



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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

## NEWSLETTER

*Established in 1970*

### Patagonia and Antarctica

Join SIAS as John Schwegaman takes us along on a trip through Patagonia and Antarctica on Friday, September 22nd at 7 p.m. at the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale.

John states that his program begins in Patagonia, that slightly inhabited southern part of South America with its temperate rain forest and secretive birds including waterfowl such as the Steamer Duck ("Steaming"), and birds of the pampas including Rhea and Upland Geese. Highlights of Antarctica will include watching a whale catch a mouth full of krill and then seeing it strain the krill from the water with its baleen and viewing huge nesting colonies of 100,000 + pairs of penguins. One colony is of Chinstrap Penguins and the other is of Adelie Penguins. You will also see the peculiar Snowy Sheathbill, Skuas, and the beautiful Cape Petrel. There will also be a visit to the Falkland Islands to see Magellanic Penguins near the dens they dig in banks and a mixed nesting colony of King Penguins and Gentoo Penguins. Other birds on these treeless islands include Kelp Geese, Falkland Island Thrush, and Turkey Vulture. A final stop at a pampas near Buenos Aires adds interesting birds from these fertile prairies.

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 continues to serve on the board. Since John's retirement, John and Martha have continued to study wildlife, including mussels, dragonflies, birds and plants.

**Very Cool Continent** Dr. George Waring, emeritus professor of zoology at SIU Carbondale, presented a program about Antarctica and his visit to the frozen continent at the bottom of the world at our August meeting.

Antarctica is nearly the smallest continent, with only Australia and Europe smaller in size. It does however have the most of earth freshwater almost all in the form of ice. The ice that covers the continent is all freshwater in frozen highly compressed form. It has built up over eons of time from the snow that falls on the continent. This pressurized ice broken off as bergs is what shows the blue translucent color in photos.

Dr. Waring's ship traveled from the port at the tip of South America to the Antarctic Peninsula, the location where tourists visit the continent. Sea ice shelves, which surround the continent, occur on the peninsula. There are also mountain peaks on the peninsula so it is representative of the entire continent which has mountain ranges hidden beneath a deep cover of ice.

We also saw images of the animals of the continent, and more specifically the surrounding sea. Penguins included the emperor, compared to the king which breeds on the South Georgia Islands instead of the continental land mass. Adelies, Gentoos, and chinstraps are the other species that breed on Antarctica itself. Several species of storm petrels, petrels, and shearwaters also spend much of their lives in the region.

All the mammals are sea creatures including baleen whales, and dolphins as well as several seals. Species of seals include elephant, fur, crab-eater, Ross, Weddell, and leopard. The leopard seal is the most predatory of any seal worldwide, taking penguins rather than fish or mollusks.

There are fish species able to tolerate the frigid waters of the southern ocean, thus some food for seals and penguins but the primary source is invertebrates. Specifically krill, small shrimp like crustaceans that occur in almost untold numbers. They are the base of all the Antarctic food web. The review of Antarctic geography and biology was thorough and interesting.

*–Joe Merkelbach, President*



## SIAS Meetings Calendar for Fall & Winter 2017

**Oct. 27th:** Program speaker: Mark Glenshaw on the Forest Park Great Horned Owls

**Nov./Dec. on Dec. 1st:** Program: Local school groups will present on the native gardens developed through donations from SIAS

**Jan. 26th:** Lyle White on the Nebraska Platte River & Rowe Sanctuary

**Wanted: Hospitality Chair** SIAS is seeking a Hospitality Chair. Responsibilities are to set out the refreshments at our regular meetings & make coffee. Refreshments usually include cookies or a similar snack that various members bring. SIAS will reimburse the Hospitality Chair for any such treat they purchase for meetings. Interested? Please let Rhonda R. know.

## Upcoming Events & Activities

### Sept. 30 > MO Dept. of Conservation Day on the River

Re-discover the Mississippi River at Riverfront Park, Water St., Cape Girardeau, MO. Hands-on activities will teach the importance of the Mighty Miss and surrounding wetlands. This event is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and offers fun for the entire family featuring live river animals, Asian carp samples, and free boat rides on the Mississippi. Boat rides will take place every half hour.

### Sept. 30 > Middle Miss Rr. Field Station Open House

Come learn about wetland wildlife at SIUC's field station near East Cape! Participation and dinner are free! Interactive demonstrations and wetlands nature walk (wear shoes/clothes that can get wet/muddy). Starts at 4:30 p.m. Fish fry dinner at 6 p.m., followed by more activities after dark! Please RSVP with # of adults/children to Trish at tsherk@siu.edu by Sept. 20th. Indicate if you will be attending for the demonstrations, the dinner, or both. Parking is limited – please consider carpooling.

