



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

Newsletter

April 2025
Vol. 32 No. 4

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

<http://www.siaudubon.org>

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SIAS is the sponsor of
The Birding Blitz of Southernmost Illinois

Details can be found at:
www.facebook.com/group/s/317666471615613/

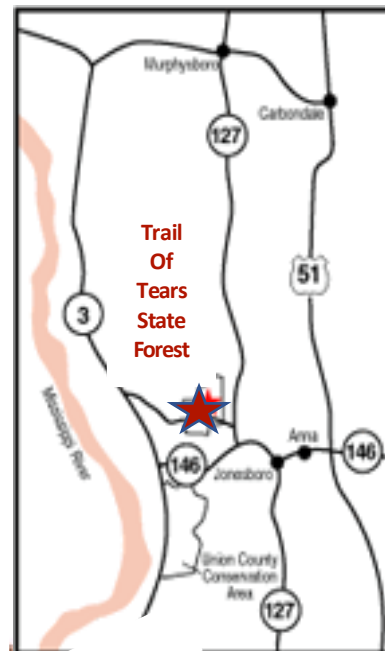
SIAS Spring Picnic will be May 17th at Trail of Tears State Forest at 1 p.m.

The Annual Southern IL Audubon Society spring picnic will be held on Saturday, **May 17th**, in shelter #4 in Trail of Tears State Forest, in Union County. **Arrive to help set up and for socializing at 1 p.m. with dining at 2 p.m.** SIAS will provide hotdogs, buns, and condiments. Veggie option will be available. Members are asked to bring a dish to share and their own beverages, dinnerware, and utensils. Water is available at the shelter.

Somewhat secluded with plenty of space, Shelter #4 is located on the south side of State Forest Road, approx. 4.8 miles east of IL Rt. 3 (Wolf Lake) and approx. 2.6 miles west of IL Rt. 127. Cross the creek then drive to shelter on left (east) side of road. Watch for the SIAS banner.

There is plenty of accessible parking near by and picnic tables under the shelter with a water spicket, electric hook-up, and nearby outhouses. We are in need of folks to help grill. Please let us know if you can help. Any questions, please contact Vicki at 618 697 9868 or vickil@siu.edu.

Shelter #4 GPS: 37.4822382,-89.3604861



SIAS 2025 Meeting Calendar

April- No meeting/program

May 17th- Annual spring picnic at Trail of Tears

June & July- No meetings in summer

August 22nd- Kimberly Rohling: Gardening for Moths

September (date & location to be announced)- SIAS annual fall picnic

October 24th- Program to be announced

Dec. 5th- Nov/Dec combined meeting.
Tom Caldwell: Art in Nature, the Bower Bird

Spring Bird Counts Need Your Help!!!

Saturday, May 10th and Sunday, May 11th

Spring Bird Count(s) take place in all the counties throughout Illinois.

You can help by contributing any amount of time you can and by covering as much area as you have time and energy to cover. Or consider counting at your home, walking your property and/or feeder watching for one to two hours.

Compilers of local counties are below.

If possible, please contact compilers at least seven days in advance of your interest in participating.

Alexander Co. 05/10: Allen Gathman -
agathman@gmail.com

Jackson Co., 05/10: Rhonda Rothrock -
woodthrusheola@hotmail.com ; 618.684.6605

Pope Co., 05/10: Andrea Douglas - anderatd@yahoo.com

Pulaski Co., 05/11: Rhonda Rothrock - woodthrusheola@hotmail.com ; 618.684.6605

Williamson Co., 05/10 & 05/11: Vicki Lang-Mendenhall - vickil@siu.edu ; 618.697.9868

Union Co., 05/10: Vern Kleen - vkleen@comcast.net

Join the Birding Blitz Fun at the Blitz Awards Brunch on Sunday, April 27th

Join the Southern IL Audubon Society (SIAS) as we celebrate the 23rd Birding Blitz at the Blitz Competition Brunch and Awards Ceremony to be held at the Haven Day Lodge, on the shore of Crab Orchard Lake, Sunday April 27th at 10 a.m. Drinks and snacks will be provided.

For participants, the Brunch starts at 9:30 a.m. Team species lists are to be turned in by 10 a.m. At 10, we'll introduce all teams and team members and compile a combined total species list for the day. Then we'll announce the winners of each category.

