



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

## NEWSLETTER

January 2023 - Vol. 30 No. 1

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

### SIAS Back In Person for Our Annual Meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup>!

On Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, SIAS will be welcoming members and friends to our first in person meeting since 2020. This will be our Annual Meeting with election, potluck, and a presentation by one of SIAS's favorite members, John Schwegman. **Our meeting will be held in the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale.** The Fellowship Hall is on the lower level of the church. Follow signs to the elevator then take it down to the Hall.

**Rarely Seen Natural Phenomena that I have Photographed** is the title of the exciting wildlife program John Schwegman has in store for SIAS. John's presentation will include images of a glacier calving into the sea, loess being blown up from glacial outwash, a hummer hawking an insect on the wing, and much more. **John's presentation will start at 7:00 p.m.!**

John is a lifelong naturalist who had a long career as a botanist with the IL Dept. of Conservation and IL Dept. of Natural Resources. He was instrumental in forming the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, and has served many years on the board of the commission. Since his retirement, John has continued to study wildlife, including dragonflies, birds, mussels, and plants. He also enjoys sharing his photography and stories. John's wife Martha always accompanies John, sharing all his adventures. It seems appropriate that John is our inaugural, post CoVid in person presenter in that he was our last presenter before our CoVid shutdown.

**This is SIAS's annual meeting event beginning with a potluck dinner followed by a short business meeting and election of officers. Note: earlier potluck set-up time of 5:30 p.m. with earlier potluck starting time of 6:00 p.m.** SIAS will provide a main course and some beverages. Please bring an entrée to share and your own dinnerware and utensils. Masks are optional, but don't feel embarrassed if you wear one!

SIAS will again hold a silent auction and possible a drawing for door prize(s) as part of the evening's events. Members are encouraged to bring new or lightly used items for the auctions (or as door prizes.) Folks providing auctions items are asked to suggest a value as a starting bid. Members are also encouraged to take part in the auction as this is one of SIAS's big fundraisers!

This year the slate of officers to be elected are: President - Vicki Lang, Vice-President - Joe Merkelbach, Membership - Kirsten Trimble, and Outings Chair - Rhonda Rothrock. Offices slated for re-election are: Treasurer - Laraine Wright, Secretary - Mary McCarthy, and Hospitality Chair - Phyllis Beck. Nominations for positions can be made in advance to any SIAS Board member or on the evening of the meeting.

### Treasurer's report for 2022 *By Laraine Wright*

Although our membership dues fell this year, SIAS still received enough in donations to keep us solvent and allow us to make financial contributions to other groups that support our values.

Income for 2022 was \$2,301 (\$666 dues, \$775 unrestricted donations, and \$860 unrestricted memorial gifts). Expenses for 2022 were \$3,029.21 (primarily \$308.28 for the newsletter, a decrease because many now receive it digitally, \$139.93 for programs, \$139 for two picnics, and \$182 for Post Office box rental). Expenses included three contributions: \$1,350 to purchase a bench in our name for the refurbished, accessible Post Oak Trail at Giant City State Park, \$500 to Free Again, and \$150 to the Illinois Audubon Society in memory of SIAS founding member Judith Joy.

We are grateful to these members and friends who donated \$600 in memory of SIAS founding member Clark Ashby (Mary Dresser, Harriet Simon, and Laraine Wright), \$160 in memory of longtime member Clara McClure (Mary Dresser, Nelda Hinkley, and Laraine Wright), and \$100 in memory of Kent Hutcheson (Amber Hanson).

Other unrestricted donations to support SIAS were greatly appreciated in the amount of \$775 from Phyllis Beck, Tom Bik and Laurel Toussaint, Lilly Crane, Elizabeth Crelling, Linda Dutcher, Carolyn Ferdinand, Nancy Garwood and Richard Thomas, Amber Hanson, Karen Kaufman, Jeff Kessnar, Elizabeth Klaver, Greg Kupiec, Dave and Anton Kvernes, Richard and Cindy LaSalle, Mike McNeerney, Frances Oros, and Lyle White.

Our funds are held at the SIU Credit Union: \$2,030.51 checking (of which \$851.63 is restricted to the Birding Blitz), \$3,962.19 C.D., and \$5.07 member shares.



### In Memoriam: Aimee Hemphill

Member Aimee Hemphill, 71, died Jan. 14, 2023, after a brief illness. She had been the latest volunteer coordinator for the bluebird trail monitors at Crab Orchard NWR and was co-founder of the native plant demonstration garden and prairie there. Our condolences to her daughter and her husband, Sam Spiller.