Directions to the Wetland Field Station: From IL Route 3: Turn west on IL-146 toward the Cape bridge. Approx. 1 mile turn left onto Gerard Rd. Follow Gerard Rd. to the second left, which is just after the pecan grove.

### Oct. 1 > So. IL Against Fracturing Our Environment

Southern Illinois Against Fracturing Our Environment (SAFE) is holding their monthly meeting on Sunday, 1:30-3 p.m. at the Douglass School Art Place, 900 Douglas St., Murphysboro.

### Oct. 1 > Cache River Swamp Walk

This easy trail along Buttonland Swamp, Cypress Creek, and the Cache River is great for viewing plants of animals of the wetlands. Meet at the Lower Cache Access at 2 p.m. For more details, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

### Oct. 7 > Snake Walk along LaRue Pine Hills Road

Join Friends of the Shawnee NF and IDNR Herpetologist Scott Ballard along "Snake Road". Meet at Winters Pond parking lot at 12 p.m. at the intersection of Larue Rd. and Muddy Levee Rd.

### Oct. 7 > Native Tree and Shrub Sale

Keep Carbondale Beautiful and Green Earth, Inc. are sponsoring this sale from 8 a.m.- 2 p.m. at Murdale True Value, 1915 W. Main St., Carbondale. Pre-orders are recommended, pre-order then pay when you pick up your plants. Visit <http://www.keepcb.org/tree-sale.html> for a list of trees and shrubs. Phone or email your pre-order to 618.525.5525 or [keepCB1326@gmail.com](mailto:keepCB1326@gmail.com)

### Oct. 14 > Heron Pond/Little Black Slough Hike

Enjoy a colorful fall hike along Heron Pond and Little Black Slough Trails. Meet at the Heron Pond parking lot at 9 a.m. For more details, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

## What to plant to feed the birds in winter

These ideas come from Sharon Sorenson of Mount Vernon, Ind., who was the speaker at the annual Illinois bluebird conference in Paris, Ill., this past April.

Bluebirds and other insect eaters who attempt to over-winter in our region rely on berries for food from December through March (the latter month is the most stressful for all birds). Her three-acre garden area has these plants and many more varieties that have proven helpful through her observations. All produce their berries in the winter and are of the smaller size that birds can easily eat.

Blackhaw (*viburnum prunifolium*), a drought-tolerant shrub with showy flowers is a bit hard to find, but check on the Web for regional native-plant nurseries. Red chokeberry (*aronia arbutifolia*), is a shrub that provides berries until spring. It has fragrant flowers but prefers moist soil. Winterberry (*ilex verticillata*) is the gorgeous shrub with copious red berries; but needs moist soil and both male and female plants. Common hackberry (*celtis occidentalis*) is a sun-loving tree and easy to grow.

American holly (*ilex opaca*) is one of the best to plant in your yard. The berries are hard in the fall, but after several freeze-thaw cycles in winter they begin to rot and become perfect for birds to eat. (Bluebirds, for instance, swallow berries whole because their beaks aren't adapted to tearing bigger fruit apart.) The holly needs male and female trees together to produce fruit. Other good hollies include Foster holly (a non-native but not invasive).

Eastern red cedar is the common, slow-growing tree of abandoned fields. If you have these on your property and care about birds, please let them grow. In addition to a food source for many birds year-round, it is winter shelter for them and especially for owls. Poison ivy, yes she said if you have plenty of property let this remain in secluded areas. It is excellent for birds. It produces copious amounts of fruit in winter. She said in her yard the fruit lasts only a few days and attracts a big variety of birds.

Flowering dogwood and gray dogwood; the former is the familiar tree, the latter is a shrub. When purchasing dogwoods, read the label carefully, as some have been cultivated to avoid producing fruit. -Laraine Wright

## SIAS Helps Fund CWRL Wetland Study

Every year the Illinois Ornithological Society (IOS) offers funding for approved grant requests through their IOS Grants Program. In past years SIAS has helped fund grants for SIU Cooperative Wildlife Research Lab (CWRL) projects taking place in southern IL, associated with birds or bird habitat. This year SIAS donated towards SIU CWRL student John O'Connell's project designed to estimate wetland availability for inundation-dependent birds in Illinois.

