



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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

Established in 1970

NEWSLETTER

August 2019 - Vol. 26 No. 5

Birding My Backyard

Avian Ecologist Mike Baltz will be talking about his efforts over the years to think globally and act locally when it comes to his birdwatching and conservation efforts **for the Friday, August 23rd SIAS program**. A theme of his work has been to emphasize the unique qualities of southern Illinois and to help others fall in love with the plants and animals (especially birds) here. **The program will start at 7 p.m. and will be held in the meeting room of the Carbondale Township Hall, Carbondale.** Entrance is from the rear, south side, of the building (216. E. Monroe St.) where two parking lots are available for use.

Mike Baltz has lived in Carbondale since 2001. He has a PhD in avian ecology from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a special interest in migrant songbirds. He is the former director of The Nature Conservancy in southern Illinois and he co-founded the annual Birding Blitz of Southernmost Illinois. Mike is currently the coordinator for the Let the Sun Shine In program, an oak ecosystem recovery project that covers 11 counties in southern Illinois. He also writes and narrates a monthly conservation feature on WSIU radio.

Why Birds Matter *By Michael Baltz*

Birds matter because they are beautiful, both visually and in form and function. Seemingly perfectly suited to their surroundings.

Birds matter, too, because they inspire us. We honor them in song, poetry, art, and invention.

But most importantly, birds matter because they were here before us – parts of (eco)systems that were here long before us. When bird species decline or disappear it is almost always the result of damages and insults to those ancient systems.

Without birds, there would be less beauty and inspiration in the world, and there would be less nature - which is mother to us all.

In Memoriam: Sylvia Greenfield

Ill health prevented our longtime member and friend, Sylvia Greenfield, from attending many of our meetings the last two years or so, but we stayed in her thoughts. Sylvia died on July 6 in Carbondale. She was a retired art history professor at SIUC and was also an artist who maintained a little studio separate from her home. She treasured birds and indoor (only) cats. A member of two book clubs, she particularly enjoyed anything about the "New Yorker" magazine and anything by its many writers.

In Memoriam: Cal Maginel

A member of SIAS for three decades, Cal Maginel, died July 31 in Anna, Ill., at age 94. He is buried by his wife, Cathie, on their little farm south of Jonesboro. We remember their gentle, unassuming natures, their lovely smiles and interesting observations of nature, their immersion into conservation work, and their devotion to SIAS. Each year Cal made an unusual birdhouse for our silent auction, including several made from old boots. We gave them our Conservationist of the Year award in 1993 for the many thousands of local acorns they gathered and planted on former agricultural fields along the Cache River. Their legacy lives on in the lives and work of their four sons and their families. Memorials may be made to Friends of the Cache River, the Illinois Native Plant Society, and This Able Veteran.

SIAS Meeting Calendar

September 27th - speaker:
Bob Stamps on Lake Apopka

October 25th - potluck night
speaker: Ernest Scott

Nov/Dec -

Tentatively December 6th,
possibly changing to
November 22nd. - speaker:
Michael McNerney on cemeteries

January 24th - Annual Meeting
with potluck, program, and
silent auction; speaker to be
announced



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"The Albatross" Special Movie Screening - 6:15 p.m. Thursday, September 19th at Guyon Auditorium in Morris Library on the Campus of SIUC. This special screening is being presented by the Shawnee Chapter of the Sierra Club with sponsor assistance from other conservation and environmental organizations including SIAS. There will be a reception with tabling by these multiple groups starting at 5:30 p.m. in the Library Rotunda. SIAS will have a table display set up and will be giving away various bird and nature related books. A discussion about the film and the affects plastic waste is having on the Albatross and other marine life will follow at 8 p.m.

If you are planning to attend and are available to help set up the SIAS display at 5 p.m., please contact Rhonda R. at 618.684.6605 or via email at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com



What's Happening - Events & Activities

Crab Orchard NWR 2019 Photo Contest

CONWR 2019 Wildlife and Wild Places photo contest includes 6 categories! To learn more about the contest, contest rules, and how to enter, visit the Friends of Crab Orchard website www.friendsofconwr.com or phone 618.998.5933. **Submission deadline Sept. 29th.**

Cache Summer Movie Series > August 25th

2-3 p.m. - Movie screening of PBS's "Rivers of Life" featuring the Amazon River at the Cache River Wetlands Visitors Center. Contact the Center at 618.657.2064 for more details.

