



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

April 2017 – Vol. 24, No. 4

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

## NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

### Note New Meeting Night For April: Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>! Program will be: John Schwegman on Some Interesting Aspects of the Natural Heritage of Illinois

Come hear John Schwegman share a sampling of facts taken from his new book *The Natural Heritage of Illinois* on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 p.m. at the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale.

John's book is based on a series of articles he wrote while employed as the first and only state botanist at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). John started as the first employee of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and was instrumental in the development of the Natural Heritage Division at IDNR, as well as their natural areas program. He is also a founder of the Natural Areas Association and just recently received the Friends of Morris Library's Delta Award. John and his wife Martha now reside west of Metropolis, where their home overlooks the Ohio River.

John's photo of variegated milkweed with beetle bearing pollinium →



### SIAS Annual Picnic Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>!

SIAS will hold our Annual Picnic on Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at the tentative location of Giant City State Park. Arrive for dining at 1 p.m. As usual, SIAS will provide the main course grilled. Members are always asked to bring a dish to share and their own beverages and utensils.

Members will be notified in May of the complete details with the exact location and directions.

### March Meeting Highlights: *The Polynesia, a Natural History*

Polynesia is made up of over 1,000 islands mostly scattered within a triangle, its corners at the Hawaiian Islands, New Zealand, and Easter Island. Dr. George Waring's program offered a wealth of details on this unique area and its natural history. Everything from geography and topography to endemic and endangered species was covered. Included were details of the sad decline of several bird species native only to the Hawaiian Islands. My apologies to Dr. Waring for not taking better notes to share here but I was just too absorbed in his presentation. –Rhonda R.

### IAS Magazine: A First-rate Benefit of Membership

You may remember the quarterly magazine of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources that was discontinued when then-Gov. Blagojevich cut funding to the IDNR.

If you are still longing for news of outdoor research, natural areas to visit, and articles about the conservation of Illinois wildlife, join the Illinois Audubon Society (IAS) and receive its outstanding magazine, "Illinois Audubon."

The recent issue features interesting articles and beautiful photos about piping plovers, the winter habitat of the short-eared owl, alligator snapping turtles, the federally endangered Eastern massasauga rattlesnake, osprey and monarch butterfly recovery programs, and important news about IAS.

A brief item about red-headed woodpecker research was among the many tidbits that also make the magazine so worthwhile. A study of the woodpecker, looking for possible sources of their decline over the last few decades, found that climate and habitat changes, along with hawk predation, were involved in the losses, but competition from Eastern starlings (long thought to be a major issue) was not part of the blame.

SIAS is an official affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society. We encourage your membership in our group, of course, but also in IAS. They have 10 sanctuaries in the state and 16 other protection agreements, including six in our region.

To join, send \$25 dues to IAS, PO Box 2547, Springfield, IL 62708. Thanks for your support. You will be happy about it especially when you start receiving the magazine.

–Laraine Wright

### In Memoriam: Chandler Robbins Renowned Ornithologist & Golden Guide Author

Who knows how many birdwatchers, tens of thousands, identified their first bird using the Golden's field guide: *The Birds of North America*. This treasured guide was created by Chandler Robbins. Mr. Robbins, known to many as Chan, passed away this past March at the age of 98. Mr. Robbins was considered one of the greatest field ornithologists and greatest birder of all time.

Dr. W. Douglas Robison, author of *Southern Illinois Birds: An Annotated List and Site Guide*, wrote of Mr. Robbins, "Many of you probably have heard of Chan Robbins, a person who had a truly great influence on bird conservation, education and ornithology in general. The Illinois spring bird count is what it is because of Chan and Vern Kleen's friendship, not to mention the Breeding Bird Survey, the foundation of innumerable conservation plans."

–Rhonda R.



## Upcoming Events & Activities

### April 22 > Earth Day

Reuse, recycle, renew, and live to make every day Earth Day.  
Demonstrate support for environmental protection.

### Apr. 27 > Meet Greet the New SNR Supervisor

Come meet Brendan Cain, the new Shawnee National Forest (SNF) Supervisor. Learn about what's happening with the SNF and ask questions in an informal setting...at the Touch of Nature Amphitheater, 1206 Touch of Nature Rd., Makanda. This fireside chat is from 6:30-7:00 p.m. with time for questions afterwards. In case of bad weather, meet inside Sledgefoot Lounge at Touch of Nature. Hosted by Friends of the Shawnee National Forest.