### 2nd Saturday Monthly Birding with SIAS Outing Moving to Evergreen Park, Carbondale

**Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00-11:00 a.m.** The location of SIAS's monthly birding gathering has moved from Bogart Point at Crab Orchard NWR to Evergreen Park on the south side of Carbondale. Meet at the Red Oak Shelter, that sets along Carbondale Reservoir lake. It's the same shelter where SIAS held our 2022 fall picnic.

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 Kirsten Trimble at 618.524.4166

Carbondale Reservoir is listed as one of eBird's year-round "Hotspots". Two hundred and seventeen species of birds have been reported in and around the lake.

## SIAS Meeting & Program Calendar

**Feb. 24** - Dr. Joy O'Keefe on Bat Ecosystems

**March 24** - Dr. Brent Pease on Sounds of Nature

**April 28 (tentative)** – to be announced

**May 21** (date subject to change) picnic

*June & July - Summer break*

## What's Happening in Southernmost IL...

*...spring, winter, or fall, Mother Nature can't make up her mind*

### Mysteries of Ancient Fire at Giant City SP

Jan. 28th (Saturday), 1-4 p.m.

Join Mark Denzer and follow the procession of humanity's relationship with fire! Take a look through ancient and modern lenses to discover how we have manipulated this powerful element through time. After the lecture, participate in hands-on training. Through friction, percussion and tool use, you will gain first-hand experience in ancient ways. Registration is required. Call 618.457.4836 to register. The Visitor Center is located at 1-245 Giant City Rd., Makanda.

### Birding Hikes at Giant City SP

Jan. 29<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) & Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> (Saturday), 9-11 a.m.

Winter is a great time to look for birds at Giant City State Park! Join Vicki Land-Mendenhall, park volunteer and SIAS member, as she guides participants along the 1/3-mile accessible Post Oak Trail. Registration is required. Call 618.457.4836 to register.

### Monthly Public Astronomy Observations Return to SIUC in 2023

Join SIU Physics and the Astronomical Association of Southern Illinois for these evenings of guided telescopic observations of the night sky from the Neckers Observation Deck on the SIUC campus. The observation deck is 624 square feet in size. It is built out of 2" thick rubber matting for vibration isolation. The primary telescope is a 14" Meade LX600. This computer guided telescope is used for all observation events as well as the lab portion of PHYS 103 (Astronomy). Several additional scopes are setup for observations as needed including Celestron 8" SCTs, a Coronado SolarMax II, and a Stellarvue SV106 Raptor (106mm refractor).

The Observation Deck is located on the South West (A-Wing) roof of the Neckers building at 1245 Lincoln Drive. Closest parking is in the lot between Neckers and the Public Policy Institute. Enter the building through the west doors facing the parking lot. Take the stairs up to the fourth floor. Meet outside Neckers 456 or follow the signs from there up the South West stairwell. Children accompanied by adults are welcome. Dress weather appropriate for this outdoor viewing. Please note that the observation deck is not handicap accessible and is only accessible via stairs. Note also that while this is an outdoor activity, you may be in close proximity to people throughout the evening. Masks for this event are optional. All observations are weather dependent. **For more information, including future viewing dates, visit**

<https://physics.siu.edu/events/astronomy.php> or

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1443237346208720/?ref=newsfeed>

## Nov./Dec. SIAS Program Highlights:

Illinois Natural History Survey Avian Ecologist Tara Beveroth provided details on why monitoring birds is important. Tara stated that one of the reasons for monitoring birds is to determine status and species trends. Monitoring is essential for species management and conservation science. Birds are easy to monitor, sensitive to changes, found worldwide, and are good indicators of environmental health. Understanding how birds react to changes can help mitigate future ecosystem failures. Data on bird trends is used in developing best management practices in restoring, reconstructing, and maintaining natural ecosystems.

Some of the changes birds are facing relate to habitat loss throughout their ranges, as well as predation, collisions, food availability, and climate change. Monitoring from 1966-2013 indicates that climate change is resulting in a latitude change in the center of bird abundance. And this also relates with habitat loss in their known ranges.

Tara referenced how bird monitoring has occurred in Illinois for over 100 years. Monitoring began with Christmas Bird Counts that started in December of 1900 and includes specific surveys conducted in IL from 1906-1909, again in 1956-1958, and then again 100 years after first. Plus, for over 50 years USGS Breeding Bird Surveys have provided a continuing source of data from Illinois and throughout the U.S.A. In Illinois, Spring Bird Counts have been conducted since 1972. Over the last 30 years multiple other monitoring studies have focused on species from prothonotary warblers to nightjars and owls.

