



Southern Illinois Audubon Society Newsletter

September 2026
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Southern Illinois
Audubon Society
P.O. Box 222
Carbondale, IL
62903-0222

Established on the first
Earth Day, in April 1970

<http://www.siaudubon.org>

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SIAS is the sponsor of
*The Birding Blitz of
Southernmost Illinois*

The 2027 Birding Blitz
will be on April 24th.

Details and registration
forms can be found at:

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

September 13th Picnic replaced Regular 4th Friday Meeting

First, sorry that the newsletter has come out so late. New and continued attacks on our state and federal public lands kept me distracted. More on that later in this newsletter.

Second, in the August newsletter, I might have not made it clear that the Sept. 13th picnic replaced our monthly Friday night Township Hall meeting. I'm sorry for any confusion that might have caused. Also sorry for any confusion that might have come from me not getting this newsletter out in a timelier manner. -Rhonda R.

SIAS 2026 Meeting Calendar

October 23rd - Mark Denzer: Reintroduction of Alligator Gar

Nov/Dec combined mtg., Dec 4th - Tom Caldwell on John James Audubon

SIAS 2027 Meeting Calendar (subject to change)

January 22nd - Program speaker TBA

February 26th - Program speaker TBA

March 26th - Program speaker TBA

April 23rd - Program speaker TBA

May - Spring picnic, date yet to be determined

Bost Supports the I-66 TransAmerica Corridor

As I wrote last month, the "dead horse" formally known as the I-66 Corridor is back on life support as the TransAmerica Corridor. This time it's Illinois' Mike Bost holding the IV bag.

On 09.08.2026, KFVS12 News reported that Congressman Mike Bost had sent a letter of support to the Executive Director of the TransAmerica Corridor Authority. In the September 3 letter (a copy of which was posted on KFVS12's website), Bost, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, expressed support for a southern Illinois segment of the corridor running through Alexander, Union, Pulaski, Johnson and Massac Counties. He wrote that the corridor "would strengthen freight mobility, supply-chain resilience and economic competitiveness throughout the region, and would improve access to the Bill Emerson Memorial Bridge."

Within days of sending a letter to Bost in opposition to the Corridor project, his assistant phoned me. The assistant implied that Illinois was already on board and that a potential route had been determined. (Illinois must agree to the project and in agreeing, Illinois must provide 10% of the construction costs for the section through our state.) But there is no evidence that Governor Pritzker has officially endorsed or issued any formal position on the TransAmerica Corridor.

It very evident that Cape Girardeau wants all business to funnel straight from Paducah, over southernmost Illinois, directly to Cape via their Emerson bridge and visa-versa. They basically state that on their website. They also want the Mississippi River traffic slated for the proposed Cairo River transportation port terminal to come to their terminal at Cape Girardeau instead. Now, they're even going as far as to refer to the TransAmerica Corridor as "the Southeast Missouri Regional Beltway". Notice, no Illinois anywhere in that name!

I urge folks to call or write Governor Pritzker and express your opposition to this Cape Girardeau, Missouri threat to Illinois. Phone his office at 217.782.6830 or 217.782.6831 Submit written opposition at his "Voice An Opinion Link" <https://gov.illinois.gov/contact-us/voice-an-opinion.html> -Rhonda R.

Hot Temps but a Cool Location for the SIAS Fall Picnic

The temperature might have been unseasonably warm but the USFS Lincoln Memorial Park in Jonesboro was a very nice location for our fall picnic. Had it not been so hot, we would have taken a birding walk around the grounds. Instead, we all chose to sit and visit instead.

Joe Merkelbach's daughter Anne (also known by her nickname Libby) and his grandson Connor were able to attend. We expressed our sympathies and Anne shared stories of her dad and his love of birds, nature, and cacti.

Our thanks to grill-masters Richard Garwood and Phil Mendenhall for doing the cooking and to our president Vicki Lang for making all the arrangements. We look forward to continuing a fall picnic tradition. -Rhonda R.

Still Time to Speak up against the Rescinding of the Roadless Rule

The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule established broad restrictions on road construction, timber harvesting, and road reconstruction within inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands.