### April 29 > 16<sup>th</sup> Birding Blitz of Southernmost IL

It's not too late to form a team and compete in the 2017 Birding Blitz! Spend Saturday, 04/29, out in the midst of bird migration birding with some of your friends. You'll find it's really a lot of fun and a fun challenge. The Awards Brunch held on Sunday, 04/30 at Crab Orchard NWR Visitor's Center, is open to the public. This year pledging is optional but encouraged. For all Blitz details including registration forms (due 04/22) contact Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 or email me at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com.

### May 6 > Spring Bird Count - Your Help needed!

The Spring Bird Count takes place on Saturday, May 6-7 in every county in Illinois. Local Saturday counts and contacts are: Williamson Co. - Vicki Lang-Mendenhall 618.697.9868; Jackson Co. - Rhonda Rothrock 618.684.6605; Alexander Co. - Allen Gathman at agathman@gmail.com; Union Co. - Vern Kleen 217.787.3515 / vkleen@comcast.net; Gallatin Co. - Ron Bradley at povpt93@consolidated.net. Pulaski Co. will be held on Sunday, the 7<sup>th</sup>. Contact Rhonda Rothrock. For info on other IL county counts, contact Tara Beveroth, Avian Researcher and Monitoring Coordinator, Critical Trends Assessment Program, Illinois Natural History Survey via email [beveroth@illinois.edu](mailto:beveroth@illinois.edu) or phone 217-265-7303

### May 9 > Afterglow Heron Pond Bird Hike

Meet at Heron Pond Trail, Cache River State Natural Area at 6 p.m., hike 'til 8:30p.m. Look for migratory birds along the boardwalk, visit the state champion cherry bark oak and listen to the music of the night. Binoculars, head lamps/flashlights, and hiking boots recommended. For more info phone Cypress Creek at 618.634.2231.

### May 11 > Movie Night at the Cache

Free monthly nature movies for viewers of all ages, from 6-8 p.m. This month's showing is *Super Hummingbirds*. A brief discussion follows. Light refreshments served after the movie. For more info phone Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at 618.634.2231.

### May 21 > SIAS Annual Picnic

Our annual picnic location is tentatively set as Giant City State Park. Arrive for dining at 1 p.m. Full details to follow.

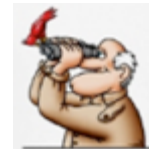
### May 19-21 > IAS Spring Gathering

The Kane County Audubon Society invites everyone to gather in the Fox River Valley for the 2017 Illinois Audubon Society (IAS) Spring Gathering. There will be bird hikes, great programs, and delicious cuisine. Members and non-members are welcome to attend. For details or to register, visit: [www.gifttool.com/registrar/ShowEventDetails?ID=2046&EID=23377](http://www.gifttool.com/registrar/ShowEventDetails?ID=2046&EID=23377)

## May 24-31 > 9th Trinidad & Tobago Adventure

Join Nelda Hinckley and other naturalist guides for an 8-day tour of this two-island nation. Experience a tropical evergreen rain forest, a mangrove, tide pools, a tropical deciduous forest, and stay at the 200-acre, world-renowned Asa Wright Nature Centre and Lodge. Land cost includes all meals, lodging, and field trips with naturalist guide(s). Contact: Nelda W. Hinckley at 618.549.5588 or [neldahinckley@jalc.edu](mailto:neldahinckley@jalc.edu)

**Seeing Birds...** I like spring because it is the best by far! Every spring morning I wake up in anticipation of a newly arrived spring migrant bird. For many of us nothing is more amazing than the migration of hummingbirds. How those pennyweights manage such a trip is like one of the great wonders of the world.



The first Illinois ruby-throated hummingbird report I saw came from Frank Bennett. He spotted it on a feeder in his yard in New Columbia, Massac Co. on April 5<sup>th</sup>.

It was about that time that I put two feeders out. On Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at around 6:44 a.m., I wearily stumbled outside in my jammies to check the weather. I'd barely made it out the door past my car when a hummer buzzed right past by head. My hair is not as red as it used to be (to have attracted him) so I suspect he was just saying, "Wake up sleepy-head, I'm back! Where's the sugar?"

Henry Detwiler was the first to report a Louisiana waterthrush. He spotted it at Giant City State Park on 03/20. Henry also located a black-necked stilt at the Fish Farm Ponds along Rt. 3.

On 03/26 Kathryn Jenkel reported that 15 American white pelicans were at the Carbondale Reservoir off S. McLafferty Rd.

