



## Southern Illinois Audubon Society Newsletter

**March 2024**  
**Vol. 31 No. 3**

Southern Illinois  
Audubon Society (SIAS)  
P.O. Box 222  
Carbondale, IL  
62903-0222  
*Established in 1970*

<http://www.siaudubon.org>

Email SIAS at:  
[siaudubonsociety@gmail.com](mailto:siaudubonsociety@gmail.com)

### SIAS Board of Directors

President & Programs Chair:  
Vicki Lang-Mendenhall  
618.697.9868  
Vice President: Joe Merkelbach  
618.532.3112  
Secretary: Mary McCarthy  
618.684.8182  
Treasurer: Laraine Wright  
618.201.1515  
Conservation/Education Chair:  
Cathie Hutcheson  
618.529.2022  
Hospitality Chair: Phyllis Beck  
618.549.9819  
Membership Chair: Kirsten  
Trimble 618.521.4266  
Outings Chair & Newsletter  
Editor: Rhonda Rothrock  
618.684.6605 /  
[woodthrushela@hotmail.com](mailto:woodthrushela@hotmail.com)  
SIAS Webmaster: Jim Shofstall

SIAS is the sponsor of  
*The Birding Blitz of  
Southernmost Illinois*  
Over 21 years of  
team birding for a cause!  
Details can be found at:  
[www.facebook.com/group  
s/317666471615613/](http://www.facebook.com/group/s/317666471615613/)

## Long-term Ecological Studies in Yasuní, Ecuador will be the subject of a presentation by Dr. Nancy Garwood for SIAS on Friday, March 22nd starting at 7 p.m. in the meeting room At Carbondale Township Hall, 217 E. Main St. Carbondale\*.

Dr. Nancy Garwood has been leading a study of plant flowering and fruiting in the Ecuadorian Amazon for more than two decades. Yasuní National Park is one of the biologically most diverse areas in the Amazon. Dr. Garwood will explain how and why she came to work at Yasuní and describe some results of this study. She will also provide glimpses of its diverse flora and fauna.

Dr. Nancy C. Garwood is an Adjunct Professor & Co-Curator of the Herbarium in the School of Biological Sciences, SIU Carbondale. She is a tropical botanist in the broadest sense, with active research projects in ecology, systematics, and conservation. Linking these apparently disparate areas is a long-term focus on the seed and seedling stages of the life cycle. Her first projects, 50 years ago in Panama, were community level studies of the earliest stages of forest regeneration after earthquake-caused landslides and the phenology of seed dispersal and germination. She's recently returned to the latter topic by initiating a comparative phenological study in the Ecuador. Crucial to the success of her early projects was learning to identify seedlings, which are very different from adults.

Dr. Garwood states that it is difficult to work in tropical forests without contributing toward their conservation, so she's lead conservation projects in both Ecuador and Belize. Most of her recent projects are in collaboration with colleagues in Latin America, Europe, and the U.S., are funded by grants that she has written, and has provided research opportunities for students in the UK and Ecuador.

**\*Entrance to the Township Hall is from the rear of the building where two parking lots are available for use. (216. E. Monroe St.)**



**February Program Highlights** On this evening, Dr. Joy O'Keefe shared more of her knowledge of bats, what she's learned about bat boxes, and how bats use them. Dr. O'Keefe discussed what attracts bats to artificial roosts/bat boxes and her concerns with inadequacies of bat box design and construction.

One concern is that many boxes offer unsuitable temperature ranges, due to small size or poor color choice, that can lead to bat deaths. "Just right" temperatures ranged from a low of 86F to a high of 100F. She suggested that the best practices for building bat boxes is to use quality, untreated lumber (not plywood), construct a tall box, 3 ft or higher with multiple 3/4 inch chambers, make the entrance small to keep predators out, and not to put mesh inside the box. Cover the outside with a latex-based paint of a medium tan or grey to help keep proper temperature. Regarding location, a poor location/placement could increase exposure to predators and parasites, could draw bats to low-quality habitat, or could alter their ability to identify natural roost types. Boxes should face south or east and be away from lights. Boxes can be mounted on buildings but avoid mounting them on trees. If on a post or pole, they should be 12 ft high or higher above the ground. (For images of safer bat boxes, visit Uoff's site: [https://wildlife.nres.illinois.edu/safer\\_bat\\_boxes/](https://wildlife.nres.illinois.edu/safer_bat_boxes/))

Other things we can do to help bats is protect and enhance natural areas. Trees are natural bat roosts. Big trees with suitable characteristics include those with furrowed bark like that of shagbark hickory trees. Bats also roost under exfoliating (shedding) bark of dead or dying trees. Planting flowers that attract moths helps provide bat food. It's also helpful to have an available water source.