A Stroll in Section 8 Woods > August 31st

9-11 a.m. - Wear rubber boots for this hike beyond the Cache River Wetlands Section 8 Woods boardwalk for a look at the State Champion Water Tupelo. Phone the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064 for all details.

Hike with a Homeless Dog > Sept. 7th

10 a.m.-noon - Giant City State Park is partnering with Wright Way Animal Rescue to get 4-legged and 2-legged friends out for a hike together. This program is free but registration is required. Contact the Park at 618.457.4836 for more details or to register.

Nature Fest at Cache River Days > Sept. 7th

9 a.m.-4 p.m. - Live wildlife exhibits, nature activities, Kid's Corner, and more all taking place at Ullin Ball Park, Ullin. For more details or to register for free canoe tours, contact Cypress Creek NWR at 618.634.2231.

Snake Road: A Southern IL Treasure > Sept. 8th

2-3 p.m. - Join Biologist John Palis at Giant City State Park on a virtual walk of the world-famous SNR Snake Road. Learn about more than just the reptiles and amphibians that inhabit the forest there. Meet at the G.C. Visitors Center. Contact the Center at 618.457.4836 for more details.

SIUC Herbarium Species > Sept. 17th

6:30 p.m. - Dr. Kurt Neubig, SIUC, will discuss the history of plant collections and the importance of collections around the world. This talk is sponsored by the IL Native Plant Society, SI Chapter and will be held at the Carbondale Township Hall.

Cache Summer Movie Series > Sept. 29th

2-3 p.m. - This month's movie screening of PBS's "Rivers of Life" features the Mississippi River! Contact the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064 for more details.

Owls at Giant City > Oct. 4th

6-7 p.m. - Join Bev Shofstall of Free Again Wildlife Rehab at Giant City as she introduces folks to some live owls that might be found in the Park. Meet at Park Shelter #3. For more details, contact the Visitors Center at 618.457.4836.

Good news from science and nature research

Let's offset our steady diet of dismal reports of environmental setbacks with some great things to celebrate in the work of our researchers and natural scientists.

CALIFORNIA CONDOR - In 1982, there were just 22 California Condors alive in the world. Now the hatching of chick number 1,000 has been confirmed at Utah's Zion National Park. (Zion is one of the few places left to see the full power of Milky Way without light pollution. Let's go!)

EMBRYO CHATTER - Research on the eggs of several bird species (yellow-legged gulls, quails, fairy wrens, zebra finches) shows that parent birds can pass on acoustic cues to unhatched embryos. The cues then help the chicks to better react to the threats of predators. The research also has shown that the embryos themselves can communicate with other eggs in the nest.

MICROBE FACTS - As part of the world-wide effort to improve the soil and lessen the use of nitrates contained in fertilizer, researchers continue to explore cover crops that yield organic material on their own. On farms where clover, rye, and grasses are planted between rows of corn, the yield is loamier soil full of beneficial microbes. Says The Nature Conservancy, "There are more microbes in a teaspoon of soil than there are people on Earth."

CATERPILLAR NOISE - The North American walnut sphinx moth caterpillar defends itself from avian predators by mimicking the alarm calls of the birds themselves. "It's a novel defense form for an insect," says a University of Washington researcher. The 2" long caterpillar compresses its body like an accordion to force out air on the side. Some whistles were recorded at 80 decibels, as loud as a food blender.

CROW TOOLS - By now, we know that crows and ravens use tools in their quest for food. But new research on the unique species of New Caledonian crows shows that they can actually make custom tools, not just use found objects. These crows nibble the tips of shrubs to produce a hook that helps them dislodge beetle grubs at a faster rate than a straight stick would do.

MAMMOGRAM READERS - Rock pigeons have been trained to locate malignant tissues in mammograms. It took University of Iowa researchers 15 days to train a pigeon to reach an 85 percent success rate. The theory is that the rate would grow to 99 percent if multiple pigeons were shown the same image. Little escapes a bird's attention, especially if food is involved as a reward. These Iowa pigeons got chicken feed.

TRASH PICKERS - At the Puy du Fou historic theme park in western France, wild rooks have learned to pick up trash and cigarette butts in return for — what else — a food reward. "The rooks ... like very much to interact with human beings as soon as we pay attention to them," the park president says. The goal is to make the park cleaner and to get visitors to discard their own trash. Shamed by a rook (relative of the crow).