The orange-crowned warbler that had been visiting Anne Parmley's bird feeder (in Metropolis) since December, was still there as of 04/04.

In early April, Don Mullison made several trips to Oakwood Bottoms in search of migrants. On 04/07 he located an American bittern. Then on 04/10 Don spotted a yellow-crowned night heron.

It was Keith McMullen that got the spring migrant award when he photographed a swallow-tailed kite east of Metropolis on 04/08. That same day he'd tallied black-throated green and blue-winged warblers at Illinois' migrant welcome mat: Ft. Massac State Park.

Jim Tudor was also making visits to Oakwood Bottoms and on 04/10 Jim encountered a black-crowned night heron at Oakwood. While birding on 04/11 at the, ever so charming, Carbondale Sewer Treatment Plant, south off Old IL 13 (E. Walnut St.), Jim spotted 2 American avocets. He stated they were feeding and appeared comfortable so, maybe, would be around a while.

Also on 04/11, Vicki Lang-Mendenhall reported her first of the year eastern kingbird and warbling vireo...the latter singing, "If I could see one I would seize one and I'd squeeze it 'til it squirts!"

Chelsea DeVivo spotted her first of the year purple martins, 10 of them, in Harrisburg on 04/12. But the first report of martins came from a friend of Linda Bobo's, who stated hers had arrived during the first week of March.

In desperate hope that the once plentiful whip-poor-wills would again return to our property, I had been going out every evening to whistle their name. On the morning of 04/12, I went out at dawn (5:30ish a.m.) to give a listen. First I heard a wild turkey gobbling in the southeast woods. Then I was thrilled to hear a whip-poor-will calling its name from the same area. - Rhonda R.



### **Big Thicket—Different Than I Imagined—***Joe Merkelbach*

My daughter and her husband are contemplating a move to the area north of Beaumont, Texas because of his job as an engineer for the BNSF railroad. I helped drive down there in mid-March so my grandsons could visit their dad during spring break.

We wife and I stayed near the headquarters of Big Thicket National Reserve (BT) during the trip and visited twice. The reserve is a unit of the National Park Service, but instead of it being within a contiguous border it is made up of seven different units with several varied eco-habitats.

The dominant vegetation of the BT is pines. The original trees were mostly long-leaf pines, able to grow in sandy, poor nutrient locations, with mixed in short-leaf and loblolly pines and several species of deciduous trees. There are several kinds of hollies and



magnolias, trees and shrubs that hold their leaves to retain scarce nutrients.

Lack of soil nitrogen is a reason for four of the five genera of US carnivorous plants to grow in specific microhabitats in the BT. The pale pitcher is an impressive tubular plant that grows in clay pan sites which retain water for periods above the pan, but do not have enough soil moisture below to support dense tree stands.

We happened to be there when the pitchers, with large yellow, nodding, flowers were in maximum bloom. It was an impressive display.

Conner, my grandson, and I visited the headquarters museum, and the ranger told us where a brown-headed nuthatch was on territory nearby. We called him up with our phones and he sounded exactly like a squeaky stuffed toy. He was very persistent in warning us away.

Conner was impressed with the ivory bill carving on the hand made and painted arch over the reception desk and wanted to look for that bird.

The BT is actually a suite of habitats, not all tight tangled vegetation as the name implies. Instead it encompasses such poor soils that it remained uncut and relatively trackless for an extended period after Texas was settled.



Carnivorous Sundew

### **IAS Discontinues Stamp Program**

For many years, we have collected cancelled stamps as part of the Illinois Audubon Society's fund-raising effort to add to its land purchase revolving account. Used stamps and the donation of stamp collections reportedly added some \$50,000 or so to that account. But the IAS board recently voted to discontinue the stamp program because of difficulties in managing it to follow IRS rules for non-profits.

We thank everyone who saved stamps from their mail, including returning stamps from our newsletters. And we thank Vern Kleen, who was our speaker in February and who was the initiator and coordinator of the program for decades.

*-Laraine Wright*

### **No Trapping Bobcats Bill Still Alive**

IL Senate Bill SB2143 is expected to make it out of the IL Senate. The bill, sponsored by Senator Don Harmon, prohibits the sale of bobcat pelts of bobcats taken (killed) in Illinois. As I understand it, this bill further amends the Wildlife Code and provides that it shall be unlawful for any person to trap bobcats in IL at any time. From what I hear, there will be a battle to get it through the house but the Bird Conservancy Network, the IL Environmental Council and many other groups are on board for this bill. SIAS supports it as well.