Joy provided so much important info on bat roosts. Our sincere thanks to Dr. O'Keefe for enlightening us on their roosting needs and how to provide them with better, healthier lodging.  
-Rhonda R.

**The 22<sup>nd</sup> Birding Blitz of Southernmost IL, April 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Birding for a cause!**

## SIAS Upcoming Meeting Calendar:

**Apr. 26<sup>th</sup>** -Friday meeting moved to Sunday, Apr. 28th

**Apr. 28<sup>th</sup>** - program to be Blitz awards brunch

**May 19<sup>th</sup>** - SIAS annual spring picnic to be held at  
Hickory Lodge Golf Course, Carbondale

**June & July** - No meeting, enjoy your summer!!

## Get Your Team Together for the 22nd Birding Blitz of Southernmost IL, April 27<sup>th</sup>!

The Birding Blitz is like a bird count for fun! Teams compete on the to see and hear the most species of birds in a 24-hour period while raising money for conservation in southernmost Illinois. If you've never participated, you're missing a great way to spend a day.

Teams can search for birds throughout the area of the wonderful 11 southernmost Illinois counties, from Jackson, Williamson, Saline, and Gallatin counties south through Union, Johnson, Pope, Hardin, Alexander, Pulaski, and Massac counties. This area includes cypress swamps, upland forests, grasslands, and the 2 big rivers. Public lands in the area include Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, Giant City State Park, Trail of Tears State Forest, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, the Cache River State Natural Area, and Mermet Lake and Horseshoe Lake Conservation Areas, and the Shawnee National Forest. (Birds counted along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers must be no further than half way across the river when seen or heard.)

Teams must have a minimum of 2 members. With the exception of category "Open B", teams may start birding as early as 12:01 a.m. on April 27<sup>th</sup> and continue until as late as 12:00 p.m. that night. All teams must follow the American Birding Association's Big Day Count rules viewable at: <https://www.aba.org/aba-big-day-count-rules/>  
There are five categories:

- \* Open A - This category is the true Big Day challenge, within the 11 county competition boundaries.

- \* Open B / Dawn to Dusk - It mirrors category Open A with the exception that participants in this category may start no sooner than -1- hour before sunrise and must quit no later than -1- hour after sunset. Starting time: 5:00 a.m. Ending: 8:45 p.m.

- \* County Big Day - Teams restrict their Big Day to one selected county of their choice within the competition boundary; enticing birders to more intensely explore previously under-birded areas.

- \* Senior - Follows the true Big Day rules but all team members must be 55 years of age or older.

- \* Muscle-powered - Follows the true Big Day rules but teams cannot use any motorized form of transportation in their pursuit of birds.

The registration fee to compete is \$25 per team members (\$15 each for students). Certificates will be awarded to the winning team in each of the five categories at the awards brunch on April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Haven Day Lodge on Crab Orchard Lake. All team members will receive a Birding Blitz t-shirt.

Teams are required to raise a minimum of \$100 in the form of donated pledges. These donations will be used to support habitat restoration and preservation in the Cache River Watershed. If you'd like to help but don't want to compete, please consider pledging!

For all Blitz details including registration forms (due 04/19) and pledge forms, visit the Blitz Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/groups/317666471615613/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/317666471615613/)

or contact Rhonda Rothrock via phone at 618.684.6605 or via email at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com

## Help for Free Again

Our recent annual donation of \$500 to Free Again will help repair cages damaged by falling trees, writes honorary lifetime SIAS member Beverly Shofstall. "We have quite a few repairs and upgrades to be made. This donation will help greatly with that!" And the breeding season has begun: "We've had three tiny, pinkie squirrels come in already (Feb. 17). Spring is coming early this year to Free Again."

To make your own donation, send a check to Free Again, 4031 Big Muddy Road, Carterville, IL 62918-3063, or to bring food and supplies, call 618.988.1067. — *Laraine Wright*

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

*...spring has sprung a month early!*

### Climate Change in Southern Illinois

Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:00 p.m.

Illinois State Climatologist Trent Ford will discuss climate change in southern IL with a focus on climate change impacts and what communities can do to mitigate and adapt to the effects. Program will be held at the Carbondale Township Meeting Rm, 217 E. Main St., parking off Monroe St. This presentation is sponsored by Shawnee Group Sierra Club, free and open to the public.

For more details, contact Barb McKasson at 618.549.9684.

### SIAS Outing to Oakwood Bottoms

Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Join SIAS in search of early spring migrant birds, resident birds, and other wildlife at Oakwood Bottoms, Shawnee National Forest.

