



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 222
Carbondale, IL 62903-0222
Established in 1970

July-August 2021 – Vol. 28 No. 6

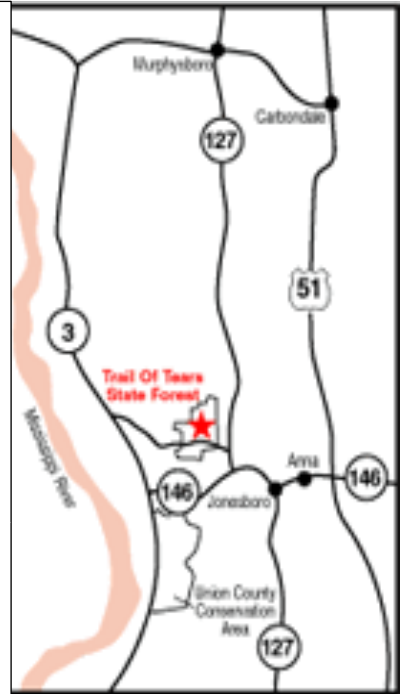
SIAS Picnic will be August 29th at Trail of Tears State Forest at 5pm (Note Date and Time Change)

The Annual SIAS picnic will be held on Sunday, **August 29th**, in the main shelter at Trail of Tears State Forest, in Union County. **Arrive to help set up and for socializing at 4 p.m. with dining at 5 p.m.** SIAS will provide hamburgers, hotdogs, buns and condiments. Veggie option available. Members are asked to bring a dish to share (no finger foods please) and their own beverages, dinnerware, and utensils. Water is available at the shelter if needed.

Large with plenty of space and parking, the shelter is located on the north side of State Forest Road, approx. 4.8 miles east of IL Rt. 3 (Wolf Lake) and approx. 2.6 miles west of IL Rt. 127.



There is plenty of accessible parking and picnic tables are under the large shelter with water spiket, electric hook-up, and nearby outhouses. **WE ARE IN NEED OF A FOLKS TO HELP GRILL.** Please let us know if you can help. Any questions please contact Vicki at 618 697 9868 or vickil@siu.edu.



Fall SIAS Schedule of Meetings Still in Flux

With cases of the CoVid Delta Variant escalating in southernmost Illinois and throughout the country, we are back to a guarded and somewhat restricted status with regard to indoor group meetings. And while vaccinated folks might feel more comfortable meeting with others inside, do remember that the vaccine is not a force-field that repels the virus, nor titanium body armor protecting the virus from infiltrating our bodies. The vaccine is a sword and shield our body uses to fight off the virus when it enters our bodies, a fighting National Guard of sorts running through our system. Vaccinated folks can still get infected by the virus (break through infections) and can still, possibly unknowingly, pass it on to others.

That said, SIAS is working on an outdoor gathering with a program for September. Bev Shofstall of Free Again will provide an educational program with some of her live critters. But the usual 4th weekend is not an option for Bev so the Sept. SIAS meeting will be on the 3rd weekend instead. The exact date has not yet been confirmed but it will be either the 17th, 18th, or 19th and might include a picnic/potluck. Time and location are not yet confirmed either but we're leaning toward a late afternoon time at Giant City State Park.

For Oct., Nov/Dec., meetings/programs, the Board is taking it day by day, week by week. We're leaning toward outdoor events, a plan that should work for Sept. and Oct. and maybe even Nov/Dec. As Lucius Annaeus Seneca, a Roman statesman and philosopher who died in 65AD, is quoted to have said "Time discovers truth".

As I have (hopefully) resolved my computer technical difficulties, I will endeavor to get the Sept. newsletter out well ahead of the next scheduled meeting. But I have a request. If you receive your newsletter via snail mail (seeming to take longer than it used to) consider reaching out to a SIAS friend to see if they get it electronically. That way someone will know to contact you if I'm running behind or there is something that requires us to make a last minute change in program plans. Be well! *-Rhonda R.*

Welcome New Members!!:

Aimee Hemphill & Sam Spiller of Carterville,
Kathy & Steve Belletire of Marion,
and Ron Marshall of Murphysboro.