My overview barely covers the wealth of information Tara presented. It's reassuring to know that she and her colleagues at the IL Natural History Survey are working so diligently in support of birds.

*- Rhonda R*

## A Busy Christmas Bird Count Season in Southernmost IL

The 2022-23 Christmas Bird Count Season ended on January 4<sup>th</sup>. It was a busy one for participants and compilers. At least 10 were successfully completed in southernmost IL. Some of those counts have carried on for over 50 years.

Participation has fallen over time. Yet a base of loyal counters still remains, joined by a few new, enthusiastic birders. One semi-regular participant is a from Delaware. He visits family in Kentucky over the holidays. Several local counts are aided by Kelly McKay who drives down from the Quad-Cities. Four Missouri birders regularly assist with the Mississippi River NWR CBC. They cover the half of that circle that falls on their side of the river. Forty some individuals assisted in these 10 counts. The average is higher than four per count due to the fact that several of us assist in multiple counts. Vicki Lang-Mendenhall and I average nine counts per year. She is compiler of one of them and I currently compile four.

Due possibly to our unseasonably warm and erratic weather, waterfowl numbers were lower than average. Unexpected summer hold-overs included fish crows and gray catbirds. Rarities included lesser black-backed gull, snow bunting, a great-tailed grackle on the Kentucky side of the Mernmet Lake circle, and 1 Eurasian tree sparrow (a first for the Crab Orchard CBC and likely a first in our area). Another record were the 9 short-eared owls tallied for the Jackson County count.

We compilers thank all of our dedicated participants, in the field and watching feeders and hope you are all willing and able to help again next year. *-Rhonda R*

Organized by the National Audubon Society, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count is the nation's longest-running, free community science project. They welcome all participants and to compilers they say:

*In future CBC seasons, please make sure to remind your participants to be thoughtful and respectful of homeowners' privacy when birding in residential areas. We've received a number of messages from concerned non-birding residents who see people with binoculars peering into their yards and toward their windows unannounced.*

*And include a reminder about the use of the Merlin bird sound ID app: It's fine to use this excellent birding aid to help identify and find species but remember that each bird included on your list for the day needs to be verified by observers—not just "ID'd by Merlin" and move on without confirming the species!*

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



## Give BIRDS the ROW

An initiative to “Give BIRDS the ROW” is expanding throughout the state. The program originated with the installation of houses for prothonotary warblers along the Lost Bridge Trail near the IL Dept. of Transportation (IDOT) headquarters in Springfield. With the goal of restoring diverse bird species on IDOT rights of way, also called ROW. In its latest effort, a group of IDOT employees coordinated with District 6 to install bluebird houses provided by the McHenry County Audubon Society at the Coalfield Rest Areas on Interstate 55 near Litchfield in Montgomery County. Posted in short-grass, open-yard habitat, the houses not only provide a resting spot for bluebirds but also attract other native bird species.

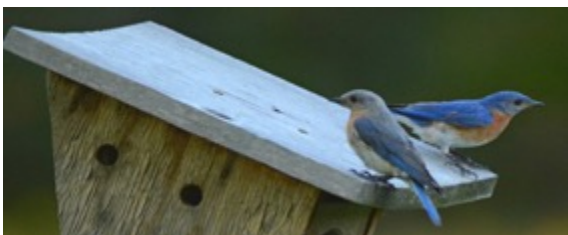
“In total, four bluebird houses have been posted so far: two at the northbound Coalfield Rest Area and two at the southbound Coalfield Rest Area,” said IDOT Photogrammetrist Jarod Hitchings. “The installation of more houses are planned for prothonotary warblers along the Spoon River and for bluebird houses at rest areas and other appropriate short-grass, park-like habitats maintained by IDOT.”

Hitchings is joined in the effort by fellow Photogrammetrist Brenda Anderson, both of the Bureau of Design and Environment, as well as a host of other IDOT District employees. Design and Environment’s Bicycle and Pedestrian/ADA Policy Engineer Steve Letsky also donated handcrafted bird houses he built on his own.

“Operations and Design and Environment have worked well together to promote declining bird species,” Hitchings said. “Partnering with the district offices, we have truly made this a statewide effort to promote a healthy environment for our feathered friends. Birds are a sentinel species and are a signal that the natural landscape is healthy for all wildlife.”