For carpooling with Kirsten Trimble (618.521.4166), meet at 8:30 a.m. under the sign at Murdale Shopping Center, 1901 W. Main St., Carbondale. Or meet Rhonda Rothrock at the Oakwood Bottoms picnic area at 9:00 a.m.

From Murphysboro: Take Hwy 149 west 7 miles to Hwy 3; then south 5.5 miles on Hwy 3 to Oakwood Bottoms Rd. Turn east (left) onto Oakwood

Bottoms Rd. and go 1 mile then turn north (left) into the picnic area.

From Jonesboro: Take Hwy 146 west 8 miles to Hwy 3, then north 8 miles on Hwy 3 to Oakwood Bottoms Rd. Turn east (right) onto Oakwood Bottoms Rd. and go 1 mile then turn north (left) into the picnic area.

For more details, contact Rhonda at 618.684.6605.

### Southern IL Crossroads Eclipse Festival

Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup> thru Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>

SIU Carbondale in partnership with NASA is hosting a four-day total solar eclipse festival at the Solar Eclipse Crossroads of America.

Join in on a variety of world class events and activities April 5 – 8, including ongoing lead up events celebrating this 2<sup>nd</sup> total solar eclipse. The main event, Eclipse Day at Saluki Stadium, is a guided eclipse experience. SIU Carbondale campus will experience 4 minutes and 9 seconds of totality as the region is cast into darkness in the middle of the day. Be prepared to witness the full range of total solar eclipse phenomenon and have your senses and emotions overwhelmed by the unexplainable experience of standing in the shadow of the Moon as you watch the Sun disappear.

<https://eclipse.siu.edu/festival/>

### Spring Wildflower Walks at Giant City St. Pk.

April 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, & 19<sup>th</sup>, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Join the Natural Resource Coordinator for a meandering walk through the spring woods at Giant City State Park to take a closer look at all the beautiful spring wildflowers. Registration required. Phone Giant City

State Park Visitor's Center, 235 Giant City Rd, Makanda, at 618.457.4836 for more details or to register.



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

### Monthly Birding with SIAS at Evergreen Park

Saturday, April 13th, from 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Meet at the Red Oak Shelter that sets along Carbondale Reservoir lake in Evergreen Park on the south side of Carbondale.

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 info call Kirsten Trimble at 618.521.4166

### Southern IL Earth Science Club

#### Gem, Mineral, Fossil, & Jewelry Show

April 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Southern Illinois Earth Science Club hosts their annual show. It will include several types of exhibits featuring minerals, fossils, artifacts, gemstones, jewelry, shells, lapidary work, and a special dinosaur exhibit courtesy of the Middle Tennessee Museum of Natural History and a mineral exhibit from the Ben E. Clement Mineral Museum. Along with exhibits, there will be silent auctions and door prizes. This event will be held at The Pavilion Events Center, 1602 Sioux Drive, Marion.

For more details, phone 618.997.3690. <https://siesclub.org/>

### Spring Trash Blasts on the Shawnee National Forest

First Friday of each month, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

The USDA Shawnee National Forest Service, Friends of the Shawnee, and the IL Extension Office will partner to host these annual spring Trash Blasts! They will happen on the first Friday in April -> June from 1-3 p.m. at various locations in the Shawnee National Forest. **NOTE:** with the Total Eclipse happening so close to the beginning of April, April's Trash Blast will move to the Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, after the eclipse.

Attendees will break into small teams of volunteers to collect litter from selected sites. No matter what we find, we try to remove it to help restore the area to its natural state. Volunteers should wear sturdy shoes, bring their leather work gloves, wear long pants, and closed-toed shoes. If you do not have leather gloves we can help provide them for you. Trash buckets and trash grabbers will be provided for volunteers to use during the trash blast. This event is limited to 30 participants. **Dates & locations: April 12th at Tower Rock** (Hardin County), **May 3rd at Bean Ridge** (Alexander County), **June 7 at Ripple Hollow** (Union County). If you would like to learn more about this program, contact Anne Townsend at [cupquake@illinois.edu](mailto:cupquake@illinois.edu).

Register at <https://go.illinois.edu/TrashBlastsSpring2024>

### Shawnee Group Sierra Club Service Outings

Help Save High Quality Natural Areas. Shawnee Group is committed to helping rid high-quality natural areas of non-native invasive plants (NNIS) that are threatening to crowd out our native plant communities at LaRue Pine Hills Research Natural Area and at Fern Rocks Nature Preserve in Giant City State Park. To volunteer, contact Barb at 618.549.9684.

## Women's History Month:

### Florence A. Merriam Bailey

When Florence A. Merriam Bailey was born in 1863, birds were more often seen ornamenting women's hats than they were in the wild. In fact, on one walk through Manhattan in 1886, she counted 40 different species, stuffed and mounted for fashion.

