

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

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



NEWSLETTER

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Established in 1970



A Shape in Time and Space: The Migration of the Necked Discoid Gravemarker – The Illinois Sample.

Michael McNerney, retired Anthropologist/Archaeologist, will discuss his recently published book **A Shape in Time and Space: The Migration of the Necked Discoid Gravemarker - The Illinois Sample** for the **Friday, November 22nd 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.

This is the story of a uniquely shaped pioneer gravemarker brought by the first wave of immigrants arriving in southern Illinois in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Although the book focuses on the spatial and the temporal distribution of the style in Illinois, it also provides a cultural context for this folk gravemarker as the nation rapidly changes from a frontier society to a commercial/industrial society beginning about 1845 and continuing into the 20th century. The book explores the origins of the marker in America and Europe, offers a preliminary look at stylistic change, and tracks the migration of some of the families whose names are inscribed on the markers.



Michael McNerney received a B.A. in Business Administration from the University of South Dakota in 1958 and an M.A. in Anthropology/Archaeology from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in 1971. He was Staff Archaeologist at SIU Museum at Carbondale from 1970-1976. From 1976 until 1979 he was a consulting archaeologist with Fischer-Stein Associates, an architectural firm in Carbondale. In 1979 he founded American Resources Group Ltd. a cultural resource management firm based in Carbondale. He is presently retired and lives in Carbondale.

SIAS Meeting Calendar

December - no meeting

January 24th - Annual Meeting with potluck and silent auction

February 28th - Program

March 27th - Potluck & Program

April 24th - Program

Hospitality Treat Sign-Up Sheet

SIAS is again looking for members to share in providing refreshment treats for our programs. Having commitments from various members helps insure we won't go an evening without after program goodies.

Hospitality Chair Phyllis Beck will pass around a list of dates for folks to choose from at the November meeting. Refreshments could be store-bought or home made...cookies, a cake, etc. SIAS will still provide the coffee!

Members Needed to Serve on SIAS Board

SIAS is seeking volunteers to serve as officers on the Board. The SIAS Outing's Chair position is currently vacant and the position of President and the Membership Chair spot might soon be vacant as well.

SIAS President Joe Merklebach has stated that he would like to resign from his position. Joe has served as SIAS's president since January 2005. For all these 14+ year's, Joe has driven nearly 4 hours round-trip from Centralia to fill his role as president, conducting meetings and representing SIAS at various events. He has done an outstanding job and although we would be very glad if he continued in the roll, it's understandable that he looks to pass the duties on to another.

The Outings Chair position has been vacant for a while. The number of SIAS scheduled outings had wained as had attendance. Activities sponsored by other groups and agencies increased, filling the void but SIAS would still like to return outings to our list of offerings.

Please consider volunteering for the Board. We need your help! Contact a current Board member if you are interested in a position or have any questions.

What's Happening - Events & Activities

Restoring & Rehabilitating Native Bamboo > Nov. 19th

6:30 p.m. > The Illinois Native Plant Society Southern Chapter is sponsoring a presentation by Dr. Jim Zaczek and Matthew Ganden about Raising Cane: Restoring and Rehabilitating Native Bamboo at the Carbondale Township Hall, 216 E. Monroe St., Carbondale.

Cache Summer Movie Series > Nov. 30th

2-3 p.m. - Cap off Thanksgiving weekend with a free screening of the PBS documentary, "My Life as a Turkey" at the Cache River Wetlands Visitors Center. Contact the Center at 618.657.2064 for more details.

Alternative Gift Fair > Dec. 7th

11 a.m.-2 p.m. > Shop for unique gifts while supporting local non-profits. Event includes light refreshments and a silent auction. This Fair will be held at the Carbondale Civic Center, 100 S. IL Ave, Carbondale.

IL Botanizer's Best of Illinois Nature > Dec. 8th

2-3 p.m. > Join Botanist Chris Benda (a.k.a. Illinois Botanizer) as he presents photos highlighting his best Illinois nature encounters of 2019. Meet at Giant City St. Pk. Visitors Center. For more details, contact the Park at 618.457.4836.

