



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

NEWSLETTER

October 2021 – Vol. 28 No. 8

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

No SIAS Program for October

The SIAS Board has voted unanimously to continue our postponement of indoor programs until further notice. We are working on setting up programming via Zoom for our Nov./Dec. and January meeting dates. Details to follow in future newsletters.

Reoccurring monthly outings are being scheduled, starting in November. Two locations have been chosen: Bogart Point, along the lake, at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge and Evergreen Park in Carbondale. Outings will be open to the public but subject to the weather (*rain cancels*). Folks are encouraged to bring binoculars, spotting scopes, field guides, friends, and any snacks they might want.

Nov. 13 (and the 2nd Saturday each month)

Outing at Bogart Point, 9:00-11:00 AM

Directions (from Carbondale, IL Rt. 13): Take IL-13 E from Carbondale to S Division St in Cartersville (the 4-way intersection), turn right/south onto Division. Take Division to Old Rt. 13 then turn left/east. Take Old Rt. 13 to N Wolf Creek Rd. Turn left/south onto N Wolf Creek Rd. Follow it south to just before the causeway. Turn left/west into parking lot. Then follow the sidewalk south to Bogart Point.

NOTE– Day use passes are required on Crab Orchard Refuge and can be acquired at the Headquarters Bldg. Purchasing a Federal Duck Stamp for \$25 provides the bearer with a year pass to the Refuge. For seniors over 62, a lifetime recreation pass can be purchased for \$80. Crab Orchard NWR and other Fish and Wildlife Service locations, as well as the Forest Service, National Park Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, and Bureau of Land Management all honor the Senior Pass at sites where Entrance or Standard Amenity Fee(s) (Day use fees) are charged. This pass can be purchased online at <https://store.usgs.gov/senior-pass>

Nov. 23 (and the 4th Tuesday each month)

Outing at Evergreen Park, 9:00-11:00 AM

Meet at the Red Oak Shelter. Directions (from IL Rt. 51 a.k.a. South Illinois Avenue): Take IL Rt. 51 south from Carbondale to the stop-light intersection with Pleasant Hill Rd., turn west onto Pleasant Hill Rd., follow it to west most park entrance, turn south, follow road south then east to the small shelter near the water.

For more information, contact Outings Chair Kirsten Trimble at 618.524.4166. While masks are not required outdoors, respect distancing and those who feel it necessary to wear a mask. 🧴

Hawkwatch at Giant City State Park, Sat., Oct. 9th!

Join SIAS Outings Chair Kirsten Trimble for some hawk watching from the viewing platform on the water tower at Giant City State Park. Watch for hawks soaring over and get birds-eye views of songbirds in the treetops. Meet at 10 AM at the water tower, at the west end of the Giant City Park Lodge parking lot, off G.C. Lodge Rd. Watch until noon!

Several hawk species migrate through southernmost IL from late September to early November, including broad-winged hawks, osprey, Mississippi kites, merlins, sharp-shinned hawks, and peregrine falcons. Some pass through from their northern breeding grounds, some are leaving from their summer stay in our area, while others are migration from the north to southernmost IL to spend the winter. Midmorning to early afternoon is the best time to catch a view if they pass over. Sometimes you might see a flock of dozens or more! You might also see resident raptors and vultures soaring overhead as they hunt for lunch. (They like to catch the midmorning heat thermals rising as the sun gets higher in the sky.)

Bring you binoculars, field guides, and any water or snacks you might need. If you have any questions, call Kirsten at 618.524.4166. Rain cancels! *The 9th is also eBird's Fall Big Day! Report all your SIAS Hawkwatch sightings to eBird at <https://ebird.org/octoberbigday>*

Rex and His Peeps Wow the Crowd of SIASers & Friends

Bev and Jim Shofstall are two very hard working folks! Their labors are unending but it's very obvious that these are labors of love. And if they weren't, Bev and Jim likely would have not been at it since 1988!

Whether or not their charges like them, Bev and Jim care for their charges and in many ways. The goal is to get as many rescued animals rehabilitated and back into the wild as possible. And they have, hundreds of animals including an array of bird species as well as any native mammal you can think of and a turtle or two, have been returned to nature.

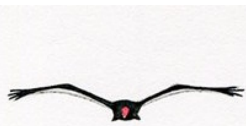
Bev has said that she considers Free Again as much an educational facility as a rehab facility because every instance someone calls in could be a teachable moment if the people on the other end are receptive to listening. Also, historically, they have offered hundreds of educational presentations for school age children and a host of organizations. Their permanent charges are always a hit with young and old alike.