The initiative continues to evolve. “We hope to grow this program and install a variety of houses at different locations as the habitat and range indicates,” Dobbs said. “In the future, if interesting species find homes on our right of way, we would like to do a webcam or something similar to share it with employees and the public.”

Anyone interested in supporting this work is invited to reach out to Hitchings at [jarod.hitchings@illinois.gov](mailto:jarod.hitchings@illinois.gov) “We are hoping to encourage the nature community, educators and bird enthusiasts to partner with IDOT in monitoring these boxes to discourage non-native species while documenting successes in diversifying the species along IDOT-managed habitats,” he said. <https://idot.illinois.gov/about-idot/stay-connected/blog/birdhouses.html>



## Own a forest, but not sure how to care for it?

Learn how to manage your woodlands to meet your goals - attract wildlife, grow timber for harvest, create recreational opportunities, or leave a legacy. Forest landowners new to owning forest or new to management are invited to participate and learn how to actively manage their woodlands to meet their goals. Two options exist, a full course and virtual short course.

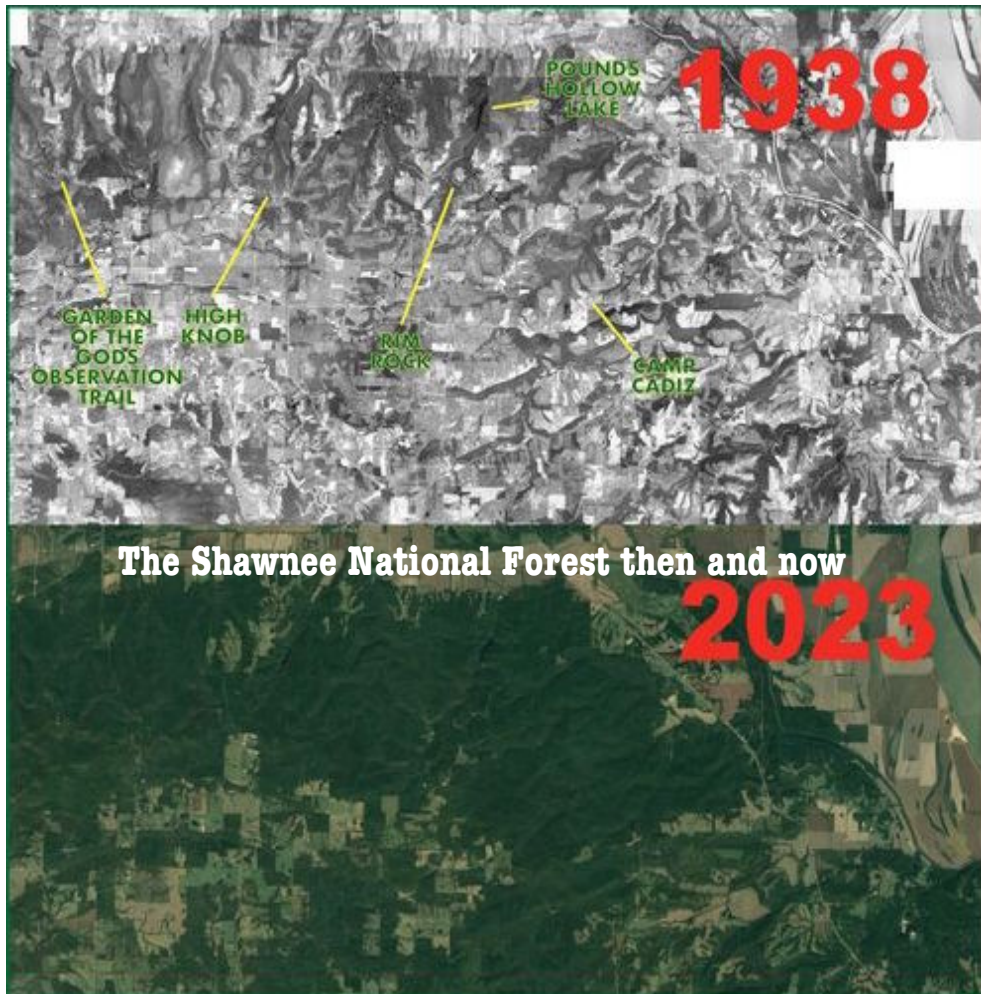
**\$50 Full Course (March 2023-February 2024)**

Get experience in basic forest and natural resource management and management planning with this year-long program covering the 16 southernmost counties of Illinois. The program includes full-day instructional sessions and hands-on field days led by IL Extension Forestry staff and program partners. Plan to attend events in-person one weekend out of each month. This course is limited to 25 participants and priority will be given to new forest landowners, those new to managing their forest, and individuals within the program area.

