



Southern Illinois Audubon Society NEWSLETTER

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P.O. Box 222
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Established in 1970

Zoom Zoom Zoom

Every time I hear the word Zoom, I think back to the 1990s Mazda car commercials. The ads start with a young boy standing roadside. Then, as a car rapidly approaches, he turns to face the camera and whispers, "Zoom Zoom". Following that, a catchy song rises; a man singing "Zoom Zoom Zoom."

Back then *Zoom Zoom Zoom* became INMI (involuntary musical imagery) also known as a brainworm, a song that gets stuck in your head. Now Zoom refers to how we have been meeting since 2020. The name likely rose from the definition of zoom, a camera shot that changes from far away to close up. -Rhonda R

SIAS will hold our 1st Zoom meeting as our January annual program. Sarah Kendrick, State Ornithologist with the Missouri Dept. of Conservation, will present on reintroducing brown-headed nuthatches back to Missouri after their 100 year absence. The Board will be purchasing a Zoom license so that we'll have no limits on time or attendance. Details will follow in the January newsletter. The Board regrets that we cannot meet in person.

What is a Snowy Owl Irruption Year

According to research, the snowy owl irruption phenomenon occurs every 4-5 years. It's triggered by a periodic boom in the populations of lemmings, voles, or other rodents they're feeding on in northern Canada. This boom of food allows snowy owls to successfully raise large clutches of chicks, somewhat of a fledgling flood. All the young birds span out in search of new hunting grounds. They might travel as far as 2000 miles from their Arctic birth place. They move to open flat spaces, often airports, large lake shorelines, and big open fields. While snowys are considered diurnal, it is believed they hunt mostly at night and remain sedentary during daylight hours. This is why it's important not to disturb them during the day. (From *An Irruption of Snowy Owls* At: shorturl.at/dovBC)

The World Bird Sanctuary, in St Louis MO, has provided the following Public Service Video on Snowy Owl sightings in Missouri. <https://youtu.be/x2oRjWwJWkQ>
And here are two links to excellent articles on keeping snowy owls safe while trying to view them.
First is: *Snowy Owl Viewing: Observe Without Disturbing* From Bird Watchers Digest At: shorturl.at/hlBq6
Second is: *You Can Help a Starving Snowy Owl in St. Louis By Leaving It Alone* At: shorturl.at/vdGHX

The Birds' Christmas Tree

The butcher gave some suet,
And Farmer Brown some wheat;
And Uncle John a sheaf of oats
All for the birds to eat.

And then we strung cranberries,
And pop corn, just for show,
And scattered lots of diamond dust
To look like frost, you know.

On Christmas Eve we trimmed it,
It made us laugh to see
How, in the morning, all the birds
Swarmed at their Christmas tree.

They ate the grain and suet;
They liked them, I tell you!
And then they went to work and ate
The decorations, too!

-Mary M. Parks

Ode (sort of) To a Snowy Owl

Big white blur out in a field,
Oh, what might thee be?
A grocery bag? Oh jubilee!
Is that a bird? Can we agree?
The bird we came so far to see? -R.R.

Seeing Birds First Thing in the Morning

Isn't it comforting to have feathered visitors stopping by? Through much of November and until recent days, it was so warm that it really wasn't necessary to supplement the diets of our birdy friends with store-bought goodies.

Two weeks ago, I finally put out my array of feeders: one suet cage, a caged peanut tube, and 2 platform feeders (one hangs and one rests on a retaining wall.) I also plugged in my trusty plastic heated dog bowl...for the birds, not for Bean our dog. It took days for any birds to come for a look see. Now that they've found and are relishing (so it seems) the free and easy bounty, I am relishing the new dynamic company.

And I happily accept the extra work of bringing feeders in at night then putting them back out in the early morning. If I didn't, the opossums and raccoons would be ripping up the feeders as they reaped the bounty there in.

For me, the most rewarding part of this venture is looking out at the crack of dawn to see just who is first in the chow line. While I know it's not me they're coming to see so early, it's a nice thought. -Rhonda R.

Tidings of Comfort and Joy It's a gift to be writing this after the events of Friday night. I am so thankful for the dedicated meteorologists at our three local television stations.

Meteorologists have made some amazing advancements in our lifetime. They now have special instruments to measure weather in the atmosphere far above the ground. There are satellites orbiting the Earth, sending back images of the weather over large areas. With computer modeling, they simulate how the weather patterns will develop in the future.