After having stated the presentation birds were a bit out of training due to CoVid cancelling presentations, Rex the turkey vulture stole the show on this particular afternoon. He sat on Bev's hand and nonchalantly preened his already lovely feathers. As per Bev, this is a behavior that only the most relaxed birds would do around humans. The Shofstalls also brought Rex's peeps (friends), a charming little red-phase eastern screech-owl, a red-tail hawk, and an elegant barn owl. (Their names I cannot recall.) The owl and hawk were too badly injured to be released so Bev has a permit to keep them for educational purposes. Having been very very young when it arrived, the barn owl inadvertently imprinted on Jim and would not do well if released so it too is now an educator (and Jim's best buddy.)

Sadly, the hold put on their programs by the CoVid pandemic has been a blow to their financial situation because Free Again is a not-for-profit and relies in part on donations to sustain their operations. If you would like to donate to Free Again, their mailing address is: Free Again Wildlife Rehabilitation, 4029 Big Muddy Rd., Cartersville, IL 62918. They also gladly accept donations of cleaning supplies like bleach and paper towels. Check their Facebook page for updates and supply requests <https://www.facebook.com/freeagainwildlife/> For emergency assistance with wildlife, call 618.988.1067.

SIAS always remembers Free Again when it's time for donating. We've greatly appreciated Bev and Jim's efforts all these 33 (yes 33 years!) and everyone enjoyed their presentation on Friday, the 17th at Giant City State Park. A wonderful program at the perfect venue site.

-Rhonda R.



What Happening in Southernmost IL...

Don Mullison Photo Display at Giant City – Oct. 1st thru 31st

Giant City State Park Visitor's Center will be displaying seven of Don Mullison's favorite photographs during the month of October!

10th Anniversary of The Big Year movie release – Oct 14th

The Big Year is a brilliant and way underrated Hollywood movie loosely based on the non-fiction book of the same name. Three men attempt to see as many species of birds they can in a year. A must see and a must read!

Cache Fall Big Sit – Oct. 16th

Details on reverse page!

Talking Tombstones at Crab Orchard NWR – Oct. 23rd, 10 - noon

While traveling in time, join a Refuge Ranger and take a closer look at some of the Crab Orchard NWR cemeteries, explore parts of the refuge usually unseen, and learn interesting facts about the Refuge history. Meet at the Old Refuge Visitor Center on IL Rt. 148. Reservation is required, phone 618.997.3344.

Discovery Tours at Crab Orchard NWR – Oct. 31st, 1-4 PM

Crab Orchard NWR will open up the restricted portion of the refuge for a self-guided driving tour. Tours begin at the Wolf Creek Causeway, volunteers will be stationed throughout the tour to answer questions.

Family Birdwatching at Crab Orchard – Nov. 5th, 9 AM-noon

Our family bird-watching course teaches future birders of all ages the basics of bird watching and bird identification.

Space is limited, reservation is required. Phone 618.997.3344 for all details and to register.

Giant City "Streets Exposed" – Nov. 6th, 10-11:30 AM

Join Geologist Joe Devera as he reveals the mystery behind these amazing Giant City rock formations!. This will be a 1 mile hike on the Giant City Nature Trail. Registration is required, phone 618.457.4836.

Giant City St. Park "What Frog Is That" – Nov. 13th, 1-2 PM

Join biologist John Palis to learn how to identify our local frogs by sight and sound at Giant City. Registration is required, phone 618.457.4836.

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

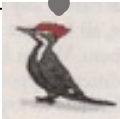
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If you receive your newsletter electronically,
contact Laraine W. or Rhonda R. to check your dues status.

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Bluebirds Devastated by Polar Freeze in February

Reports are coming in from Midwest bluebird box monitors of a huge loss in Eastern bluebirds following the February 13-20 polar vortex that brought ice and freezing temperatures as far south as the Texas coast. Bluebirds could be somewhat measured, but many other species suffered, including Carolina wrens, house wrens, brown thrashers, and horned larks. Carolina wrens, in particular, are very sensitive to the cold. I kept a pair alive during the freeze by cracking a side door of my garage and scattering mealworms inside. A brown thrasher discovered this, too, and lived there the full week.