This is a fun opportunity to meet birders from throughout Illinois and surrounding states. You'll be surprised to find out how much fun the awards brunch can be as you listen to the stories told of team Blitz Day experiences. While the Blitz is a competition, a wonderful camaraderie exists between all participants. Because, even though the Blitz is a competition, all team members really want to do is see and/or hear as many birds as they can. And, for spring migration birding, it's hard to beat our amazing southernmost IL.

The Haven location is a beautiful, spacious, rustic lodge with big windows that provide an awe inspiring view of Crab Orchard Lake. The Haven is located on the south side of IL Rt. 13, at 10289 Haven Ln., Carbondale, opposite Cambria Rd turnoff.

Although this year is not a fundraiser, in the 23 years that the Blitz has been taking place, participants have raised over \$50,000 for habitat restoration and preservation in the Cache River Wetlands. For more info on the Blitz and how to participate, visit our Facebook page facebook.com/groups/317666471615613/ or email Rhonda at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com. Hope to see you at the awards brunch! -Rhonda R.

February SIAS Program Highlights- Birding in Belize

Jyothi and Michael Wainer wowed the crowd in attendance on March 28th. Using a combination of photographs and video footage, Jyothi and Michael's presentation was very engaging.

The first part of their excursion to Belize was one of the many group trips organized by Prof. Nelda Hinckley (open to both students and the general public) while she taught biology at John A. Logan College. Eight folks were on this trip, six were present at the evening's presentation. Since they were making this special trip, Jyothi and Michael extended their stay and journey beyond the time period of the organized adventure.

Belize borders land on 3 sides and the Gulf of Mexico along its eastern coastline. While one of the smallest countries in Central America, it is a very vital part of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. This group of 7 countries (and some of the southern states of Mexico) are of great importance because, like a bridge, they connect North America and South America, assisting species in their migrations.

Belize has multiple habitat types and is known as a place where Mayan's flourished. When European's arrived, first the Spanish then the British, they found a small country with a large quantity of valuable resources, including log woods used for making dyes and mahogany. Mahogany was so valuable, it was sent back to Europe by the shipload.

As for the fauna, Jyothi and Michael shared images and video of the countless species of wildlife they encountered. The video footage was so engrossing that I neglected to make adequate notes but will follow up with Jyothi and Michael for a few more details. Until then, Thank You Jyothi and Michael!! -Rhonda R.

SIAS Treasurer Laraine Wright Retires

After over 20 years as Treasurer for SIAS, Laraine has retired from the Board. Laraine would diligently check the mailbox every 7-10 days. At meetings, she collected the membership dues and the proceeds from all the silent auctions and gear sold and kept records of who's membership was current. Our account(s) were kept balanced and our finances were kept in order. Having joined SIAS in 1988, she has witnessed SIAS's changes over the years and has experienced the passing of many beloved members. The Board is so grateful for Laraine's many years of service and wishes her many happy trails. Be sure to thank Laraine when you get a chance!

SIAS Welcomes our new Treasurer Judith Marshall

Long over a year ago, Laraine had expressed her desire to retire as Treasurer. The Board actively searched for someone to step into the roll. In response to an article in the Newsletter, member Judith Marshall offered to take on the position.

In conversations, Judy had been modest about her treasurer qualifications. She actually has extensive credentials in accounting, sharing that she'd retired from SIUC after 36 years in the Dept. of Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance-SIUC. At the time of her retirement, Judy held the position as Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance. The Board felt exceptionally lucky and thankful that Judy was willing to step up and volunteer her services.

As per Article VI, Section 5 of the Southern Illinois Audubon Society By-laws: Any vacancy occurring among the elected officers shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Board to serve out the unexpired term. Judy became the new official Treasurer for SIAS on April 17th.

What's Happening in Southernmost IL...

...backyards, fields, parks, woodlands, and forests are filling with the beautiful music of spring migrating songbirds!

SIAS Brown Bag Birding & Socializing at Evergreen Park, C'dale

2nd Tuesday of the month lunchtime birding at 11:30 a.m.

May 13th - June 10th - July 8th - August 12th - September 9th - October 14th
Meet at Red Oak Pavilion located in Evergreen Park, Carbondale, 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.