Many groups, including the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club, as well as tribes, and local coalitions argue that removing the 2001 Roadless Rule protections will increase wildfire ignition risks and human-related fires tied to roads, fragment vital wildlife habitats, threaten waterways, and roll back critical safeguards for old-growth ecosystems.

The repeal would be especially threatening to the thousands of acres of remaining true old growth hemlock, spruce, and cedar trees surviving intake on Tongass National Forest in southeast Alaska.

To comment against rescinding of the Roadless Rule by the October 6th deadline, go to the link below, then click on the blue "Comment" button above "Document Details" column. [https://www.regulations.gov/docu
ment/FS-2025-0001-223869](https://www.regulations.gov/document/FS-2025-0001-223869)

What's Happening in Southernmost IL...

...fall songbird, hawk, hummer, and wading bird migration is on!

Note to all: the events listed could be subject to change at any time or for any reason. For confirmation, please check with the contact listed in the event(s) description.

Shawnee National Forest Trash Blasts 2026

October 2nd, at Turkey Bayou (Jackson County); 1:00-3:00 p.m.
November 6th, at Iron Furnace (Hardin County); 1:00-3:00 p.m.
The Shawnee National Forest Service, Friends of the Shawnee, and IL Extension will be partnering to host annual Trash Blasts on the first Friday of every month at various locations in the Shawnee National Forest. During Trash Blasts, participants break into small teams of volunteers to collect litter from selected sites. Volunteers should wear sturdy shoes, long pants, closed-toed shoes, and bring their leather work gloves. Trash receptacles and grabbers will be provided. Registration required.

If you want to learn more about this program, please contact Anne Townsend at cupquake@illinois.edu. Register at: <https://registration.extension.illinois.edu/start/trash-blasts-2026>

CCNWR iNaturalist Bioblitz

October 2nd-4th

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge is currently working on updating its species list in order to better represent the incredible diversity of this unique area. Each National Wildlife Refuge has its own species list that can be accessed on that refuge's website. These lists are useful for visitors to the refuge but are also used for planning purposes by the USFWS and when prioritizing tracts of land to purchase.

The Friends of the Cache will be hosting the iNaturalist bioblitz the weekend of October 2-4. To participate in the Bioblitz, upload your observations on the iNaturalist app from anywhere within the refuge. Your observations will automatically be added to the Biodiversity of Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge project. For questions, contact Wildlife Biologist Karen Mangan at Karen_Mangan@fws.gov. For more info the Refuge, visit <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/cypress-creek>.

Birding Walk with Lily Glaeser and Indigo Nathani

8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. > various dates & locations

Join Master Naturalists Lily Glaeser and Indigo Nathani for a leisurely walk to look at birds! All ages and experiences are welcome. Registration is required in case the event needs to be cancelled due to inclement weather. For more info or to register online for each event, go to go.illinois.edu/BirdWithLilyIndigo

October 8th – Campus Lake, Southern IL University C'dale

November 5th – Green Earth Pyle Forks Trail, C'dale

November 15th – Crab Orchard NWR Visitor Central Trail

October Big Day! Global Bird Weekend!

October Big Day, **this year on the 10th**, is an opportunity to celebrate our shared love of birds. By taking part in October Big Day, you're also celebrating Global Bird Weekend and World Migratory Bird Day. Be a part of the global effort and help set new records for October birding. How to participate? Visit this link details <https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2026>. You don't need to be a bird expert or go out all day long, even 10 minutes of birding from home counts. October Big Day runs from midnight to midnight in your local time zone. Log into your eBird account. Make sure to submit your observations before October 13th to be included in the official results! Don't have an eBird account? Create one at the above website Or scan this QR code. →  Snap photos or video of your birding adventure to share with others. During the day, follow along with bird observations from more than 200 countries in real-time at <https://ebird.org/octoberbigday>.

Events at Giant City State Park -Registration Required

U of I Gardening for Bats - October 14th, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
at the Giant City Visitor Center 1-245 Giant City Rd, Makanda
Phone Visitor Ctr. at 618.457.4836 for all details or to register.

Brown Bag Birding and Socializing

October 12th, Second Tuesday of the Month, 11:30 a.m.
Meet at Red Oak Pavilion located in Evergreen Park, C'dale.
We sit under a pavilion, so lunch happens rain or shine.