Christmas Bird Count Season > Dec. 14 - Jan. 5

Christmas Bird Count Season is less than two months away! This will be the 119th year of these all-day censuses of winter bird populations, providing the longest running database in ornithology. Volunteer for all or just part of the day. Feeder watchers needed too!

Marion County- Dec. ?? - Advance registration required. Meet in the parking lot of the Raccoon School, just west of I-57 at the Centralia exit at 6:00 a.m. Contact compiler Joe Merkelbach at 618.532.3112/ jmerk@ecologyfund.net.

War Bluff Valley- Dec. 14 - For details contact Andrea Douglas, compiler at 618.564.2079 / anderatd@yahoo.com.

Mingo Wildlife Refuge (MO)- Dec. 14 - Meet at Mel's Diner in Puxico at 6:00 a.m. for breakfast and assignments. Contact compiler Dr. Bill Eddleman at weddleman@semo.com for details.

Cypress Creek NWR- Dec. 16 - Meet for assignments at Shawnee Comm. College Bldg. D, Rustic Campus Drive, Ullin, at 6:00 a.m. For details, phone Cypress Creek NWR 618.634.2231.

Big Oak Tree St. Pk. (MO)- Dec. 17 - Meet on Count Day at 6:00 a.m. at the restaurant at Boomland, on the southeast corner of the interchange at the Charleston, MO, off I-57. Contact compiler Dr. Bill Eddleman at weddleman@semo.com.

Crab Orchard NWR- Dec. 19 - Advanced registration required, contact compiler Vicki Lang-Mendenhall at 618.687.9868

Rend Lake- Dec. 21 - Advanced registration required, contact compiler Keith McMullen at 618.632.1057 / warbler7@sbcglobal.net.

Arklands/Pyramid St. Pk. - Dec. 27 - Meet on site at the intersection of Pyatts Blacktop and Panda Bear Rd. at 6:00 a.m. Contact compiler Joe Merkelbach at 618.532.3112/ jmerk@ecologyfund.net.

Horseshoe Lake (Alexander Co.)- Dec. 28 - Advanced registration required. Meet in parking lot at the intersection of Rt. 3 & Miller City Rd., Olive Branch, at 6:30 a.m. Free lodging at the Wicker Club for Friday and Saturday nights. Space is limited with beds and mattresses available but bring bedding, pillows, personal items, etc.

Carlyle Lake- Dec. 28? - Advanced registration required, contact compiler Dan Kassebaum at 618.233.5451 / kdan@htc.net. Meet for assignments at the McDonald's near the Lake entrance at 6 a.m.

Union County- Dec. 29 - Advance registration required. Meet at the SW corner of the intersection of IL Rt. 3 and IL Rt. 124 (old gas station in Ware) at 6:30 a.m. 5 p.m. compilation at Anna McDonalds. Contact compiler Vern Kleen at 217.787.3515 / vkleen@comcast.net.

Mermet Lake- Dec. 30 - Advance registration required. For assignments contact compiler Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 / woodthrusheola@hotmail.com.

Middle Mississippi River NWR- Dec. 31 - Advance registration required. Contact compiler Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 or email woodthrusheola@hotmail.com

Jackson County- Jan. 1 - Advance registration required. For assignments contact compiler Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 / woodthrusheola@hotmail.com. Compilation at sunset at The Neighborhood Co-Op, Murdale Shopping Center, W. Main St., Carbondale.

Feeder watchers wanted. Contact Rhonda to confirm you live within the circle (or one of the other CBC circles). For Jackson Co., email or snail mail your feeder bird list to Rhonda by Jan. 3rd.

After 15 years of hosting the Jackson County CBC compilation, David and Chef Anton Kvernes have decided to retire. David and Anton's comradery, warm home and excellent soups were greatly appreciated at the end of a long day and the reason one out-of-towner kept coming back to participate in the count. We participants send our most sincere and heartfelt Thank You to David and Anton!

Winter Walk in the Woods > Jan. 19th

10-11:20 a.m. > Join the Giant City Natural Resources Coordinator for a leisurely stroll through the winter woods on the Giant City Natural Trail. For more details or to register, contact the G.C. Park Visitor's Center at 618.457.4836.

Crab Orchard NWR Eagle Tours > Jan. 2020

Contact the Crab Orchard NWR Visitor's Center for more details, dates and times.