Updates on Our Affiliate, the Illinois Audubon Society

SIAS has been either a chapter or an affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society (IAS) for most of our 51 years. IAS itself dates to 1897, an independent conservation organization separate from the National Audubon Society.

I have just named three non-profits that are worthwhile joining. Let's look at IAS for now. Your \$25 IAS membership brings you a lovely quarterly magazine with news of environmental research and projects in the state, profiles of species, information about IAS sanctuaries (16) and other sites to visit, and news of IAS's efforts to protect more land.

As an SIAS chapter representative to the IAS board some 30 years ago, I remember the tense discussions about finances and the worry about paying the very small staff. So much has changed since then. Grants and donations have added to its endowment. Recently IAS received \$30 million from the estate of Gilbert and Mary Hebard of Knoxville, IL.

If you are in Springfield, leave time to visit the IAS headquarters at Adams Wildlife Sanctuary. The remnant farmstead of Margery Adams is now peaceful wooded trails and native prairie. Her renovated landmark house has been converted to IAS offices and meeting rooms open to visitors.

Through a revolving fund (buying land it later sells to governmental and other groups), IAS has preserved 5,548 acres in the state. It owns and manages an additional 3,272 acres. Go to the IAS website (illinoisaudubon.org) to learn much more about the society, its sanctuaries, and how you can support this exceptional society (P.O. Box 2547, Springfield, IL 62708).

— Laraine Wright

Seeing Birds

With summer came visits from a couple bird species rare for our area.

First was a young wood stork that showed up at Mermet Lake, Massac County in mid July. In W. Douglas Robinson's *Southern Illinois Birds* book he writes: *Wood Storks, like some other large wading birds, may wander widely to the north after breeding in swamps of the southern U.S. Nelson (1877) reported Wood Storks occurred at Cairo, Alexander County, 1 Aug – 30 Sep 1875, being "numerous" 11 Aug to 4 Sep.* Doug notes 4 records of storks from 2000-2021.

A roseate spoonbill was spotted in Pope county on 07/31 but disappeared the same day. Then on 08/20, Kimberly Rohling and Katy Banning spotted a (the?) roseate spoonbill in an area of the recently drawn down Crab Orchard Lake, south of the new headquarters bldg. Of roseates, Doug writes: *A truly exciting bird to find, especially well north of its normal range, a group of 4 appeared in Sep 2008 for the first documented southern Illinois record.*

After several search attempts, Don Mullison and I were two SIASers lucky enough to see these

4 pink beauties flying over Jackson County, south of Grand Tower near the area known as the Chutes. It was quite a sight! *-Rhonda R.*

FYI Doug has digitized his whole book and it can be viewed for free at <https://sites.google.com/view/birds-of-southern-illinois/home>



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

Individual Member \$15
Family \$25
Student Voting Member \$ 5
Donation _____
Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Your Name _____
Street Address _____
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(We pileateds are known for our loyalty.)

Mail to: Southern Illinois Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
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I/We would like to receive our newsletter via email: YES / NO
If you receive your newsletter electronically, contact Laraine W. or Rhonda R. to check your dues status.



Crab Orchard NWR: \$25 Million in Upgrades

The new headquarters of the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge is now open at the same location as the old. Hours currently are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. Make a note of their new address: 6987 Headquarters Road, Marion, IL 62959. That is also the address of the Friends of Crab Orchard (\$10 single, \$20 family membership). Within the next year the refuge expects to spend \$25 million on its new visitors' center (opening in August 2022), new water lines, and improvements of the campgrounds and The Haven. The new exhibits for the visitors' center will cost \$1 million.

Membership in the Friends of Crab Orchard group will bring you an emailed copy of the minutes of the monthly board meetings plus an occasional newsletter full of photos and good articles about the group's activities and refuge information. A strong Friends membership base tells the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the refuge's staff of the region's support for and appreciation of them. It also helps the Friends win grants for projects such as the outstanding pollinator garden near the entry road to the headquarters.

Please consider joining, becoming active as a volunteer, and visiting the refuge often. It is a treasure for birders, walkers, bikers, fishing, hunting, dog-walking, and observing wildlife and beautiful scenery. Currently the main lake has been drawn down about four feet to repair the spillway. Mudflats have appeared and so have shorebirds and egrets, especially.