**\$10 Virtual Short Course (September 2023)**

A series of virtual classes will be offered covering forest management and management planning for different goals. These classes will be led by forestry experts and provide the knowledge necessary to begin managing your forested land. This is a great option for Illinois residents living north of Interstate 64. An optional field-day will be offered to gain experience and skills in the field.

Please apply no later than February 10th, 2023. This is not a formal registration, but an application to determine eligibility and interest. We will contact you shortly following the application period, regarding the next steps and payment. To learn more and apply, visit: <https://emails.illinois.edu/newsletter/34/351721834.html>



At the top is an aerial photo of southeasternmost Illinois in 1938. It shows the area is eroded, denuded, and mostly treeless. The darkest areas are the only areas where trees remained. And that's the reason the Shawnee National Forest was created in 1933.

Below that is a current 2023 aerial photo of the same area of the Shawnee National Forest, 85 years later. Note how much of the 1938 light grey to white areas are now filled in with the green (dark) trees in the bottom image.

That's successful U.S. Forest Service management!



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

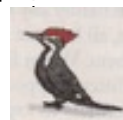
Individual Member \$15  
 Family \$25  
 Student Voting Member \$ 5  
 Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Pileated woodpeckers  
 don't flock but SIAS  
 members like to!**

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

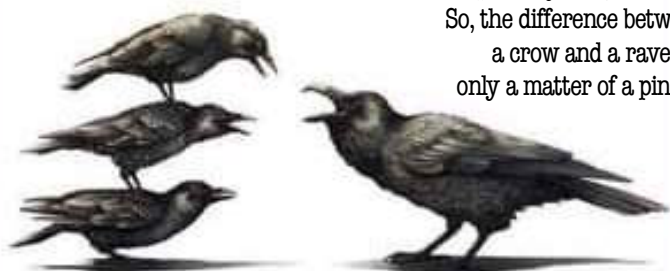
**I/We would like to receive our newsletter via email: YES / NO**  
 If you receive your newsletter electronically,  
 contact Laraine W. or Rhonda R. to check your dues status.



A raven has 17 primary wing feathers. They're the big feathers at the end of the wing and are called pinion feathers.

A crow has 16 primary wing feathers.

So, the difference between  
 a crow and a raven is  
 only a matter of a pinion.



### SIAS Board of Directors

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 Vice President & Programs Chair:  
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 Secretary: Mary McCarthy 618.684.818  
 Treasurer: Laraine Wright 618.201.1515  
 Conservation/Education Chair:  
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 SIAS Webmaster: Jim Shofstall  
 SIAS Website: <http://www.siaudubon.org>

**Some farmers in Bangladesh have switched to raising  
 ducks instead of chickens, because during catastrophic  
 floods, ducks float.**

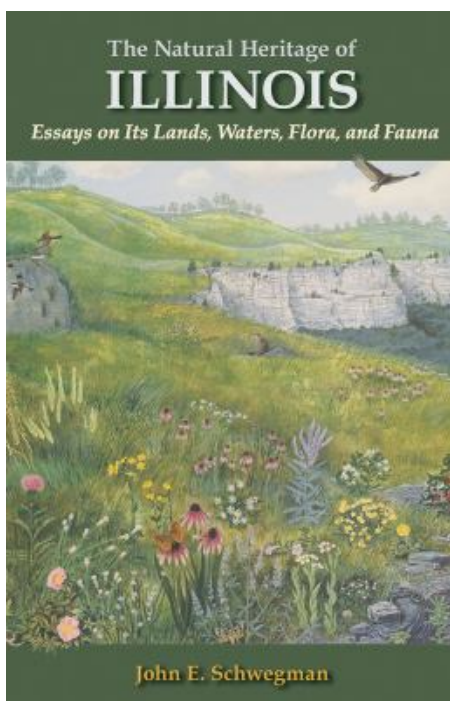
*And that's the truth!*



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



John Schwegman  
 is the principal  
 author of The  
 Natural Divisions  
 of Illinois, a  
 classification of the  
 state's natural  
 lands that guides  
 the development of  
 the Illinois Nature  
 Preserves System.  
 He established the  
 Natural Areas  
 Program (now  
 Division of Natural  
 Heritage) at the  
 Illinois Dept. of  
 Natural Resources.

John published  
 these essays in  
 August 2016.

