

# **Southern Illinois Audubon Society**

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

Established in 1970

**NEWSLETTER** 

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# The (Near) Death and Resurrection of Lake Apopka – a U.S. Birding Supersite

Bob Stamps is giving a program on Florida's Lake Apopka for the Friday, September 27th SIAS program.

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.

Bob's program highlights the decline of Florida's 2nd largest lake from a world-class bass fishing lake in Central Florida to the 4th largest lake, a green, eutrophic body of water next to 20,000 acres of wetlands converted to farmland in the 1940s. Fortunately, after a buyout of the farmlands in the 1990s and subsequent restoration efforts, Lake Apopka is recovering and the former farmlands (now known as the Lake Apopka North Shore) are a birding mecca and the site of the 4th North Shore Birding Festival from January 16–20, 2020. Lake Apopka is an American Bird Conservancy Important Birding Area, an Audubon Florida Special Place, a part of the Florida Wildlife and Birding Trail, and is the top site in Florida on e-Bird. The site holds the Christmas Bird Count



one-day record for any inland site in the U.S. (174 species) and to date 370+ species have been seen on the lake and its North Shore. Since this site is only about 30 minutes or less from Orlando's theme parks, park wildlife staff now have a great recommendation for tourists interested in birds.

Bob Stamps is a professor emeritus with the University of Florida. He has been active in Orange Audubon Society, the third largest chapter in the southeastern U.S., for decades—serving as chapter president, vice president, conservation chair, newsletter editor, publications designer, sanctuary chair, and regional representative to the state organization, Audubon Florida. He and his wife Loretta Satterthwaite are recipients of National Audubon Society's 2015 William Dutcher Award for the Atlantic Flyway that recognizes superior volunteer service.

# The Mike Baltz Way Of Thinking

The program presented by Mike Baltz at our August meeting was one of more than just birding in his backyard, it was one of hope. Mike's reference to his backyard was more a reference to something bigger, the place where he felt/feels he can have a positive impact.

Mike started his presentation with an introduction to him and how he gained his interest in avian ecology. He spent several of his college age years living in the Bahamas and assisting with avian studies there. After completing his PhD, Mike chose to focus his efforts "closer to home". Having grown up near Belleville, he chose southernmost Illinois as the place to work as he recognized this area as an important for migrating birds. He was hired by the Nature Conservancy, working with the Cache River Joint Venture in their efforts to restore the watershed.

After a hiatus from avian ecology, Mike is now helping spearhead the "Let the Sun Shine In" initiative. He's working with IDNR, the U.S. Forest Service, and a group of private organizations to promote oak regeneration by opening the forest canopy so that sun can get through to germinate acorns and bring needed sunlight down to oak saplings. This initiative also involves removing understory vegetation that blocks sunlight from making it to the forest floor.

As long as I've known Mike, he has been an up-beat, positive person. In our current political era, it's hard to maintain a positive attitude, at least for me. Our president's ego driven agenda benefits no one, not his followers, not even himself. As he reverses all the advances previous made to recognize and address climate change and the protections to the air we breathe and water we drink, it's easy to question whether there is anything we can currently do to help protect and nourish the natural world.

It might be possible to make it through this current environmental nightmare by working off Mike's positive attitude and by embracing his forward way of thinking. Also, as I wright this, hundreds of thousands of our youth are protesting throughout the world to bring awareness to climate change. Unlike many adults who chose to ignore the obvious, these youth see climate change as real. They understand that human actions are making it worse. They want to move from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Let's hope they will be able to influence the "powers that be" to see the light and work to protect the earth for them and future generations. Let's help them any way we can. - Rhonda R.

## SIAS Meeting Calendar

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

#### **Back to Counting the Bees' Knees**

The US Department of Agriculture will resume data collection for its annual Honey Bee Colonies report on October 1 – the start of a new fiscal year – after suspending the survey earlier this summer over budget constraints.

Bees help pollinate a third of the crops we eat, including almonds, apples, avocados and grapes, but populations have been steadily declining since 2006. That's caused alarm not just in the US but in Europe as well. Pollinators like bees are under threat because of parasites like varroa mites, widespread pesticide use, habitat loss and the climate crisis.

www.cnn.com/2019/09/13/politics/USDA-resume-honeybee-colonies-report/index.htmlUSDA will resume honeybee survey suspended this summer

### California is the First State to Ban Fur Trapping

In a major milestone for wildlife, California has become the nation's first state to outlaw fur trapping. The Wildlife Protection Act of 2019, backed by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) and Social Compassion in Legislation, was signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom in early September. It prohibits trapping native animals — including bobcats, gray foxes, coyotes, beavers, badgers and mink — plus selling their pelts.