*The Illinois Ornithological Society (IOS) Grants Program is a partnership with individuals and groups who are part of the Illinois birding and bird conservation community. IOS functions as the Program coordinator, evaluating each proposal and determining each's suitability for funding. The final funding support comes from a broad spectrum of both individual donors and various organizations. A total of 94 grants, totaling \$32,069, have been awarded since the IOS Grant Program's inception in 2004.*

## Where Do Birds Go In A Hurricane?

When severe weather hits, humans flee or hunker down and hope for the best. But what about birds? Where do they go? And what happens to migratory birds? Basically, birds have a variety of strategies for dealing with large storms, such as hurricanes, including: leaving the area; flying ahead of or into the storm; or sheltering in place.

Birds may leave in advance of an approaching storm. Research has shown that birds can hear infrasound and are sensitive to barometric pressure, so they know when a storm is on its way – especially when the storm is as large and as powerful as a hurricane. When a large storm approaches, birds in its path may adjust their behaviors within the parameters of their own life histories and according to season. For example, white-throated sparrows are migratory songbirds, so if a large storm is approaching during their annual spring or autumnal migration period, they may migrate sooner than they might otherwise do. Interestingly, research has found that sparrows speed up their autumnal migratory departure date in response to falling barometric pressures (but not temperature), whereas they delay their spring migratory departure in response to falling temperature (but not barometric pressure).

Birds may fly ahead of, into, or through, a storm. Some migratory birds may intentionally fly into a large storm. For example, a whimbrel named Chinquapin, flew into Hurricane Irene's dangerous northeast quadrant in 2011. This medium-sized shorebird was part of an ongoing research project and was carrying a satellite tracker, allowing scientists to watch this intrepid bird's progress in real time as she migrated from Hudson Bay, Canada, to her wintering grounds in South America. Chinquapin was lucky. Although this same bird successfully flew around the edge of Tropical Storm Colin in the previous year, a second satellite tagged bird flew into that storm and was killed.

But storms are not the worst of what whimbrels and other migratory birds encounter. Several other satellite tagged whimbrels, named Machi and Goshen, survived their flights through hurricanes in 2011. (Like Chinquapin, Goshen also tangled with Hurricane Irene, although she flew through the outer edge instead.) But both Machi and Goshen paused on the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe and tragically, both were shot dead within hours of their arrival. (This is a common fate for hurricane survivors landing on Guadeloupe.)

Migrating ahead of, or during, a hurricane is a strategy that is fraught with dangers and can have unexpected consequences, especially for small birds. For example, in 2005, a large flock of migrating chimney swifts was swept up by Hurricane Wilma and the lucky survivors relocated to Western Europe – to the delight of bird watchers there. Other small migratory bird species may become trapped inside a hurricane, as probably was the situation for those migrating chimney swifts. For example, radar images of Hurricane Matthew as it raged across Florida in 2016 showed it had a huge flock of birds trapped in its eye.

Birds may shelter in place and hang on for dear life. Many non-migratory birds seek shelter inside thick bushes or on the

leeward side of trees. Trees and shrubs can dramatically reduce wind speeds and can keep birds dry even during a torrential downpour. And since birds adapted to sleeping whilst perched, their feet automatically close when they are relaxed, thereby making it easier for birds to hang on to something solid for dear life. Birds may also find cover wherever it exists. For example, an injured Cooper's hawk now known as Harvey, took refuge in Willam Brusco's taxi in Houston during Hurricane Harvey just a few weeks ago. Other birds, such as woodpeckers and parrots, may seek shelter in their nest-holes or in other cavities. This works well unless the tree they are sheltering in is uprooted or snapped off at the cavity, or if these birds become trapped by floodwaters—just as people become trapped in their attics and drown.

Birds may die. Remember that flock of chimney swifts mentioned above? Most of them met a horrible end: at least 727 of these tiny birds' bodies were found later – but how many thousands more died and were never found? Indeed, Hurricane Wilma's effects on chimney swift numbers were so severe and widespread that, in the province of Québec, Canada, where these birds lived, chimney swifts became quite rare as the direct result of this one tragic event. In the following year, roost counts declined by an average of 62% and the total chimney swift population is estimated to have decreased by half.

Hurricanes can have serious impacts on sedentary bird species, particularly those that live on islands or that have small populations. For example, already driven to the point of extinction by widespread habitat destruction and poaching for the pet trade, the few remaining Iguaca, or Puerto Rican parrots were then faced with Hurricane Hugo in 1989. This storm pummeled the island of Puerto Rico, destroying much of the habitat in the Luquillo mountains, which is the last refuge for these critically endangered parrots. By the end of that year, it was determined that only 22 Puerto Rican parrots had survived.