Directions (from IL Rt. 51/ South Illinois Ave.) Take IL Rt. 51 south from Carbondale to stop-light intersection with Pleasant Hill Rd, turn west onto Pleasant Hill Rd, follow it to western most park entrance then turn south next look for Red Oak Pavilion on right. There are restrooms in Evergreen Park. Pavilion has picnic tables. Please bring your lunch, drink, binoculars and conversations. Please invite family, friends and neighbors. Everyone is welcome. For more details contact Kathryn Jenkel at katjenkel@yahoo.com or 618.559.2908.

Friends of the Shawnee National Forest Annual Celebration

Saturday, October 24th – Alto Vineyard,
8515 Highway 127, Alto Pass, IL. Doors open at Noon!
Join Friends for another fun filled afternoon at Alto Vineyard celebrating stewardship at work in the Shawnee National Forest. Guests will enjoy music from Noon - 5:00 p.m. as well as updates from the Forest Service, a silent auction, and drinks and food offered by Alto Vineyards. Friend memberships and new merchandise will be available for purchase at the door.

The Public is invited to attend! General admission is \$10.

To view details and purchase a ticket, visit:

<https://friends-of-the-shawnee.square.site/product/2026-member-celebration-fundraiser/X5TQ34SHJCHQDTIXPATI7ASJ?cs=true&cst=custom>

Boo at the Slough

Sunday, October 25th, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Want to learn more about creatures of the swamp? Come out to the Cache River Wetlands Center, 8885 State Route 37 South, for Boo at the Slough. Hike the Egret Slough Trail behind the Center for a trick-or-treat adventure! Meet Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners disguised as swamp animals like spiders, crows, and snakes to learn more about these misunderstood creatures. It's a free family event designed for youth ages 5-12! For more info, phone: 618.657.2064

Coffee on the Cache

Friday, October 30th, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Coffee on the Cache is a monthly gathering, part conversation, part idea-swap, and part "show-and-tell," with free coffee and time to connect with each other at the Cache River Wetlands Center, 8885 State Route 37 South.
For more info, phone: 618.657.2064

3rd Annual Southern IL Native Plant Seed Swap

Saturday, October 31st, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

To be held at the
Carbondale Township Hall,
217 E. Main St, C'dale
Park in back, off of Monroe St.
Get free IL native plant seed from local growers.

Donate or trade native seed if you have extra.

Mighty Rivers Nursery will be providing native plant seed. and specialists will be there to guide you and answer questions about seed collecting, saving germination, and companion planting! While supplies last! Questions? Contact Rhonda Rothrock at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com



Bean's BFF (Bark Friendly Forest): the Shawnee National Forest



Let me introduce myself, my name is Bean on 3.
I'm a strong-willed little doggie but that's the dachshund in me.
I'm also a bit vocal, bark bark, as doggies go.
And I'm gonna tell you somethings that you need to know. Bark!
Been livin' by the Shawnee National Forest for ruff-ly 76 dog years.
There's been lots of fun and happiness, and a few doggie tears.
Someone called me a NIMBY 'cause I don't want this proposed Park.
But I'll tell you a story that'll make you want to bark. Bark! Bark!

The road to the Shawnee National Forest goes through the middle of my front yard. And when I was younger, I really played hard.

Distracted one day, I ran out on that road and got hit by a car.

Doctor took off my left rear leg and now my back hip is a metal bar. Whimper. Whimper.



Oh, so many friends of mine have died on that road...

...turtles, squirrels, snakes, opossums, frogs, and toads.

More tourists is a big reason some folks what a Shawnee Park, but we don't need more killing traffic. Grrrrrowl! Bark! Bark! Bark!