-Laraine Wright

Rooster in My Neighborhood

Someone in my neighborhood has a rooster. And hearing it cock-a-doodle-do at seemingly random intervals through the day makes me smile. It takes me back to the Bahamas. And to younger days.

As a homesteader wannabe, I've been wanting chickens for awhile. A Farm Bulletin, from 1941, that was my grandfather's, makes a very practical case for keeping chickens: There's little cash outlay, the home provides a market for the products, chickens eat food scraps, and their 'waste' is fertilizer for the garden.

I'd add another, less practical, reason to get chickens: It's a good excuse to get a rooster.

-Michael Baltz

Why does a chicken coop have only 2 doors? If it had 4 it would be a sedan.

Why did the turkey cross the road? Because it was the chicken's day off!

Why did the chicken cross the road? To show the armadillo it could be done.

Why did the chicken cross the road, roll in the mud, and cross back? He was a dirty double-crosser!

Why did the chicken cross the road? Because she lived on the other side.

What do you get when you cross a parrot with a lion? I don't know, but when it talks, you better listen.

The Endangered Species Act is incredibly popular and effective. Trump is weakening it anyway.

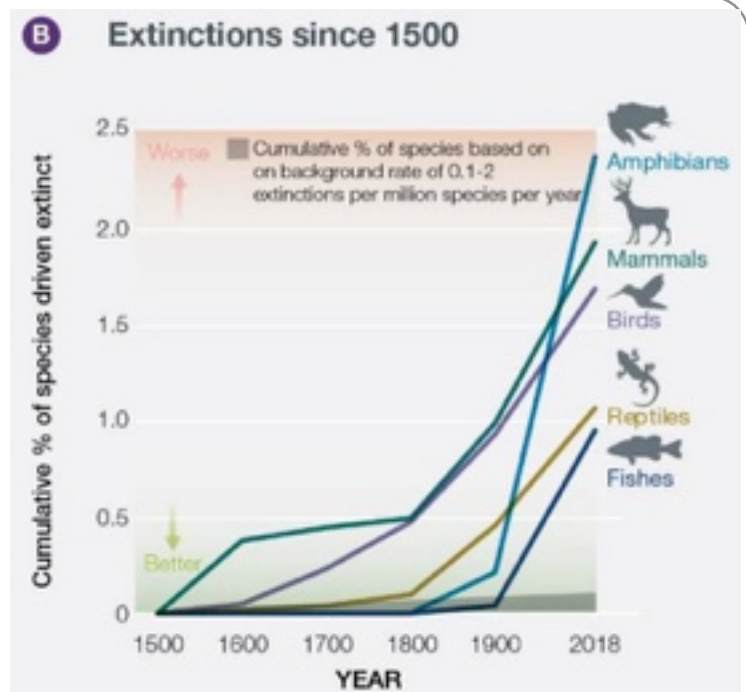
In May, a United Nations panel on biodiversity released a massive, troubling report on the state of the world's animals. As many as 1 million species are now at risk of extinction if we don't act to save them. The recent UN report found that, worldwide, 40 percent of all amphibian species, 33 percent of corals, and around 10 percent of insects may be at risk of extinction.

So, on Monday, 08/12, the Trump administration made new Endangered Species Act (ESA) rule alterations that don't change the letter of the ESA, which was passed in 1973 during the Nixon administration, but do change how the federal government will enforce it. The new rules allow for greater leeway in protecting threatened species and open the door to industry to skirt protections. Currently, species that are listed as "threatened" are defined as "any species which is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future." The new rules constrain what is meant by "foreseeable future" and give significant discretion in interpreting what that means. "The Services (the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) will describe the foreseeable future on a case-by-case basis," the new rule states.

Discretion is not a problem per se, but as the Washington Post explained last year, this could mean that in determining protections for plants and animals, regulators could ignore the far-flung effects of climate change that may occur several decades from now. Polar bears are threatened now, but they'll be in even more peril in the future, when there's less and less sea ice. There's now more leeway for the government to determine if disappearing ice 40 years from now contributes to the threat Arctic animals face today.

The second big change is more of a giveaway to industry. Until now, the agencies that enforce the ESA have had to base their decisions of whether to protect a species solely on scientific data, "without reference to possible economic or other impacts of such determination." The new rule removes that phrase. "The Act does not prohibit the [government] from compiling economic information or presenting that information to the public," the rule argues. It does clarify that it's allowed to do so "as long as such information does not influence the listing determination." (But that's confusing: Why strike the phrase from the guidelines in that case?)