Pavilion has picnic tables, if you would be more comfortable in a folding chair, then please bring one. Bring your lunch, drink, binoculars, and conversations. Sponsored by the SIAS. For more info, contact Kathryn Jenkel at 618.559.2908 or katjenkel@yahoo.com

Dogtooth Bend, a Floodplain Restoration Project

May 8th, 7:00 p.m. - Tharran Hobson, Southern Illinois Program Director for the Nature Conservancy (TNC) will present "Dog Tooth Bend", a landscape-scale floodplain restoration project in Alexander County. Hobson will also discuss TNC partnerships with the Army Corps, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), focusing on human dimensions of the project as well as restoration of natural infrastructure. Program will be at Carbondale Township Hall Meeting Room, 217 East Main St. Enter through the back door. Park behind the Hall, off Monroe St. Sponsored by Shawnee Group Sierra Club, free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Barb at 618.549.9684.

Fun Birding Walks with Master Naturalist Lily Glaeser

8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. / Various Dates / Various Sites

Join Master Naturalist, Lily Glaeser, for a leisurely walk in nature 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. Binoculars are available for use, please reserve a pair. SIAS is one of the sponsors of these birding walks.

Online registration for each event at: go.illinois.edu/BirdWithLily will close the Tuesday before each event. Participants will be emailed the Wednesday before the outing. If you have questions, contact Lily at littleglaser@gmail.com

-Thursday, May 15 - Green Earth Brush Hill: 1085-1087 E Park St, Carbondale.

-Sunday, May 18 - Giant City State Park Post Oak Trail: 460 Giant City Lodge Rd, Makanda. Event is a sit so bring your olawn or camp chair to be comfortable.

Programs & Hikes at Giant City State Park -Registration Required

May 17th -Sonja Lallemand: Landscaping with Natives, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

June 7th - Park Naturalist: Sun-up Hikes, 6:30-8:00 a.m.

July 27th - Chris Benda: Flora of Bean Ridge, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Phone the Visitor Center at 618.457.4836 to register.

Friends of Crab Orchard Nature Dialogues

Sundays from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

May 18th - Bats of Our Region by Joy O'Keefe

July 13th - Meet the Snakes & Reptiles of Southern Illinois

Dialogues will be at Crab Orchard Visitor's Center,
phone the Refuge at 618.997.3344 for all details or to register.

IL Native Plant Society Annual State Gathering, June 20-22

The Southern Chapter of the IL Native Plant Society is hosting the state wide Annual Gathering at Touch of Nature Environmental Center, Makanda. The schedule includes Friday evening guest speaker John Schwegman on *The Natural Divisions of Illinois, a pictorial look at some of their unique flora and fauna*. Saturday evening guest speaker: Chris Benda on *Changes to Illinois Flora*. Guided hikes on Saturday & Sunday. For all details and to register, visit <https://www.illinoisplants.org/the-annual-gathering/>

Illinois Native Plant Sale

**MAY 3, 2025 8AM - 12PM
TURLEY PARK, CARBONDALE, IL**

**HIGH QUALITY NURSERY
STOCK NATIVE PERENNIAL
WILDFLOWERS, FERNS, AND
GRASSES, ALL \$10.**

Plants provided by Southernwood Gardens -
Alto Pass, IL

**PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE SOUTHERN
CHAPTER OF THE ILLINOIS NATIVE
PLANT SOCIETY**

Perfect Gifts for Mother's Day!

Questions? Email
southernillinoisplants@gmail.com

You can't plant flowers if you haven't botany.

This photo from the Southern U.S. shows two trees planted 17 years ago. The smaller tree competed with 5,000 stems (tree trunks) per acre, while the larger tree grew free from competition in a stand that was far less dense. This is an example of how active management, including thinning of standing trees through selective removal, can help promote tree growth. Source: Renewable Resources renweforest.com



Son, "Dad, can you explain to me what a solar eclipse is?"
Dad, "No sun."



Seeing Birds *I hope you are!!!*

As I write this, a stunningly colored male rose-breasted grosbeak is tussling with a brown-headed cowbird at our birdfeeder. Can you guess one which I'm rooting for?

In past years I would stop feeding birds when the hordes (at our place, hordes equals 8 on average) of cowbirds would arrive and monopolized the feeders. This year I caved to the thought of seeing rose-breasted grosbeaks close up and have continued to fill one feeder.

I confirmed via Cornell's website that while rose-breasted grosbeaks are considered insectivores and favor them during breeding season, they also eat seeds and fruits. They seem to like sunflower seeds, (who doesn't?) When feeding sunflower seed, I prefer to spend a bit more and get sunflower hearts. That choice is mostly because there is no hull mess left on the ground to be cleaned-up. The seed I've been buying most is actually a "no-mess" mix that contains hulled millet, sunflower hearts, peanut splits, and small bits of dried fruit. But I add just a pinch of sunflower seed in the shell for good measure.