*-Rhonda R.*

**Prairie Dogs Had Their Day...And Will Continue To Do So** Prairie dogs in Utah recently won a turf battle against property developers when a U.S. appeals court reinstated restrictions on development in areas inhabited by the threatened animals. Environmentalists praised the three-judge appeals court panel's decision overturning an earlier ruling and protecting the foot-long rodents, which property rights activists say threaten farm animals and development with their massive underground colonies.

The plaintiffs in the case, People for the Ethical Treatment of Property Owners, had argued that the federal government did not have authority over a species that existed only in one state. They said that while they acknowledge the importance of the species, known to build vast underground networks of tunnels that have been found under cemeteries and golf courses, they asked for a review of the panel's decision by the full court.

Wednesday's ruling affirmed the existing standard of allowing the federal government to limit local development using the Endangered Species Act, the 1973 law intended to protect species at risk of extinction. In the majority opinion, Judge Jerome Holmes wrote that overturning the earlier ruling was in line with actions by previous circuit courts, which have ruled uniformly to protect the Endangered Species Act in similar cases. <http://www.msn.com/enus/news/us/threatenedutahprairiedogshavetheirdayincourtandwin/ar-BBz1QOI?i=BBnb7Kz&ocid=mailsignout>



## It's The Bees Knees!

Finally, some good news for bees. Under pressure from a National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) lawsuit, the Trump administration relented and listed the rusty-patched bumblebee as an endangered species — the first bumblebee ever to be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

The NRDC stated, "This is a huge step forward in our campaign to save the bees. And it's an exciting win for NRDC supporters who stood with us every step of the way, sending tens of thousands of



messages to President Obama's Fish and Wildlife Service late last year calling for immediate action to save the rusty patched bumble bee from extinction. Thank you." [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)

The mission of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is to safeguard the Earth: its people, its plants and animals, and the natural systems on which all life depends.

## Human-generated Noise Reduces Bird Species Richness & Diversity in Urban Parks

Anthropogenic (human-generated) noise is becoming more prevalent in the world and has been shown to affect many animal species, including birds. The impact of such noise was measured in Neotropical urban parks to assess how it affects avifauna diversity and species richness. Bird species were sampled, and concurrently sound pressure (noise) levels were measured in eight urban green areas or parks located in a large city (Belo Horizonte) in southeastern Brazil over a one-year period. The diversity of sampled points was measured by means of total species richness, Fisher's alpha and Shannon-Wiener diversity indices. Noise levels within all parks were greater than those in natural areas. Researchers found that an increase in noise levels and the area of open habitats surrounding sampling points were negatively related to species richness. Social factors reflecting increased urbanization, such as higher incomes, were also negatively correlated with bird species richness. However, noise was the factor that explained most of the variance. These results suggest that anthropogenic noise can have a significant negative impact on the conservation value of urban parks for bird species.

*Excerpts from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ibi.12481/abstract?campaign=wolacceptedarticle>*

## Human-generated Noise Reduces Approach of Black-capped Chickadee & Tufted Titmouse to Tufted Titmouse Mobbing Calls

Successful communication between a sender and a receiver is critical for coordinating behaviors between organisms. This coordination can be disturbed by anthropogenic (human-generated) noise, which has been shown to alter vocal signal production in many species of birds. In addition to affecting senders, noise may also alter reception and behavioral response. Scientists investigated the effects of anthropogenic noise on behavioral response to acoustic signals in mixed-species flocks of songbirds. The study used playbacks of Tufted Titmouse chick-a-dee calls and local anthropogenic noise to determine how receivers respond to calls with and without added noise.

Scientists found that the addition of noise caused a significant decrease of ~80% in the number of birds that approached the speaker during a chick-a-dee call playback; however, they saw no effect of noise on feeding behavior. Their data supports the hypothesis that anthropogenic noise can alter behavioral responses to chick-a-dee calls. This finding is of particular concern because chick-a-dee calls are given in response to a threatening stimulus. If receivers are slow to respond to these warnings, they may be unable to take advantage of the warning. *Excerpts from The Condor 119:26-33.*

## Bee On The Lookout For Bee Swarms

With the shift of the season, we will be entering the reproductive time for bees. Honeybees do this through a process that called swarming. Swarm season is a thrilling time for beekeepers. Collecting locally adapted, feral honeybees has proved to help in building a sustainable

apiary. Swarm season generally starts in April, and can last through June. If you happen upon a honeybee swarm this season, Mark Fletter of Dayempur Farm asks that you phone him, so that he can come collect it. A honeybee swarm is a tight cluster of honeybees,

usually gathered on the branch of a tree or fence but have also been observed on walls or even the ground. They gather for a short time while scouting for their new home as part of the colony's natural reproductive cycle. They may not be there for long, so don't delay!