Old, Short-sighted, and Technically Challenged

Recently I'd thought about restyling the SIAS newsletter heading logo, possibly changing the font or switching the size or placement. But while in our basement (actually more of a "crawl space") checking my stash of copy paper, I noticed two unmarked stationery size boxes tucked under some other office supplies. I opened one up to find preprinted SIAS newsletter letterhead. Well, far be it from me to be wasteful. I decided to reformat the newsletter so I could print the first page on this letterhead. What I didn't foresee was how this would (or would not) work. There was a reason for this letterhead surplus.

Half way through writing the newsletter, I realized that the pdf version would lack the letterhead. Oh boy. Well, I knew my color printer scanner wasn't working properly and it seems the scanner on my copy machine chose to scan only the logo in color, not the images, grrrrr. And the scanner data file turned out to be enormous and would take our painfully slow internet forever to attach and send. But, because I'm old, short-sighted, technically challenged, stubborn and crazy, I printed the newsletter on the old letterhead then added the logo back onto the doc before saving the pdf version.

-Rhonda R. s.k.s. Grrrhonda

October Program Highlights

October's speaker, Ernesto Scott, shared some of his favorite art images of birds native to the U.S. Many of his photos were taken in Wyoming, others were taken in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and some were taken around his home in southernmost Illinois where he lives with his wife Patricia.

Ernesto admitted that he wasn't a bird lister and sourced the assistance of avian ecologist Kelly McKay in identifying some of the species he photographed. He shared photos of wading birds, shorebirds, raptors, and songbirds. Ernesto describes his images as creative not diagnosis, diagnostic being the type used to identify a species. His interest is in capturing birds in a motion, a location, a habitat. This was well represented.

Along with the digital images he shared, Ernest brought along some of the actual photographs. Some of his photographs gave the impression they were paintings in watercolors or oil. Several were quite large and all were quite breathtaking.

Ernesto stated he was apprehensive about the number of photographs he had included, maybe making the presentation too long, but all in attendance were captivated.

SIAS thanks Ernesto for sharing his photographs and describing his creative processes. SIAS also thanks everyone for their contributions to the evening's potluck. *-Rhonda R.*

Bird's The Word

Folks have been seeing a host of fall migrant arrivals throughout southernmost Illinois. Thanks to email and eBird, it is possible to follow the migration as it develops when time does not allow for actual outdoor birding treks.

During the first 3 weeks of November, Don Mullison and others have reported the following at Crab Orchard NW Refuge: Forester's tern and Franklin's gull along with northern pintails, Am. black ducks, a common loon, red-breasted merganser, canvasback, bufflehead, and 5 sandhill cranes at Heron Flats off IL Rt. 148. The last report of the cranes at Heron Flats was on Nov. 10.

Speaking of sandhill cranes, on Nov. 8 Kimberly Rohling spotted 3 sandhills taking off over a cornfield near BellRose Waterfowl Reserve in Pulaski County. Around the same time Mary McCarthy reports that she saw a sandhill crane fly across IL Rt. 51 north of Anna.

Carbondale Reservoir at Evergreen Park has attracted a goodly number of waterfowl and gulls. On Nov. 11, Henry Detwiler counted 492 ruddy ducks among waterfowl species there.

James Smith from up north near Homer, stated that small flocks of trumpeter swans were showing up in Champaign and Vermillion counties. He added that earlier this month he saw a flock of hundreds of white-fronted geese flying northwest but he rightfully predicted they would be heading back south ahead of the big winter blast.

Up north, things got real exciting in the last two weeks when a King Eider then an Ancient Murrelet were located at Chicago's Montrose Harbor.

And keep those hummer feeders out in case the Anna's hummingbird reported 130 miles due west of St. Louis decides to head further south east.

Here Come the (Winter) Blue Jays

Almost lost in the visits of winter birds from the north are the Canadian blue jays, coming here in the states to visit our feeders and eat the nuts the squirrels have missed, plus anything else we've pitched outside for the animals in cold weather.

The other day I heard "Jay! Jay!" and I began tossing out peanuts in the shell. I attracted about eight jays in just a few minutes. An article from 1998 says researchers don't yet know why some jays stay on a territory all year long and others are migratory. I certainly have a few pairs who live and breed year-round on or near my property, but that number goes up dramatically when the winter cold fronts arrive.

