



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

NEWSLETTER

April 2022 – Vol. 29 No. 4

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

The Conservation and Management of Migratory Birds: From Mexico to Illinois to the Arctic

Join SIAS for this virtual program on **Friday, April 22nd at 7 P.M.** See [Zoom link below announcement](#).

Dr. Mike Ward, an assistant professor in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, has been using automated telemetry systems to track bird migration across the Gulf of Mexico since 2009. He and his students are working on a variety of projects throughout the Midwest but also in Texas, Mexico, and Cuba. Dr. Ward studies the ecology and behavior of birds in natural and modified ecosystems in order to inform conservation and management. "From our previous research, we know approximately forty percent of the birds tagged along the coast of Alabama make it across the Gulf to the Yucatan Peninsula. This journey is very taxing for the birds, and if they don't have enough fat, they will fall in the ocean and die. Upon arrival in the Yucatan, they have just flown 1,000 km non-stop for 24 hours and most have used all of their fat. So, they have to eat to gain more fat before they continue their journey to South America," Ward explained.

Dr. Mike Ward is originally from Jacksonville, IL and received his PhD from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in 2004. He is currently a professor in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, in the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois and an Ornithologist at the Illinois Natural History Survey.

Many SIAS members are familiar with his father, Pat Ward. For many years, through his nursery business, Pat supplied the wild bird seed for our annual seed sales and shared his wonderful stories of the many birding trips he led throughout North and South America.

All SIAS members should take a short period of time to visit the zoom website and join before Friday so that accessing will be painless for the meeting. It is free to all to join to view and participate in meetings and SIAS is now an official license holder to schedule and run meetings. -Joe Merkelbach, President

Instructions for signing into the April SIAS Zoom presentation: Time: April 22, 2022 07:00 PM Central Time

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84728768774?pwd=K0dVYURsa1ZP0URVaWRGbUdmdXl6dz09>

If you have to type in the link, use this shortened version: <https://tinyurl.com/mr4as4ku>

Meeting ID: 847 2876 8774 Passcode: 225733

Dial in by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) Dial-ins, be prepared to provide the following Meeting ID & Passcode (see above)
Find your local number at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84728768774?pwd=K0dVYURsa1ZP0URVaWRGbUdmdXl6dz09>



April SIAS Program Highlights: Our third Zoom program featured Dr. Douglas Robinson, speaking on the topic of Birding that Counts.

Doug started off with a bit of history on his early life as a child bird nerd, using rather large binoculars (20x80s?) that looked to have weighed more than he did at the time. In those years he quickly realized he wanted to be an ornithologist, was taking copious field notes, and was already planning the books he wanted to write. At the time, mentors were few. He later became good friends with Todd Fink, with whom he shared bird sighting reports and discussions and to whom owes his infamous nickname "booger" (a response Todd made to one of those reports.)

Doug interjected a lot of humor into his presentation. He shared his ten commandments of birding that include: Thou shalt keep a list of all birds seen; Thou shalt start thy year list on New Year's Day; Thou shalt honor thy state birds records committee; Thou shalt not reveal locations of owls on eBird; Thou shalt not use playbacks during the breeding season; and Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's optics.

The main focus of Doug's presentation centered on his favorite research project, "Oregon 2020". It is a statewide benchmark of Oregon's birds as of the year 2020 and a project he would like to see adopted by other states. The Oregon 2020 Project is a collaboration of citizen scientists and professional ornithologists working towards a high-quality, statewide estimate of the abundance and distribution of Oregon's birds. They use methods that are exactly repeatable today and in the future, incorporating eBird. They collaborate between professional researchers and citizen scientists and they work to improve the quality of volunteer data contributions through training.

Their method is similar to a point count. Each count is conducted at a fixed location, traveling no more than a couple hundred feet during the count, if at all. Each count is short, preferably between 5-10 minutes. The exact location, start time, length of count, and number of observers is all documented. Data is submitted via eBird, making it available to Oregon 2020 and other scientists. To learn more about the project and how it has progressed, visit: <https://oregon2020.com>

Doug believes that it is our job to look at our time and preserve what's around us for future observers. I believe we can all agree with that. Many thanks to Doug for sharing his wonderful life story and life-long passion for birds with SIAS. We look forward to the Sept. 23rd presentation by his wife Tara. -Rhonda R.



What Happening in Southernmost IL...

...besides spring wildflowers blooming, ruby-crowned kinglets bellowing "look at me look at me look at me!", & crazy weather

20th Anniversary Birding Blitz

April 30th - competition & May 1st - awards brunch

There's still time to form a team and register for the Blitz!

You'll find it's really a lot of fun and a fun challenge.

Collecting pledges is again required. The 5 categories remain the same as in past years: Open A Big Day, Open B Dawn to Dusk, County Big Day, Senior (over 55) and Muscle-powered.