"The overwhelming majority of Californians value our wildlife alive, not trapped and cruelly slaughtered for foreign fur markets," said CBD's Conservation Director Brendan Cummings. He thanked Governor Newsom for relegating this cruel and antiquated practice and moving to the dustbin of history in California.

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# What's Happening - Events & Activities

#### 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.

#### Cache Fall Mini Sit > Oct. 5th

9 a.m.-noon > The "Mini Sit" is a bird watching event with the objective to record as many bird species in the Cache River State Natural Area, somewhat like the spring bird count but from just one spot! The event welcomes birdwatchers of all levels to sit back, relax, and enjoy fall migration. This is being approached as a "groups" event. Each group will sit in a 17-foot diameter circle for 3 hours, tallying all the birds that they can identify by sight or sound. Data will be recorded on eBird. To register a team, contact the Wetland Center at 618.657.2064 to register.

**SIAS Team Cuckoo**. Join Rhonda Rothrock and Chelsea DeVivo tallying bird at the North Cypress Access. This area is in the upper Cache, east of Wildcat Bluff "as the crow flies". Take IL Rt. 37 south from West Vienna or north from Cypress to Bear Branch Rd, turn south onto Bear Branch and follow it to Old Cypress Rd. Turn east/left onto Old Cypress and follow it to Snake Hole Ln. Turn south/right onto Snake Hole and follow it to Fain Ln. Turn east/left onto Fain and follow it straight east until it dead-ends at a parking lot. We'll be set up just a short hike down the marked trail near the pond. If you have questions phone Rhonda at 618.534.8659.

#### October Big Day > Oct. 19th

All Day > Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird citizen scientist project will be focusing birding on this one day to survey birds on their travels south. How to Participate:

- Get an eBird account: eBird is a worldwide bird checklist program used by millions of birders. Sign up at https://ebird.org. It's 100% free.
- Watch birds on the 19th: October Big Day runs from midnight to midnight. You don't need to be a bird expert, or go out all day long. Even 10 minutes in your backyard will help.

#### **SIAS Board of Directors**

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



#### October Big Day con't -

• Enter what you see and hear on eBird: You can enter your sightings via our website or download the free eBird Mobile app. You can enter and submit lists while you're still out birding, and the app will even keep track of how far you've walked, so you can focus on watching birds.

Stats will be updated in real-time on our October Big Day page. https:// ebird.org/news/october-big-day-19-october-2019

#### Tunnel Hill Trail Senior Van Tour > Oct. 25th

Explore the history and wildlife along a section of the Tunnel Hill State Trail between Tunnel Hill and New Burnside on this guided van tour for seniors and persons with physical imitations. For departure times and required reservations contact the Cache Wetland Center at 618.657.2064.

#### Guided Hike at Cedar Bluff > Oct. 26th

12 noon-2 p.m. > Be part of a fall hike at Cedar Bluff Natural Area, an annex of Ferne Clyffe State Park. Experience dramatic views of southernmost IL's fall colors. For meeting place directions, contact the Cache Wetland Center at 618.657.2064.

#### Water Bears on the Moon?

Tardigrades, affectionately called "water bears" or "moss piglets", are microscopic creatures measuring between 00.05 to 1.2 1 millimeters long. They have tubby bodies and eight legs tipped with tiny "hands". Believed to be almost indestructible, they've been found just about everywhere on Earth: in parking-lot puddles, at the bottom of lakes, in deserts, even in frozen Arctic water. Researchers have tested their limits by boiling them, crushing them, and shooting them into outer space. Tardigrades handily survived it all.

In April an Israeli lunar lander, the Beresheet (whose name is Hebrew for "in the beginning," suffered a computer error and crashed onto the moon. Beresheet was carrying a load of tardigrades. Now the question is, Did they survive?

https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/thousands-of-tardigrades-crash-underland-on-the-moon-did-they-survive/2019/08/09/41944b72-b927-11e9-