While it's easy to hate on cowbirds, and many folks do, it's really misplaced anger. Cowbirds are only doing what they evolved to do, parasitize other songbird nests. But if we humans hadn't intervened, cowbirds would be doing what they do in a transient, roaming way and would not be impacting the same songbirds year after year. So as much as I don't want to be feeding cowbirds, and constantly fight the urge to spend half my day chasing them away from the feeder, I try to look past them. Last week I looked past them to see my 1st indigo bunting of spring sharing the feeder with them.

But the cowbirds free meal ticket will disappear when the grosbeaks have moved on to their breeding grounds in northern Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and Canada.
-Rhonda R.

Joy O'Keefe and Mark Vukovich have been hosting a female spotted towhee on their property since before January; still there as of this writing. Possibly a record for the longest out of known rage spotted towhee documented in Illinois.

Amber Hanson reported her first ruby-throated hummingbird of the season appeared at 5:06 p.m. on 04/12. She stated that "he" looked nice, plump, and in quite good shape after his very long trip. *Let the sugar purchasing begin!*

Active, one each, a bald eagle's nest, barred owl's nest, great-horned owl's nest, and red-shouldered hawk's nest are within walking distance of Vicki Lang's (and Phil's) home. Hopefully there is plenty of food available, other than Vicki's pet chickens, to keep all those raptor families happy and healthy.

Some of the migrating warbler species that have been reported in southern-most Illinois so far this spring include: pine warbler (it seeming like a few are regularly over-wintering here), northern parula, yellow-throated warbler, common yellowthroat, blue-winged warbler, black-throated green warbler, cerulean warbler, American redstart, prairie warbler, black-and-white warbler, prothonotary warbler (the Blitz mascot!), Louisiana waterthrush, Kentucky warbler, Nashville warbler, and Tennessee warbler.

Here's a question, why does Tennessee have two named warblers and there's no Illinois warbler? Our Shawnee National Forest is host to some of the highest numbers of singing male ceruleans, so how about the Illinois-cerulean warbler!

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

Excavate
a spot
for
yourself
in SIAS!



Southern Illinois Audubon Society (SIAS) was established in 1970, the same year as the first Earth Day, by a mix of local citizens and scientists who came together to protest plans to dam Lusk Creek. Today, our primary emphasis is on the observation, study, and protection of birds, even as we continue to support programs that promote biodiversity and the conservation of land.

Based in Carbondale, on the edge of the Shawnee National Forest, SIAS membership extends from Metropolis to Centralia, from the Mississippi to the Ohio Rivers. We also have members scattered further north and south and from coast to coast.

SIAS members receive eight newsletters each year.

SIAS holds seven to eight programs (meetings) per year, on the fourth Friday of the month. One of those is our annual meeting held in January with a potluck, program, silent auction, and election of officers.

SIAS members gather for a picnic each May and September, held at one of the many beautiful park and recreation areas in southernmost Illinois.

SIAS offers bird watching and nature related outings throughout the year.

SIAS is involved in citizen science programs including spring and Christmas bird counts, breeding bird surveys, and the annual monitoring of bluebird nesting site boxes.

SIAS helped organize and now sponsors the Birding Blitz of Southernmost Illinois, a fun, one day birding contest and fundraiser.

We hold various other fundraising efforts, giving proceeds to Free Again Wildlife Rehabilitation, local science teachers, university graduate students, as well as local conservation and habitat restoration projects.

World Migratory Bird Day Unveils 2025 Conservation Theme: Creating Bird-Friendly Cities & Communities

The partners behind World Migratory Bird Day are happy to announce that the theme for the 2025 campaign is dedicated to creating bird-friendly cities and communities. The campaign will highlight the need for a healthy coexistence between humans and birds. It will focus on creating and adapting environments that support migratory bird populations across all communities, from bustling cities to smaller towns and communities. There are actions everyone can take to protect our shared spaces with wildlife.

The two peak days of World Migratory Bird Day 2025 will be 10 May 2025 and 11 October 2025, reflecting the cyclical nature of bird migration with varying migration periods in the northern and southern hemispheres. For more information please visit: www.worldmigratorybirdday.org



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*Affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society and
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