— Laraine Wright

Drawn Down Lake a Big Draw for Shorebirds

In the first week of July, Crab Orchard NWR drew down the level of the water in Crab Orchard Lake in order to facilitate repairs to the Dam Spillway. The Lake at its current low level is truly a sight to behold and the mind drifts to images of what the area might have looked like prior to its construction in 1936. At the time 4.6 million trees were also planted. As a result of the water level drop, the lake is very shallow. Shorelines have transitioned into large mudflats. The timing and habitat are perfect for shorebirds migrating south for the winter. Anticipation is high amongst birders, who look forward to seeing large numbers of shore-birds and possibly rare species as they pass thru heading south.

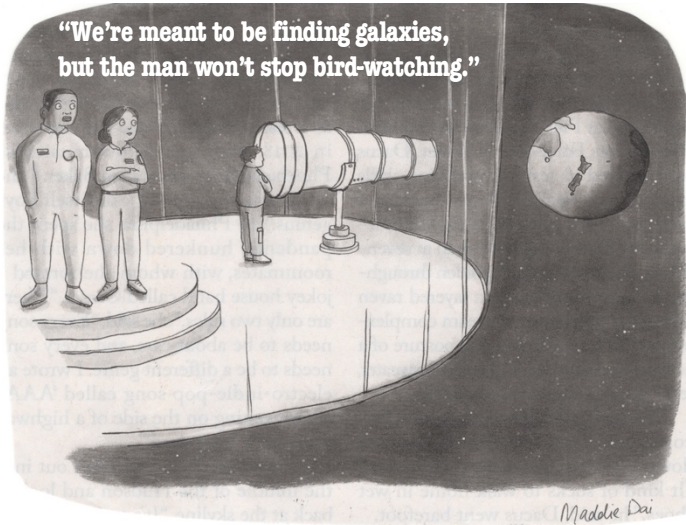
-Rhonda R.

Bird Disease Still A Mystery; Officials Say “Don’t Feed Birds”

Thousands of cases of mysteriously ill songbirds have now been reported in at least 10 Eastern and Midwestern states. Scientists from federal and state agencies and wildlife health centers are collaborating diligently to determine the cause, and perhaps find a treatment for what has so far proves to be an untreatable malady. Though over a dozen species have reportedly been affected by this mystery ailment, four — common grackles, blue jays, American robins, and European starlings — make up the majority of cases. The condition overwhelmingly affects young birds.

Even though scientists don't know yet if it's a transmissible disease or something else, scientists advise that people take pre-emptive steps to keep their backyards safe. If you see a sick or dead bird, regardless of whether it's showing signs of this mystery ailment, contact your local wildlife experts for advice. Avoid handling birds, especially if they appear sick, and keep pets away from sick birds. If you absolutely must touch a bird — for instance, if you're turning it over to wildlife rehabilitators — wear gloves or put a plastic bag over your hands.

Until further notice, the National Wildlife Health Center advises the removal of bird feeders and bird baths to discourage birds from congregating and potentially spreading illness. At the very least, it's a good idea to clean your bird feeders weekly with 10% bleach to kill any germs that might be lurking. www.discovermagazine.com/planet-earth/we-still-dont-know-whats-killing-the-birds



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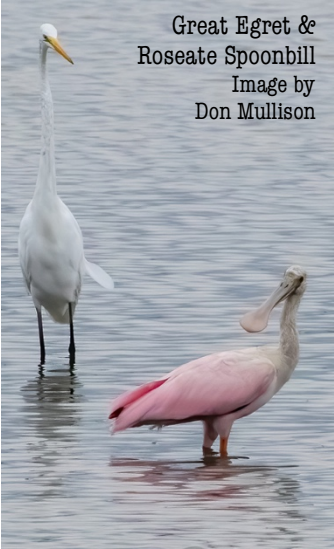
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Affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society,
the Illinois Environmental Council,
& the North American Bluebird Society



Great Egret &
Roseate Spoonbill
Image by
Don Mullison