For complete Blitz details including registration forms (due ASAP) and pledge forms, visit the Blitz Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/317666471615613/> Or contact Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605 or at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com

The awards brunch will be held the following day, May 1st, at The Haven on Crab Orchard Lake, of IL Rt. 13 (10289 Haven Rd, Carbondale) and is open to the public! Set up at 9 a.m., socializing at 9:30 a.m., turn in checklists by 10 a.m., awards ceremony starts at 10:30 a.m.

New 20th Anniversary t-shirts are for sale for \$20 each. The image is a redo of the very first Birding Blitz artwork. The prothontary warbler has always been the Blitz's mascot, as the preeminent species of the Cache. Profits from the shirt sales help cover the yearly operations costs of the Birding Blitz.



If you're not competing, please consider pledging to a Birding Blitz team. Pledge donations go to support habitat restoration and preservation efforts in the Cache River Watershed. If you'd like to pledge but don't know a team, just send your pledge check payable to Friends of the Cache River to: Birding Blitz of Southernmost IL c/o So. IL Audubon Society, P.O. Box 222, Carbondale, IL 62903

Sierra Club Annual Native Plant Sale

April 30, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., at the Town Square Pavilion in Carbondale (at the corner of North Illinois Ave. & Jackson St. just west of the RR tracks). Many species of native plants will be available along with expert advice. Plants are locally raised by Southernwood Gardens, Alto Pass. You can order ahead from Southernwood via Facebook for pickup on the 30th.

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernwoodGardens-134537089896753>

For questions, call Barb McKasson at 618.549.9684

Night Sky Viewing at Giant City St. Park

May 6, 7:30-9 p.m., at Giant City State Park.

Join the Astronomical Association of Southern Illinois (AASI) as they do a little night sky viewing. Join the Park Naturalist for a short evening hike to the viewing field where AASI will have telescopes set up. This program is weather dependent. Registration is required. Call 618.457.4836 for more details or to register.

Bell Smith Springs, SNF, Trash Blast

May 6, 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Bell Smith Springs.

Join the Friends of the Shawnee National Forest as they partner with the USFS and the IL Extension Service for another Trash Blast trash collection and clean-up. On April 1, they had a clean-up at SNF's Ripple Hollow and removed 2,042 pounds of trash, including dozens of abandoned tires. Watch the Friend's Facebook page for further details on the May 6th event, link: https://www.facebook.com/shawneefriends/?ref=page_internal

SIAS Meeting & Program Calendar

May 22 - Spring Picnic - will be at the Harvey Welch Pavilion on Hickory Ridge Golf Course, 2727 W. Glenn Road, Carbondale, but take Edgewood Rd.

August 26 - Zoom presentation/meeting at 7pm; Jeff Hoover speaker

September 23 - Zoom presentation/meeting at 7pm; Tara Kate Robinson speaker

October 28 - Zoom presentation/meeting at 7pm; Kelly McKay speaker

Dec. 2 - Zoom presentation/meeting at 7pm; Tara Beveroth speaker

SIAS Annual Picnic May 22nd

We are trying a new location this year, the Harvey Welch Pavilion at Hickory Ridge Golf Course, 2727 W Glenn Road, Carbondale, see directions below

Arrive at 1 p.m. for set up and socializing. We will eat at 2 P.M. SIAS will provide the meats (& a non-meat option), buns, condiments, and some beverages. Please bring a side dish, your own plate, utensils, and a beverage.

From Carbondale: take Main Street (IL Rt. 13) west to the intersection with Old Hwy 13 and New Era Road, turn north (right) onto New Era Road, drive 1.6 miles to Edgewood Lane, turn west (left) onto Edgewood Lane, follow road to park maintenance building parking lot.

From Murphysboro: take Walnut Street (IL Rt. 13) east to the intersection with Old Hwy 13 and New Era Road, turn north (left) onto New Era Road, drive 1.6 miles to Edgewood Lane, turn west (left) onto Edgewood Lane, follow road to park maintenance building parking lot.

Spring Bird Count - Your Help Needed!