Amber Hewette, the longtime coordinator of bluebird box monitors at Giant City State Park, tells us they found 28 bluebirds frozen to death in March, some dying together as they tried to keep warm. For the season this year, of 60 bluebird boxes in the park, just 163 eggs were laid with 130 fledging. (Carolina chickadees did well with 53 eggs and 45 fledging.) The results at Crab Orchard NWR are being compiled, but coordinator Aimee Hemphill earlier told of the many dead bluebirds found this spring in boxes at the refuge and in her yard. Some of us with yard boxes had no bluebirds this year. One pair in my yard just ahead of the freeze never returned, and I had no house wrens despite years of several nestings. Jim Smith of rural Danville wrote me that this year was the worst he has seen in more than 40 years of monitoring about 100 boxes in and around his farm.

-Laraine Wright

Ivory-billed Woodpecker is Extinct, say Feds

The dramatic excitement of 2004, when three outdoorsmen in a large Arkansas swamp announced they had seen an Ivory-billed Woodpecker, is now put to rest. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will declare the big bird's extinction after a 60-day public comment period. The announcement on September 29 also included the extinction of the Kauai O'o (native to Hawaii) and the Bachman's Warbler (native to the southeastern U.S.). The last confirmed sighting of the Ivory-billed was in 1944. But in 2004-2006 or so, birders and professional biologists ventured to Arkansas and Louisiana with the hope of reconfirming its existence. Habitat loss and hunting are to blame for the woodpecker's demise. Endemic species in Hawaii are disappearing quickly due to the introduction of non-native species. Among the worst for birds, actually, is the mosquito, brought to the islands in the 1800s. Of the more than 50 species of honeycreepers in Hawaii, only 17 remain.

-Laraine Wright

Meet Up with Rhonda R. for a Cache Mini Sit on Oct. 16th!

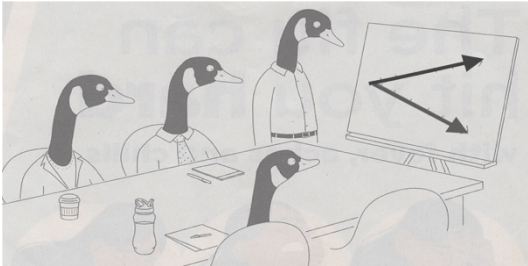
Consider participating in the 4th annual Cache Fall Migration Mini Sit on Oct. 16th from 9AM 'til noon! This citizen science birdwatching event invites birders of all experience levels to enjoy fall migration. To join Rhonda Rothrock and other members of SIAS, register for the North Cypress Access hotspot at go.illinois.edu/minisit. Online registration closes on Sunday, October 10. Phone registration will be open until the day of the event, call 618.657.2064. North Cypress Access is located along Fain Lane. From the Intersection of IL Rt. 146 & IL Rt. 37, turn south onto IL Rt. 37. Go 3.8 miles to Bear Branch Rd., turn left (southeast). Drive Bear Branch to Old Cypress Rd., turn left (east). Drive Old Cypress Rd to Snake Hole Ln, turn right (south). Drive Snake Hole Ln to Fain Ln, turn left (east). Drive straight on Fain Ln to North Cypress Access parking lot.

HeartLands Conservancy Working to Preserve Southernmost IL

For over 30 years, HeartLands Conservancy has been an advocate and partner for the protection of important places. For the past six years, HeartLands Conservancy has been working with the US Forest Service to preserve inholdings (private land surrounded by public land) of the Shawnee. One of these is a 150-acre Alexander County property. The swamp is home to many special species including centuries-old bald cypress trees, minks, and bald eagles. Last month, the property was officially transferred to the Forest Service. HeartLands thanks Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, Grand Victoria Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Arbor Day Foundation, and US Fish and Wildlife Service for funding the acquisition of this special place. https://heartlandsconservancy.org/explore-areas/?blm_aid=27583

SIAS Birding Blitzers Raise \$1094 for IOS Grant Program

Thanks to the generosity of SIAS members and friends, the SIAS Birding Blitzers raised \$1094 for the Illinois Ornithological Society's Grant Program. The team of Kimberly Rohling, Katy Banning, Vicki Lang-Mendenhall, and Rhonda Rothrock counted bird species at Bogart Point on Crab Orchard Lake from 6:44 AM to 6:44 PM. While the species total of 64 fell short of hopes, the day was full of great birds and great fellowship. Throughout the day, the team was joined by 17 other SIAS members, many who came bearing treats. We also met a few passers-by who were interested in our events and asked questions about birds. The team thanks all our donors and visitors! -Rhonda R.



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