Mark is also interested in knowing about any wild honeybee colonies out there, either living in a tree or in a man made structure. Keeping an eye on these feral bees from year to year helps Dayempur Farm to be better beekeepers. Contact Mark Fletter at 618.559.2768.



**My Opinion: Mr. Bost, Check Your Facts and Do Your Job!** - Southern Illinois' US Congressman Mike Bost recently sent out an opinion poll on construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. The results, he says, were strongly opinionated on both sides. However, he states that the majority polled support the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline (*barely a majority: 2409 out of 4747 in favor, 2012 opposed, 326 unsure*) and he agrees with that opinion. Bost believes this is a win for American jobs, American national security, and the American consumer. Bost adds that this project is estimated to create tens of thousands of U.S. jobs in the construction, manufacturing, transportation and services industries, all of which are important to the economy of Southern Illinois (*and all these proposed benefits have been exposed as false*.) The pipeline will also decrease our (*non-existent*\*) dependency on Middle Eastern oil and help lower prices at the pump.

\*(*The Energy Information Administration states that the USA gets only 12.9% of its oil from the Middle East. See charts from 2014 & 2015.*)

In regard to energy independence, Bost states that the past (Obama) Administration burdened Americans with costly regulations that threatened to harm Southern Illinois jobs and energy production. These burdensome regulations would have imposed standards on coal plants aimed at destroying America's (*already destroyed in the 1980s*) coal industry. Bost support's President Trump's Executive Order that directs the EPA to roll back Obama-era regulations that he believes would stifle the American energy industry (*ignoring the fact that the energy sector is growing - as reported by the Scientific American, February 2017 - and the solar energy industry is booming*).

And, for those like me who missed this tidbit, CNN reported on Bost's racially insensitive term and reference to explain why he would not hold in-person town hall events. CNN referenced Bost's comments as were reported by The Southern Illinoisan, whose editorial board met with him. They discussed Bost's lack of in-person town hall events, that he said such events would be an unproductive use of his time, and he used the derogatory term "Orientals" in the process. "The amount of time that I have at home is minimal, I need to make sure that it's productive," Bost told the SI. "You know the cleansing that the Orientals used to do where you'd put one person out in front and 900 people yell at them? That's not what we need. We need to have meetings with people that are productive." (*Really?*)

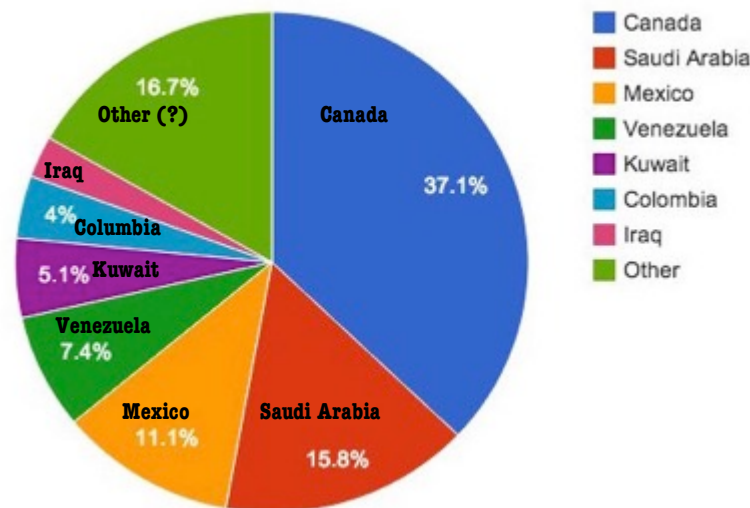
Bost told CNN in a statement that he regretted his choice of words for creating a distraction and said there was "no malicious intent." (*Really?*) He also called on people not to disrupt town hall events. (<http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/02/politics/mike-bost-struggle-sessions/>)

Following reports of Bost's comments, William Lo, who identified himself as a Chinese-American constituent from Carbondale, reached out to CNN to express his concerns. Lo, who said he manages a Chinese restaurant owned by his parents, said the comments took him back and that Bost's response to criticism was "kind of an empty statement." He said the remarks recalled racially motivated bullying he had faced growing up and that Bost's comments were making him rethink his support of the congressman, who he said he had voted for and looked up to. Lo, who said he was a Republican, also said the "bigger question" was Bost's lack of town hall events, adding, "That's his job." (*Kudos Mr. Lo!*)

CNN also referenced Bost's epic IL State House fit. Remember, when Bost gained national attention after raging during a session on pension reforms where he screamed throughout an impassioned speech, at one point exclaiming, "Enough, I feel like somebody trying to be released from Egypt. Let my people go."