Of course, if birds survive a hurricane, and somehow manage to find their way back home, they are then faced with profound habitat destruction that can persist for decades. In 1989, Hurricane Hugo decimated much of the remaining old-growth forest that is vital habitat for endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers. According to the National Wildlife Federation, Hurricane Hugo damaged 4.5 million acres of state forest throughout South Carolina, and reduced 477 colonies of red-cockaded woodpeckers to just 100 in the Francis Marion National Forest. This same hurricane also devastated coastal and dune habitats that a variety of shorebirds and seabirds (at least some of which are endangered or critically endangered) depend upon for food or for nesting sites.

Throughout the millennia, birds have developed a variety of strategies for coping with large, severe storms like hurricanes. But thanks to people and to our bad behaviors, like habitat destruction, hunting, and poaching, birds have fewer and fewer places to flee for safety, and this makes the effects of hurricanes more extreme than they otherwise would be.

*Excerpts from: [www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2017/09/08/where-do-birds-go-in-a-hurricane/#6efe76e254a4](http://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2017/09/08/where-do-birds-go-in-a-hurricane/#6efe76e254a4)*

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## So, Why Do Bird Eggs Have Different Shapes?

A sandpiper's egg is shaped like a teardrop, an owl's like a golf ball, and a hummingbird's like a jellybean. Now scientists have a convincing explanation for this diversity: it depends on how much its species flies. A new study suggests the shape of bird eggs is linked to flight ability, with strong fliers laying long or pointy eggs.

In general, birds want to pack as many nutrients as possible into their eggs. But, in order to fly, they must maintain sleek bodies - meaning their eggs can't be too wide. "Perhaps, evolutionarily, birds stumbled upon this very natural, geometric solution, which is to increase the ellipticity and asymmetry of their eggs," said Dr. L. Mahadevan, a Harvard professor and an author of the study. Doing so allows for greater volume without increasing girth. This explanation requires further research he added.

Read more about bird eggs, some of the 49,175 egg images studied, and view their diversity by visiting: <http://vis.sciencemag.org/eggs/>

## Tell Scott Pruitt to Protect Our Clean Car Standards

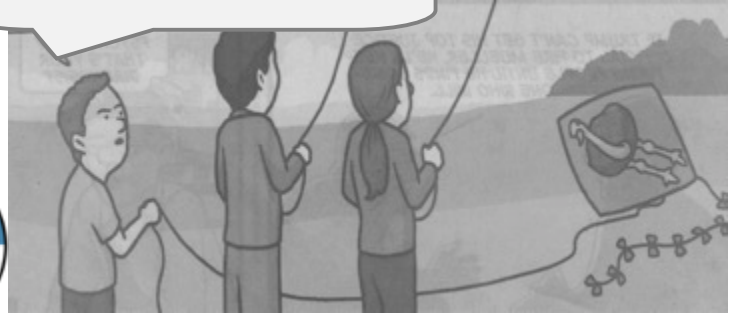
Transportation emissions are now the single largest contributor to global warming pollution in the U.S.A. With the effects of climate change hitting us harder and faster than experts predicted, we can't afford to lose one of the best tools we have to avert the worst impacts of climate change and accelerate our transition off of fossil fuels. When fully implemented, the existing standards are set to save us 6 billion metric tons of dangerous global warming pollution and cut our oil use by 12 billion barrels.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviewed the current vehicle emissions standards just last January, concluding the standards were appropriate and even found evidence that they should be strengthened.

Everyone deserves clean air to breathe and a healthy climate. Tell the EPA to keep existing protections for our health and climate in place and to make them even stronger. If they are rolled back it would mean more smog, more unhealthy air days, and more asthma attacks for millions of Americans, including the 6.3 million kids growing up with asthma. Sign a petition to stop the rollback at

<https://sierra.secure.force.com/actions/National?actionId=AR0072960>

You could have gotten me an eagle or hawk kite like you, but no, I get the Emu.



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Membership Chair & Newsletter  
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618.684.6606  
woodthrusheola@hotmail.com  
SIAS Webmaster: Jim Shofstall  
selsyn@midwest.net  
SIAS email:  
siaudubonsociety@gmail.com



## Southern Illinois Audubon Society

**P.O. Box 222**

**Carbondale, IL 62903-0222**

*Affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society,  
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& the North American Bluebird Society*

