



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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

Established in 1970

NEWSLETTER September 2019 - Vol. 26 No. 6

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 write 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.html USDA 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.

COPYRIGHT : MORTEN INGEMANN