*Mr. Bost, Moses you are not. - Rhonda Rothrock*

U.S. Crude Imports By Country, Jan 2014



The five largest sources of U.S. petroleum imports by share of total imports in 2015 —>

- Canada—40%
- Saudi Arabia—11%
- Venezuela—9%
- Mexico—8%
- Colombia—4%

**President's Budget Threatens Bird Conservation and Public Lands** President Trump's proposed 2018 budget would gut major programs and protections for birds and for America's public lands, and put decades of conservation work at risk. American Bird Conservancy urges all Americans who care about our nation's wildlife and natural resources to tell Congress that such extreme cuts will not fly.

Three agencies essential to protecting birds and habitats would be among the hardest hit: The Dept. of Agriculture's budget would be cut by \$4.7 billion, a 21% decrease from last year. At risk are key programs such as the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, the Conservation Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the NRCS's Working Lands for Wildlife. These programs provide support to farmers to conserve & restore habitats, potentially preventing the need to list species of conservation concern under the Endangered Species Act.

The Dept. of the Interior would lose \$1.5 billion, a 12% decrease. That would put at risk essential migratory bird conservation laws and programs including the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, State Wildlife Grants, the North American Wetland Conservation Act, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The proposed budget's emphasis on energy development on public lands would also put at risk progress on conserving sagebrush habitat, late-successional forests, and desert streams that are essential for the conservation of declining species.

The Environmental Protection Agency would be cut by \$2.6 billion, a 31% decrease. Such a severe cut would require extreme staff reductions and threaten to undermine the agency's ability to function effectively. <https://abcbirds.org/>



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

Individual Member \$15  
 Family \$25  
 Student Voting Member \$ 5  
 Donation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**Attn: Membership**

**P.O. Box 222**

**Carbondale, IL 62903-0222**



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

Member mailing labels reflect current dues status.

If you receive your newsletter electronically,

Contact Laraine W. or Rhonda R. to check your dues status.

## SIAS Welcomes New Member: Lynn White of Carbondale

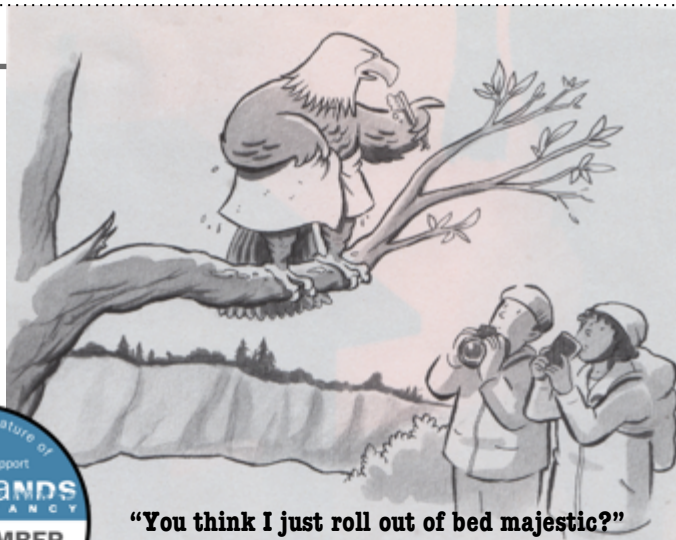
I apologize if we messed welcoming any new members in the past few months. We are excited to have you join! And we are equally as excited and grateful for all who have renewed dues.

Reminder, if your label states "16", it is time to renew. If you receive your newsletter via email, contact Laraine W. or me, so we can check your paid-to date in our records. Likewise, if you think you've already renewed, contact one of us and we'll correct our error. If you'd like to switch from getting a paper copy to getting an email, email me at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com Thanks again! -Rhonda R.

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**"You think I just roll out of bed majestic?"**

**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*