Florence Merriam Bailey became the preeminent woman ornithologist of the late 1800's and throughout the early decades of the 1900's. A frequent publisher in the Auk and Condor ornithological journals, her scientific works chronicled bird distributions, habitat use, and breeding biology, especially throughout the western U.S. where she conducted numerous field trips with her husband (Vernon Bailey). By the time they were married in 1899, Florence Merriam Bailey had already established herself as an important ornithologist and she continued to publish at a rapid clip including tens of papers in both the Auk and Condor.

Florence Merriam Bailey was also very involved in bird conservation, having campaigned against slaughtering birds for the millinery industry as a Smith undergrad where she founded the "chapter" of what would eventually become the National Audubon Society, and inspired the Lacey Act, which prohibited trade in illegally acquired wildlife, and the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. She is also credited with producing the first field guides to birds and a book that launched bird watching through binoculars. She had over 6 bird-related books published.

Florence Merriam Bailey was the first woman "associate" (member) of the AOU (American Ornithological Union) in 1885 and the first woman elected as a Fellow of the AOU in 1929. Florence Merriam Bailey was also a member of the Cooper Ornithological Club, the Wilson Ornithological Club, the National Audubon Society, and the Biological Society of Washington. Florence Merriam Bailey encouraged people to go out and admire living birds through bird watching. She stated, "We won't say too much about the hats. We'll take the girls afield and let them get acquainted with the birds. Then of inborn necessity, they will wear feathers never more." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence\\_Merriam\\_Bailey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Merriam_Bailey)

**Seeing Buds...** During an average year, the sprouting and blooming of spring plants would pretty much correspond with spring bird migration.

As per Audubon Great Lakes, many birds migrating back north from the tropics eat insects, spiders, and worms. These little creatures are found on leaves as they emerge, budding and blooming flowers, and under bark or leaf litter on the ground. Tiny insects evolved to find and eat these plants just as birds evolved knowing how to find and eat the insects. The big movement of migrant songbirds begins in mid-April and continues through the end of May. Trees and shrubs that leaf out or flower during this period feed the migrating songbirds. <https://gl.audubon.org/plantings-spring-migrants>

This year we seem to have an unusually early start of spring as it relates to plants. Plus, the date of our last threat of a killing frost is April 15<sup>th</sup> (as per Rob). A few of our first migrant purple martins and swallows are being reported. Louisiana waterthrush are due within a week. Here's hoping there will be adequate food in April thru early May for our migrant songbirds, especially those that tank up then head further north to Canada. -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.

My "thank you" to all  
for continued support of  
SIAS & birds like me.



# Birding Walks

WITH MASTER NATURALIST LILY GLAESER

IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH



SIU  
CARBONDALE



8:30am  
to  
10:00am

March 21  
Green Earth  
Oakland Preserve

March 24  
SIU Campus Lake

April 18  
Green Earth Stan  
Harris Prairie Nature  
Preserve

April 21  
Giant City SP  
Post Oak Trail



All are welcome. Binoculars are available.

Register at:  
[go.illinois.edu/BirdWithLily](http://go.illinois.edu/BirdWithLily)

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences  
University of Illinois - U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Local Extension Councils Cooperating  
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and  
employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in  
programming, contact your local Extension office. Early requests are strongly  
encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting your needs.



Illinois Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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

*Affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society and  
the Illinois Environmental Council*



**Seeing Birds...** Who will see and report the return of the first Louisiana waterthrush? My earliest date is March 19<sup>th</sup>. Soon we'll say a seasonal goodbye to snow geese and hello to little singing warblers. Their spring cacophony is magnificent and worth waiting for. I just hope it's not drowned out by those hundreds of noisy cicadas. *-Rhonda R*

In late February, a whooping crane was reported at Kaskaskia Island, Randolph County, near where they've been seen in the past. While banding birds on 03/03, Cathie Hutcheson saw 7 sandhill cranes making their way north. Then while in C'dale on 03/10 she and Lew encountered a mini murder of fish crows by Woodlawn Cemetery.

Keith McMullen visited Bellrose Waterfowl reserve, Cypress Creek NWR on 03/03 and found 350 green-winged teal, along with Wilson's snipe, pectoral sandpipers, and both lesser and greater yellowlegs.

On 03/07, Mark Vukovich counted 40 red crossbills at an area of managed shortleaf pine in the Shawnee Nat. Forest, Massac County.

## Is it a Fairy or a Microbe?

	Fairy	Microbe
Miniature	✓	✓
Fantastic in appearance	✓	✓
Profuse in number	✓	✓
Invisible to the naked eye	✓	✓
Fascinating Names	Oona	E. coli