Spring Bird Count(s) will take place on **Saturday, May 7th and Sunday, May 8th** in all the counties throughout Illinois. This is the 50th year of the counts! You can help by contributing any amount of time you can or consider feeder watching for two hours. Compilers of local counties are below. **Please provide compilers at least seven (7) days advance notice of your interest in participating.**

Alexander Co., 05/07: Allen Gathman - agathman@gmail.com

Jackson Co., 05/07 & 05/08: Rhonda Rothrock - 618.684.6605

Johnson Co., 05/07: Dave Enstrom -

Franklin Co. & Massac Co., Need a Compilers! Contact Tara Beveroth at beveroth@illinois.edu

Pulaski Co., 05/08 Rhonda Rothrock - 618.684.6605

Pope Co., 05/07 Andrea Douglas - anderatd@yahoo.com

Saline Co., 05/07: Cathie DeNeal -

Union Co., 05/07: Vern Kleen - vkleen@comcast.net

Williamson Co., 05/07: Vicki Lang-Mendenhall - vickil@siu.edu

2nd Saturday Monthly Birding with SIAS

May 14th Migratory Bird Day Outing at Bogart Point, CONWR, 9:00-11:00 AM

Directions (from Carbondale, IL Rt. 13): Take IL-13 east to S Division St in Carterville, 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 right/south onto N Wolf Creek Rd. Continue south to the causeway. Turn left/west into parking lot. Take the sidewalk to Bogart Point.

NOTE— Day use passes are required on Crab Orchard Refuge and can be purchased 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 is \$80.

New Firefly Species in the Cache

June 3, 7:30-9 p.m., at Heron Pond Preserve

The cypress firefly, lightening bug, (*Photuris walldoxeyi*) was first documented in early 2019 in high-quality cypress swamps in Mississippi, Tennessee and Indiana. A confirmed Illinois sighting was recorded at the Heron Pond boardwalk in June 2019. Natural heritage biologist Christina Feng will tell us about fireflies of Illinois while leading a night hike on the Todd Fink-Heron Pond Trail to the Heron Pond boardwalk in search of the cypress firefly. For more details and to reserve your spot on the hike call Molie Oliver at 618.657.2064.

50 Years of Spring Bird Counting in Illinois

In 1959, the organizer of the North American Breeding Bird Survey, Chandler Robbins*, organized the first Spring Bird Count in Maryland. In the early 1970s, the IL Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR) turned to Vernon Kleen (retired state ornithologist) to organize the first Illinois statewide SBC. Vern had been mentored by Chandler Robbins "Chan" and helped with the first SBC in Maryland, making him the ideal candidate to take on such a large task in Illinois. With the help of the Illinois Audubon Society, the first count was conducted on Saturday, 6 May 1972 and included 650 observers in 62 counties.

Vern continued organizing the count for over 30 years before transitioning the count to the Illinois Natural History Survey, where it is currently organized by Tara Beveroth and Mike Ward. Reports from the SBC are published each year in the Meadowlark, a journal of the Illinois Ornithological Society.

Censuses are conducted in all 102 counties in Illinois. However, because this is volunteer dependent, in any given year there may be counties not censused. Each county has a compiler responsible for recruiting volunteers and assigning them to areas within the county to census. Some counties have over 100 volunteers, making the compiler's job vital to prevent double counting an area.

Some volunteers may start as early as midnight on the day of the count. Volunteers record all birds that they see or hear, the number of hours spent looking for birds during the day, the number of hours they spend "owling" (pre-dawn hours), the number of miles driven in a car, and the number of miles walked. All data are sent to the county compiler to tabulate and submit to the state compiler.

May 7th, 2022 will mark the 50th Spring Bird Count in Illinois. Novice and returning birders alike enjoy participating in the count. For some, this may be the one time of the year they dust off their rusty bird identification skills and really hone them, while others are eager to try and break species high-count records.

With over 49 years of SBC data, we can look at trends in a species' population, range movement, distribution, and even document rare species. Over the past 49 years, SBC data has shown declines in species that were once common, including the Red-headed Woodpecker and Chimney Swift. These species have declined due to habitat loss and food availability. Data have also shown that introduced species have increased in abundance throughout the state. For instance, the House Finch was originally a west coast species but was introduced into the pet trade on the east coast in the 1940s. It has been making its way westward ever since, as can be supported by SBC data.

These data will soon be easily available for public use. Until that time, if you are interested in the data, contact beveroth@illinois.edu. Because of the nature of these data, declines or increases in certain species' population trends may not accurately reflect true changes in populations, and statistical tests should be performed to determine if observed trends differ from a stable (no change) trend.

The count would not be possible without the continued support of volunteers and compilers as well as various organizations including, but not limited to, the Illinois Audubon and local chapters, Illinois Ornithological Society, IDNR, The Nature Conservancy, Bird Conservation Network, and numerous Illinois Nature and Forest Preserves. For more information, including a list of county compilers to contact if you are interested in participating, visit <http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/collections/birds/sbc/>

*Chandler "Chan" Seymour Robbins (July 17, 1918 – March 20, 2017) was an American ornithologist. His contributions to the field are renowned and include co-authorship of an influential field guide to birds, as well as organizing the North American Breeding Bird Survey. Robbins wrote *Birds of North America: A Guide to Field Identification* with Bertel Bruun and Herbert S. Zim (illustrated by Arthur B. Singer) in 1966. It was the so-called "Golden Guide" that introduced innovative two-page spreads that integrated text, illustrations, range maps and silhouettes. Read more about the amazing Chan at <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/robbins/index.cfm> and <https://www.audubon.org/news/in-memory-chandler-s-robbins>



Seeing Birds

On April 30, 2022, there will be at least 24 birders out and about in southernmost IL seriously bird watching. They'll be teaming up with their birder buddies, 8 teams as of this writing. They will be out, rain or shine but shine is preferred. For many of these birders, it will be the 20th year they've spent this one particular day in an attempt to see or hear as many birds as they can before days end.

