



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

September 2014 – Vol. 21, No. 6

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

## NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

**East Africa's Serengeti Ecosystem** is the title of a program John Schwegmann will present for SIAS on Friday, September 26th at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale. Take the elevator or stairway down to the lower level Fellowship Hall.

John's program will cover the Serengeti ecosystem in both the wet season when birds are nesting and wildflowers are blooming and the big migratory herds are present and the park when during the dry season with permanent resident wildlife and wintering birds from Europe.

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 dragonflies, birds, mussels, and plants. He also enjoys sharing his photography and stories. John's wife Martha always accompanies John, sharing all his adventures.

### August Program Highlights - Mudbugs etc.

The August meeting of SIAS featured a program by Dr. Bronwyn Williams about her work relating crayfish speciation to the geologic changes over time in the Pacific northwest of the United States.

Crayfish would seem to be a pretty minor, easily envisioned and understood player in the ecology of freshwater streams, ponds and wetlands. However they are more finely varied and ubiquitous than we believe; and the center of their diversity is the southeastern US. The premier economic crayfish of southeast is the cajun red; widely valued for food. There are more than 400 species worldwide, from very small to the giant Japanese species that rivals clawed marine lobsters. The saltwater lobsters are the closest crayfish relatives and they are very similar in appearance.

Rather than the bright colors and songs that separate birds crayfish have subtle shell color differences and habitat preferences to demarcate species. There are numerous species just to the south and east of us, but glaciation over most of Illinois pared our natives down to a few. *Oroconectes virilis* is common in our part of the state and Bronwyn brought in examples of these and another species from a nearby lake, no one who tried could see the species differences until she pointed out color patterns near the tip of the pincers.

Bronwyn and her publishing co-author have been examining crayfish species (*Pacifasticus* spp.) distributions in Washington, Oregon, and northern California in relation to the ways that land forms and topography have changed over geologic time scales. The Klamath knot of superimposed mountain and volcano forms is some of the most difficult to traverse and understand geology in North America; and speciation of many resident forms of life, including crayfish, reflects this.

The final items displayed, by video, were symbionts of the crayfish; all very small and either opportunistic riders on or obligate cohabitants for feeding and or breeding. The suites of symbionts, none of whom do harm to their crayfish hosts, are perhaps indicative of degrees of relationship between crawdaddies of the of the northwest mountain streams and pools.

Thanks to Dr. Williams for her detailed and interesting science based presentation. –*Joe Merkelbach, President*

### Bluebird Volunteers Needed

For about a quarter century, SIAS has supported, with money and time, an extensive bluebird box trail at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. Over the years many of our members have been volunteers for monitoring the boxes and turning in data every year.

One trail is already in need of a new volunteer monitor. I plan to refurbish it this fall and winter. There also is room to put a new, short trail elsewhere.

This project has seen the fledging of some 20,000 Eastern Bluebirds and thousands of Tree Swallows, House Wrens, chickadees, and even some Prothonotary Warblers. No starlings, no house sparrows!

Volunteers must commit to weekly checking of boxes from April 1 through mid-August, although help is available during out-of-town trips. You also must collect data accurately and turn in the summaries in September so I can prepare the annual report.

If you want to learn more about this fund and worthwhile effort, please call me at 618.457.8769. Thank You! -*Laraine Wright*

### 2014 Meetings Calendar

**October 24th:** Program to be announced

**December 5th:** Nov./Dec. combined meeting; Program to be announced

### IDNR Releases Updated Illinois Fracking Rules

On 08/29, the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources released updated rules to their controversial draft regulations governing fracking in the state.

In their initial read through of the new rules, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) experts note a number of critical changes requested by the environmental community have been made, but a deeper analysis of the highly-technical rules will be necessary to better assess if a bevy of concerns have been adequately addressed. NRDC stated that IDNR seems to have listened to public concern and attempted to improve the draft rules. However, Illinois remains far from prepared to protect against the risks of fracking, because more research is needed concerning its public health impacts and how best to mitigate them. <http://www.nrdc.org/media/2014/140829.asp>

### The Center For Biodiversity's Lawsuit Results in Pesticide Effects Assessment

On July 28, 2014, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California approved a settlement agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Center for Biological Diversity (the Center) that will result in the completion of Endangered Species Act (ESA) section 7 consultations that assess the effects of five pesticides on listed species. The five pesticides are: carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, malathion and methomyl. The Service and EPA expect to complete nationwide ESA consultations for three of the five pesticides by December 31, 2017, and for the remaining two pesticides by December 31, 2018.

There are approximately 1,500 domestic species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA of which more than 1,400 are under the jurisdiction of the USFWS Service. The purpose of the consultation process is to assist federal agencies in meeting their duty to ensure that any action they authorize, fund or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species listed as endangered or threatened or to result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat.