You have noticed that the jays are a bit like chipmunks, cramming as many sunflower seeds or peanuts into their beaks as possible before going off to cache them somewhere. It is that behavior, their tucking of the nuts under leaves on the ground, that helped the recovery of oak trees after the ice ages, plus the spread of our current forests into open areas. Squirrels bury acorns, but some nuts sprout best on the surface, not underground.

On May 20, 2004, on a birding trip led by Pat Ward, we stopped at Whitefish Point, Michigan, a hot spot on the Upper Peninsula. Just 13 miles separate the U.S. from Canada there, so birds fly across both ways depending on the season. We found 100 blue jays that day, remarkable. But the next morning, at 6:30, there were 2,500 of them, in a huge, loud, swirling crowd, screaming at each other and the larger world.

They were headed north, back to Canada, to breed for the season. The migratory jays. A few tried to lead the rest across the water, but they gave up and circled back. We ourselves had to leave for the day, but we did return early the next morning — to silence. An empty sky, the thousands of jays gone, just a quiet 25 left behind. Something spiritual happened to me that day. I realized that in the great complexity and mystery of the universe, I was nothing, nothing. And that was okay.

So consider feeding the winter jays this season as you do the other northern visitors. Help keep those interesting, loud, social, brave birds going. Think about them and all else in the broader picture of life on Earth.

- Laraine Wright

Be A Newsletter Contributor

Do you enjoy SIAS programs? Do you like to write? Do you have an email account? Would you be interested in writing recaps of SIAS presentations?

This newsletter editor would be quite grateful to anyone willing and able to write SIAS program highlight recaps. These are worthy additions to the newsletter. The recap would need only be 2-3 paragraphs written in an email sent to me by the 10th of each month.

And/or if you enjoy writing short articles, reports, or poetry related to nature, the environment, or conservation, I would love to consider them for printing in the newsletter. Just email them to me at woodthrushela@hotmail.com by the 10th of the month.

If you have any questions for thoughts, please speak to me at the next SIAS meeting. *-Rhonda R., Newsletter Editor*

Dues Soon Due To Be Renewed

January is dues renewal month. If you get a paper newsletter via snail mail, check your mailing label for your dues "paid to" date. If you receive your newsletter digitally via email, contact Laraine Wright at 618.457.8769 for your "paid to" date.

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

Individual Member \$15 (per year)
Family \$25 " "
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I/We would like to receive our newsletter via email: YES / NO

Your address label on your newsletter reflects your dues paid thru date (year). If you receive your newsletter via email, contact Laraine W or Rhonda R to check your dues status.

Welcome New Members: Welcome new members Joanna Gray of West Frankfort and Liz Gersbacher of Carbondale.

SIAS Board of Directors

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Wingspan, a Popular New Card Game About Birds!

One of the most popular games of the year isn't focused on war or domination; it's about birds. In Wingspan, a scientifically accurate game from St. Louis-based publisher Stonemaier Games, players create their own personal aviary. The game has become wildly successful with both hardcore gamers and birders — groups whose interests don't always overlap. Each of the 170 playing cards features a different North American bird species, along with dozens of bird facts.

The idea for Wingspan grew from a conversation with friends, said game designer Elizabeth Hargrave, a health-policy consultant and avid birder who lives in Maryland. Hargrave created the game after realizing most of the board games she was playing were about subjects she didn't care about, like castles and trains. Hargrave said, "I decided to make a game about something I actually want to spend time thinking about."

More than 200,000 copies of Wingspan will be in circulation worldwide by the end of the year. Stonemaier Games initially printed only 10,000 copies, expecting limited interest in the game. Those copies are all sold out. Learn more about the game at the Stonemaier Games website <https://stonemaier-games.myshopify.com/products/wingspan?variant=21339869937745>
Excerpts from <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/bird-themed-game-hatched-st-louis-soars-popularity#stream/0>



Why did the fish blush? Because it saw the boat's bottom.

What do dogs get after they finish obedience school?

They get their masters!

Why is it a bad idea to insult an octopus? Because they are well armed.

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