The first Birding Blitz, April 30, 2002, had a greater mission than to just see birds. This contest was to serve as both a way to bring attention to the realm of possibilities that is the Cache River Watershed and to raise funds in support of restoration and preservation efforts taking place there. Each competing team is required to collect a minimum of \$100 in donations.

Initially, funds raised were to provide financial assistance for the construction of ripple weirs (low-lying rocky barriers) to be placed in various locations within the Cache. Weirs help to slow the flow of water as it approaches the Cache, raise and sustain water levels, and prevent or reduce erosion leading to wetland loss.

Since 2002, competitors in the Blitz and their loyal supporters have raised over \$47,000. In addition to the weirs, Blitz donations aided in the construction of the Michael W. Wolff Memorial Wetland at the Cache River State Natural Area and most recently in the purchase of the 70-acre Powless tract, acreage situated along the Cache River Diversion in Alexander County.

Cache River conservation efforts were initiated in the 1970's, most notably by the Citizen's Committee to Save the Cache River and then with the formation of the Joint Venture Partnership in 1991. This partnership includes representatives from the IL Dept of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ducks Unlimited, and The Nature Conservancy.

The Joint Venture shares a goal of restoring the habitats and processes necessary to sustain the plants, animals and natural communities of the Cache River Watershed. These efforts are assisted by the Birding Blitz of Southernmost IL and the Friends of the Cache River Watershed.

The Cache River Watershed is and always will be a realm of possibilities.

- Rhonda R.



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 _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Phone Number _____
 Email _____

**Mail to: Southern Illinois Audubon Society
 Attn: Membership
 P.O. Box 222, Carbondale, IL 62903-0222**

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.

Knock Knock. Who's
 there? Anita.
 Anita Who? Anita ask,
 will you renew your dues?



On World Migratory Bird Day, Have a Bird Friendly Mocha

World Migratory Bird Day is officially celebrated on the 2nd Saturday of May in Canada and the US (May 14th in 2022), and the 2nd Saturday of October in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean (October 8th in 2022).

To celebrate, consider a purchase of some shade grown coffee and chocolate (cacao) and make a caffe' mocha! A University of Utah 2012 study found that wooded "shade" plantations that produce coffee and chocolate with some native forest trees left standing, provide four times greater bird diversity than open farmland. Buying Certified Bird Friendly and Organic coffee and chocolate (cacao) promotes biodiversity, sustainability, fair trade, and contributes to a greener morning.

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/bird-friendly>

SIAS Board of Directors

President: Joe Merkelbach 618.832.3112
 Vice President & Programs Chair:
 Vicki Lang-Mendenhall 618.897.9888
 Secretary: Mary McCarthy 618.884.8182
 Treasurer: Laraine Wright 618.487.8789
 Conservation/Education Chair:
 Cathie Hutcheson 618.529.2022
 Finance Chair: Greg Kupiec 618.684.5188

Hospitality: Phyllis Beck
 618.549.9619 Outings: Kirsten Trimble
 618.581.4866
 Membership Chair & Newsletter Editor:
 Rhonda Rothrock 618.684.8608 Or
 woodthrushes@hotmail.com
 SIAS Webmaster: Jim Shofstall
 SIAS email: slaudubonsociety@gmail.com
 SIAS Website: <http://www.slaudubon.org>

When the Birds Go North Again

Oh, every year hath its winter,
 And every year hath its rain-
 But a day is always coming
 When the birds go North again.

When new leaves swell in the forest,
 And grass springs green on the plain,
 And the alder's veins turn crimson-
 And the birds go North again.

Oh, every heart hath its sorrow,
 And every heart hath its pain-
 But a day is always coming
 When the birds go North again.

'Tis the sweetest thing to remember
 If courage be on the wane,
 When the cold dark days are over-
 Why, the birds go North again.

-Ella Rhoads Higginson (1862-1940)

Neotropical migratory birds are birds that migrate between North America and the Tropics. Some travel incredibly long distances. Lucy's warbler flies from 500-1,500 miles. Wood thrush fly from 600-3,700 miles.



**Southern Illinois Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 222
 Carbondale, IL 62903-0222**



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