That change, conservation groups fear, opens the door to business interests coming into discussions of whether a species should be protected. The new rule also gives the agencies more leeway to determine if an area that's unoccupied by a species (but where it could also conceivably live) should be protected...



We Ought to do More to Protect Species, Not Less

...Some 300 mammal species have died off since the last ice age 130,000 years ago. A few years ago, a team of researchers in Europe wanted to figure out the answer to a simple question: How long would it take for evolution to replace all the mammal species that have gone extinct in the time humans have walked the earth? The researchers estimated it would take 3 to 7 million years for evolution to generate 300 new species.

Humans have been around for about 200,000 years; that's a blink of an eye in terms of the age of the planet. Nevertheless, in that time, we have caused damage that may well last longer than our species. The researchers only looked at mammals. Evolution works slowly. Humans are killing off species at an alarming pace.

The damage we do to biodiversity in our lifetimes may never really be undone. In some ways, the fallout from the biodiversity crisis is more permanent than the climate crisis.

****Several states and many organizations have already stated they will sue the Trump administration to prevent these Endangered Species Act rule changes.****

-Excerpts from: www.vox.com/science-and-health/2019/8/12/20802132/endangered-species-act-trump-weakening

We #KickCoalAsh! - The Coal Ash Pollutions Prevention Act Signed in IL

Both the Illinois Senate and House just passed Senate Bill 9, The Coal Ash Pollution Prevention Act, so the bill went to Governor Pritzker who signed it. Passing SB9 makes Illinois the 3rd state to take action on coal ash. While southern Illinois legislators Bryant, Windhorst and Fowler voted "No", we can thank the leadership of Senator Scott Bennett, State Representative Carol Ammons, and State Representative Mike Marron who better understand the environmental and health hazards of coal ash.

What SB 9 does for Illinois: Provides Illinois communities protection from toxic coal ash pollution as impoundments are closed. Provides a regulatory framework for EPA to approve protective closure plans for coal ash impoundments. Requires Financial Assurance so Illinois taxpayers are not stuck with the cleanup bill. Ensures meaningful public participation and transparency for affected communities. Focuses on environmental justice communities and high-risk impoundments. Assesses fees on polluters to provide IEPA the resources they need.

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

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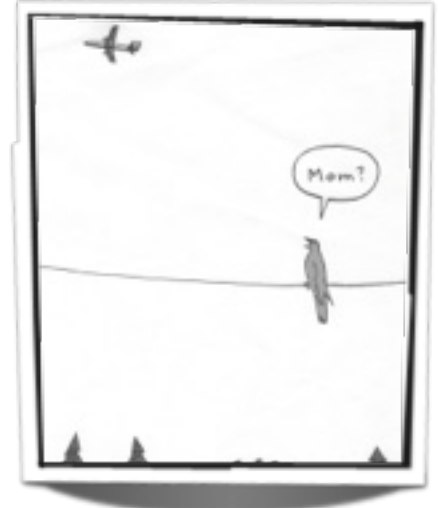
Injunction Sought to Halt Trump's Wall in Arizona

In less than two weeks bulldozers could start tearing through some of Arizona's most pristine, wild areas to build Trump's border wall — places like Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.

That's why this week the Center for Biological Diversity and allies filed an emergency request asking a federal court to block work until a judge rules on the group's lawsuit from July that challenged Trump's waiver of dozens of environmental and public health laws to speed border-wall construction in Arizona. The border region is home to jaguars, wolves, and so many other animals that would be devastated by Trump's wall.

"It's senseless to let bulldozers rip through wildlife refuges and national monuments before the court decides whether the waiver is even legal," said the Center's Jean Su. "Trump's grotesque barrier would destroy some of the border's most spectacular and biologically diverse places. We'll do everything in our power to stop that."

From: www.azpm.org/p/home-articles-news/2019/8/6/156150-conservation-groups-looking-to-block-border-wall-construction/?utm_term=PublicLands



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Pyramid State Recreation Area Strategic Planning Report

The planning report formulated by SIUC can be viewed at <https://econdev.siu.edu/>. Any plan that manages for waterfowl and upland game birds also manages for other birds and wildlife. But there are things in the plan to be questioned including: addition of cabins and addition of new glamping** glamour camping camp sites.

**as per wikipedia: a form of camping involving accommodation and facilities more luxurious than those associated with traditional camping

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