For full details, visit: [http://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/pdf/2014\\_0728\\_amended\\_settlement.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/pdf/2014_0728_amended_settlement.pdf)

## Upcoming Events & Outings

### Sept. 20 – Monarch Migration Saturday

The orange and black Monarch Butterfly migrates up to 2500 miles from various North American sites to central Mexico for the winter. Monarch Watch has been tagging and monitoring migrating monarchs since 1992. Join the folks at the Cache River Wetlands Center to learn about the monarch's life habits and their journey to Mexico and back. And assist in capturing and tagging butterflies for the Monarch Watch program. Meet at the Cache River Wetlands Center at 10 a.m. For more info, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

### Sept. 27 – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Oakwood Bottoms!

Join the U.S. Forest Service, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, and SIAS to celebrate 50 years of Oakwood Bottoms. There will be a brief program at the Interpretive Site starting at 1 p.m. followed by tour opportunities, a birding walk, bird banding, and more.

Take IL Rt. 3, south of its intersection with IL Hwy 149, drive south on Rt. 3 to Oakwood Bottoms Rd., then turn east. Drive 2 miles then turn north to the site.

### Oct. 10 – Wild Weekend in the Cache

In celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week, Cypress Creek NWR will provide guided canoe tours to Eagle Pond and highlight ancient cypress trees and wetland wildlife. Reservations are required for the canoe tour; reserve your spot beginning Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>. For more details, call Cypress Creek NWR at 618.634.2231

### Oct. 11 – Owls at Giant City

Join Bev Shofstall of Free Again Wildlife Rehab as she introduces attendees to some live owls found at Giant City State Park. After Bev's presentation, join the Natural Resources Coordinator to dissect some real owl pellets and for a short hike to call in some owls. Bev's program starts at 7 p.m. at the Giant City Visitor's Center off Giant City Road, Makanda. For more details, phone 618.457.4836.

### Oct. 12 – Wildflower Hike at Piney Creek Nature Preserve

Learn the basics of plant identification. This hike will be lead by Chris Benda; starts at 10 a.m. at the Piney Creek trail head. For more details & to reserve your spot, contact Chris at botanizer@gmail.com

### Caribbean Conservation Trust Cuba Bird Survey

Spend 13 days in Cuba, 12/2->14. Vern Kleen is facilitating this trip. For details including price, contact Vern at 217.787.3515 or vkleen@comcast.net or Gary Markowski, Caribbean Conservation Trust, Inc. at 860.350.6752 or cubirds@aol.com

### 4<sup>th</sup> South American Adventure: Ecuador 2015

Join Professor Nelda Hinckley and Trevor Hinckley for some eco-trekking in Ecuador, January 4-13, 2015. Tour pricing is based on double-occupancy and a minimum of 10 paying participants. For complete details, including tour cost, contact Nelda at 618.549.7335 ext. 8820, 618.5649.5588, or neldahinckley@jalc.edu

### Seeing Birds

On a 08/19 visit to Crab Orchard NWR, Don Mullison located a Black-Crowned Night Heron at Wolf Creek Causeway. The following day Don spotted a Laughing Gull and 2 Caspian Terns at Wolf Creek Causeway.

On 08/22, a Swallow-tailed Kite was reportedly seen near Kidd Lake in Monroe County. Keep a lookout because in late summer of 2008, 2 Swallow-tailed Kites spent time in Jackson County, hanging out with Mississippi Kites.

Cathie Hutcheson reports that it appears fall Nighthawk migration has begun. On 09/01 Cathie saw a flock of about 30 Nighthawks flying south over Rt. 51, south of Carbondale.

Answer five simple questions about a bird you are trying to identify and Merlin Bird ID Wizard will come up with a list of possible matches. Download ID free at: <http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/download/>

A Ruby-throated Hummingbird with white feathers mottled on it's back showed up at my hummer feeders in mid-July. I nicknamed it Spot and assume it was a chick that fledged this summer. -Rhonda R.

### SIAS Board of Directors

President: Joe Merkelbach 618.532.3112  
Vice President & Programs Chair:  
Vicki Lang-Mendenhal 618.697.9868  
Secretary: Mary McCarthy 618.684.8182  
Treasurer: Laraine Wright 618.457.8769  
Conservation/Education Chair:  
Cathie Hutcheson 618.529.2022  
Finance Chair: Greg Kupiec  
618.684.5168  
Hospitality: Karen Kaufman  
618.412.1333  
Outings: Trevor Hinckley 618.967.1157

### 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!



### Southern Illinois Audubon Society

P.O. Box 222

Carbondale, IL 62903-0222

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

Can you spot "Spot"?

