Act, because a hunter who killed a Whooping Crane claimed to have mistaken it for a legally hunted Sandhill Crane. When the courts assign penalties that are woefully small compared with the value of Whooping Cranes and the crane recovery efforts, they do not deter tragedies like this from happening in the future and they degrade the strength of the Endangered Species Act. At least one court did recognize the significance of these crimes; in a South Dakota shooting case, the perpetrator was sentenced to an \$85,000 fine (that will help fund Whooping Crane conservation work) and two years' probation. This is a model that should be considered in all Whooping Crane shooting cases to maximize deterrence. Even stronger would be to add the loss of hunting privileges for life - reflecting that illegal shooters have no place in ethical hunting communities.

A united front of concerned citizens, federal and state governments, and nonprofit organizations have brought Whooping Cranes back from the brink of extinction. Now that Whooping Cranes are back on our lands, it is up to us, citizens of the U.S.A. to keep them safe. They are a national treasure! We should not tolerate having them destroyed by vandals in our communities. ICF is working hard with partners on education and outreach efforts; to work with communities where Whooping Cranes live to spread the word that Whooping Cranes are a valued resource and to help young citizens understand that shooting them will not be tolerated. Contact your regional US Attorney (<http://www.justice.gov/usao/districts/>) and Fish & Wildlife Office (<http://www.fws.gov/where/>) and urge them to apply the maximum possible penalties for those found guilty of shooting a Whooping Crane, or other endangered species.

-message from the International Crane Foundation & the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership

To Join SIAS or Renew Your Membership, please fill in this form and return it with payment. Thank You!

Individual Member	\$15	Your Name _____
Additional Family Member	\$10	Street Address _____
Student Voting Member	\$ 5	City, State, Zip _____
Donation	_____	Phone Number _____
Amount Enclosed	\$ _____	Email _____

Mail to:
Southern Illinois Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 222
Carbondale, IL 62903-0222

I/We would like to received our newsletter via email: YES / NO

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

Keep the Pressure On to Keep the Keystone XL Off U.S. Soil

In the past 12 months at least 3 major pipeline or storage failures have occurred, resulting in toxic waste spills. These failures are examples of improperly built, improperly maintained, and improperly monitored aging infrastructures. They reflect bad decisions made by folks who don't seem to care.

Recently data surfaced about multiple corporate conflicts of interest related to the Keystone XL pipeline. TransCanada failed to disclose work it had previously done with Environmental Resources Management, the contractor that TransCanada handpicked to write the Keystone Environmental Impact Statement for the State Department. These improprieties give evidence as to why the Keystone XL project should not go forward. Write President Obama urging him to reject the Keystone XL pipeline or sign the National Wildlife Federation petition at: <http://bit.ly/WyZWSs>

President Obama, Please Stop the Pebble Mine!

This colossal gold and copper operation would generate an estimated ten billion tons of waste and devastate the world's greatest wild salmon runs, which are the linchpin of a spectacular American ecosystem and the generator of 14,000 jobs and \$1.5 billion in annual revenue. More than 80 % of Bristol Bay residents, including Native peoples and commercial fishermen, oppose this monstrous project and have asked the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to stop the mine. A new, scientific report by the EPA has concluded that the Pebble Mine would spell disaster for Alaska's Bristol Bay – its legendary salmon runs, its pristine environment and its Native communities.

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. Write President Obama directly or sign the petition at <http://www.savebiogems.org/stop-pebble-mine/>

New Solar Array Scorching Birds

The world's largest solar power plant, made up of thousands of mirrors focusing the sun's energy, has officially started operations in Nevada's Mojave Desert. "Unlike the photovoltaic solar panels that are common on the roofs of homes and commercial buildings, solar thermal technology concentrates the sun's rays to boil water and generate steam. The project received a \$1.6 billion federal loan guarantee. The Wall Street Journal says it is "the first of its kind, and may be among the last, in part because of growing evidence that the technology it uses is killing birds." This system appears to be scorching birds that fly through the intense heat surrounding the towers, which can reach 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

There's An App For That - Birding Apps

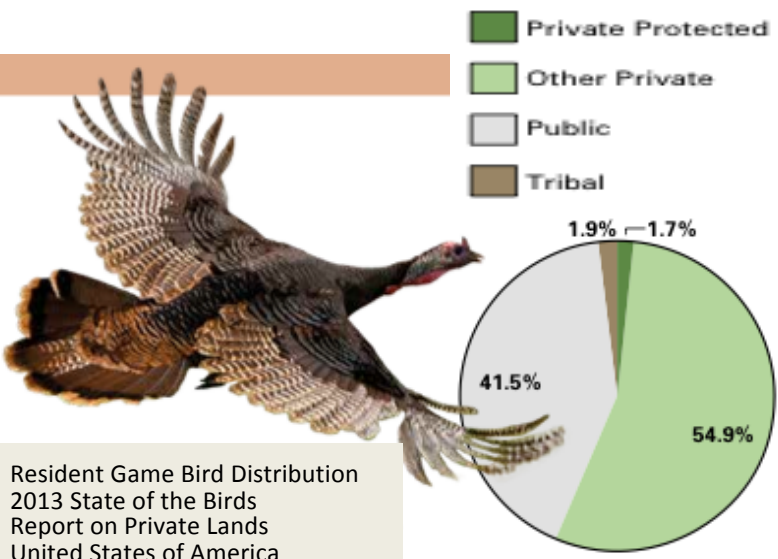
Smartphone apps are changing the way that we identify and track birds. There are many options for birders, here are three:

- BirdLog GBBC* – This app allows you to submit your Great Backyard Bird Count checklists to eBird directly from your phone. When you log your sightings during the GBBC your data goes directly to the count.
- Merlin Bird ID* – Available free for iPhone or iPad, is from the Cornell Lab & helps you to identify birds by answering five questions about the bird you saw and Merlin will give you a list of possible bird IDs.
- Audubon Birds Pro* – This app provides sounds, pictures and maps of over 800 North American bird species. This app works for iPhone or Android.

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



Resident Game Bird Distribution
2013 State of the Birds
Report on Private Lands
United States of America

Newsletter contributions welcome,
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Printed
on
recycled
paper!

New Members! We'd like to welcome new members:

Reed Arrott of Dongola, Brenda Mayberry of Anna, Linda Bobo and Dennis Berner of Carterville and Leila Kassim,



Don't forget to save stamps for the IAS Land Acquisition fund.
Bring them to any SIAS meeting.