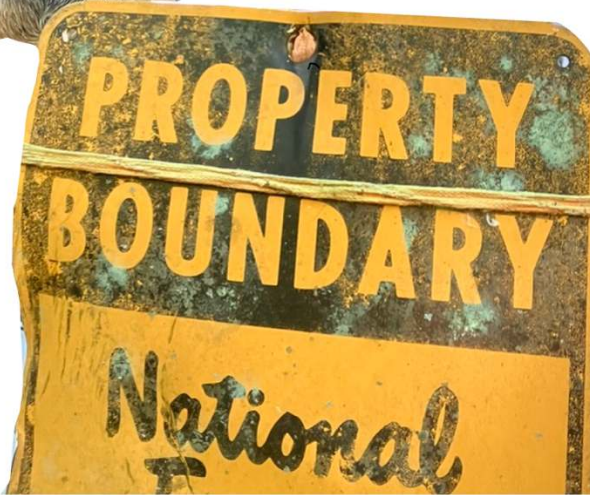
They'll make more roads and parking lots and bigger ones too and put asphalt and concrete where trees and bushes once grew. They'll build all sorts of buildings and surround them in lawn.

The natural sounds, smells, and little snails once there will all be gone. Whimper.

If you would take me with you to a National Park, I can't walk on all trails with you, and that breaks my heart.

I can mostly only be in campgrounds or the parking lot, or walking along with you roadside where asphalt can be hot.

There are many and various rules and they differ from Park to Park. Contact the Park Service to find out where I'm allowed*. Grrrowl! Bark!



But, as long as I'm leashed, Shawnee National Forest welcomes me, except in Research Natural Areas where I cannot be.

They're real special places and that's ok!

I have the rest of the Shawnee National Forest in which to snoop and play. Bark! Bark! Bark!



So, I've told you all these details to attest that for 3 and 4-legged doggies the Shawnee National Forest is the best!

As a National Forest is how our Shawnee National Forest should stay!

Stop by to visit me and the Shawnee National Forest next time you're out my way!!

Bark! Bark! Bark! Bark! Bark! Bark! Bark!

*Fully trained service dogs are legally allowed anywhere that members of the general public can go within National Parks.



Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Please don't forget to Renew Your Membership. We consider January our "renew by" date because it's when we hold our yearly elections. If you appreciate our newsletters & programs but are not a member, please consider joining! Fill in this form and return it with payment or renew at the next meeting. Thanks! Sorry, we don't have a digital payment option.

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

Your Name	_____
Street Address	_____
City, State, Zip	_____
Phone Number	_____
Email	_____

SIAS is my BBFF!
(Bird Best Friend Forever)

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 Treasurer Judy M. or Rhonda R. to check your dues status.



SIAS's Website Back Up and Running Again! A Big Thank You to Our Longtime Webmaster Jim Shofstall!!



Home News BirdingBlitz

A big Thank You to Jim Shofstall for his continuing efforts keeping SIAS's website up and running and current. Our website has long given SIAS an easily accessible internet presence, providing a schedule of our current activities, access to our newsletters, and a connection to the Birding Blitz. It also offers inquiring minds a way to contact to SIAS via our email address. We get regularly get inquires, leading to meeting attendance and new memberships. *-Rhonda R.*

Who We Are: The Southern Illinois Audubon Society (SIAS) is an organization of 100+ individuals who enjoy feeding, locating, and viewing wild birds and generally share an appreciation of nature. We have member of all ages and all walks of life, from as far north as Minnesota and as far south as Metropolis.

SIAS is an affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society (IAS).

What We Do: We offer monthly programs on nature related topics and organize nature outings to various locations, all free of charge and open to the public. Our members provide educational programs for local schools and other organizations and take part in volunteer programs directed at conserving birds and their habitats. <http://www.siaudubon.org/>



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



Did you know there are actually 433 park "units" managed by the National Park Service?

Yes, there are currently 433 protected units, covering over 85 million acres, managed by the National Park Service and considered National Parks. 63 of these, including Yellowstone, Yosemite, Denali, and Gateway Arch (the St. Louis Arch), are recognized as "The National Parks". The other 370 park units have a myriad of different titles including: national seashores, recreation areas, national monuments, national historic parks, preserves, and military parks. All of the 433 units have specific and varied visitation rules, regulations, and some charge fees. Some require reservations. The National Park Service advises visitors to Know Before You Go.



Be a part of a global event from as close as your back yard!

CornellLab

OCTOBER **BIG DAY**
 10 Oct 2026

See full details by visiting this link:
<https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2026>
 (or scan the QR code below)