When local meteorologists announced that on Friday night our area would be in a level 4 storm threat, I was alarmed. My imagination started working overtime. What should I do to prepare? While driving home from town Friday afternoon, I seriously made note of all the surroundings. Would everything still look the same at sunrise Saturday morning?

Obsessed with the weather outcome and fortified by the WPSD Channel 6 (Paducah Ky) weather app on my iPhone, I watched Channel 6 non-stop from 7:30 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. WPSD faithfully tracked the monster tornado as it raged on the ground from Arkansas on through western Kentucky. Trent Okerson and Noah Bergren were outstanding in their efforts to both inform and warn folks in the path of the storm. I learned a lot about weather that night.

Here in southernmost IL we all received the gift of waking up on Saturday to find things were more or less the same. For those along the path of that history making horrific tornado, their world has changed. At this time of year, they so need our tidings of comfort and joy, and then some. -Rhonda R.

Homemade Bird Suet Recipes – *From Birds and Blooms Magazine*

Peanut Butter Suet – One cup each of the following: peanut butter*, lard, yellow cornmeal, and flour; two cups quick cooking oats and bird seed mix. Melt peanut butter and lard over low heat. In large bowl mix oats, birdseed, cornmeal, and flour. Stir in melted ingredients and mix. Once cool, press into molds of your choice and refrigerate.

Spreadable Suet – One cup each cornmeal, sugar, flour, peanut butter, lard, and raisins; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour & $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water. In medium bowl mix dry ingredients, then mix in water. Melt peanut butter and lard in microwave for 2 minutes. Mix into cornmeal mixture. Refrigerate for approx. 2 hours. Spread suet on tree limbs, pine cones, or onto a suet log.

Bird Suet Cakes – One cup each lard, honey, oats; two cups whole wheat flour; 2 eggs. Mix all ingredients and pour into a greased 9-inch square pan. Bake at 350 for 30 to 40 minutes. Put in mesh bags or fine wired suet feeder.

Pseudo Suet – Two cups shelled unsalted peanuts, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins, 2-3 tablespoons cornmeal. Process peanuts in a food processor until they're the consistency of peanut butter. Add in raisins and process for another minutes. Add in cornmeal and process again. Press this mixture into molds of your choice.

Super Suet – One tablespoon each black oil sunflower seeds, chicken scratch or cracked corn, and mealworms; $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon each unsalted pumpkin seeds and unsweetened cranberries; sprinkle of cinnamon and cayenne paper; coconut oil. Place all ingredients in muffin tin, coconut oil last to fill over all. If coconut oil is too solid place the tin in oven at lowest temperature until oil has completely melted. Place tin in freezer for approx. 3 hours, then pop them out of tin and rap in wax or parchment paper. Store in freezer. Thaw before putting out to birds.

*Most peanut butter contains added sugar. While low levels of sugar are ok for birds, there are "no sugar added" peanut butters available.

When the snow is deep and drifted
And the air is full of sleet,
I wonder how the chickadees
Find food that they can eat.
I like to spread some crumbs outdoors
To feed the hungry throng,
And listen while they show their thanks
By bursting into song.
When all the summer birds go south,
These fellows stay behind
To brighten up the coldest day
By singing. They're so kind!
If everyone would spread some crumbs
Upon the pure white snow,
The birds would not be hungry
When cold winds begin to blow
-Regina Sauro

The glances began shortly after they learned
that inside each of their friends is a magic bone
that could grant them their greatest wish.

CBC Feeder watchers Wanted

Check the Nov. SIAS newsletter for count compiler information. Record the highest total number of each species observed at any one time at the feeder/feeder area during the day of the count. Record the number of hours spent counting. limit of 2.

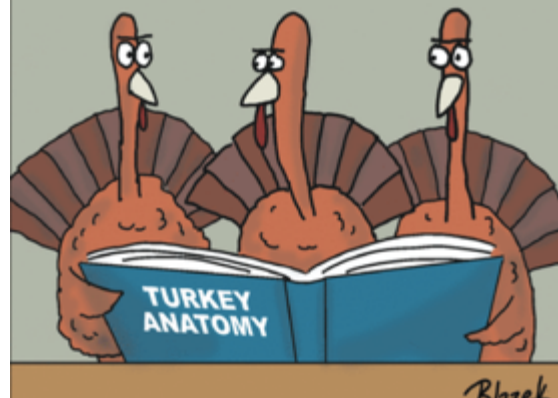
For a map view of the circles, visit:

<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>

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

