



Southern Illinois Audubon Society Newsletter

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Southern Illinois Audubon Society
P.O. Box 222
Carbondale, IL
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Established on the first Earth Day, in April 1970
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SIAS is the sponsor of
The Birding Blitz of Southernmost Illinois
Details can be found at:
www.facebook.com/groups/317666471615613/

Which dinosaur was both feathered and bipedal?

rotparicoleV

The October 24th SIAS monthly program has been Canceled.

SIAS decided not to schedule a program on the 24th (4th Friday) to avoid conflicting with SIU Homecoming activities and the City of Carbondale's Halloween events scheduled downtown and at their new event center (a block from Carbondale Township Hall) that same evening.

SIAS 2025-26 Meeting Calendar

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

January 23rd- Annual Meeting, Potluck, & Program. Speaker to be announced.

February 27th- Program to be announced

March 27th- Program to be announced

HawkWatching and Making Friends

SIAS hosted a "hawkwatch" on the late morning and early afternoon of Saturday October 4th atop the Giant City water tower. Laraine Wright hosted this outing years past with many fond memories of those climbing the 84 steps in order to observe avian life from a perfect bird's eye view. Too many years went by before this outing was again suggested. About 50 folks came up to visit, either for the view or out of curiosity for what was taking place atop the water tower. Vicki Lang provided a spotting scope while Kathryn Jenkel shared binoculars for those wanting a better look. The weather was perfect with a nice breeze, some clouds breaking up the sunny skies and friendly conversations.

Following this outing, SIAS participated in the "Explore Southern Illinois" at Giant City State Park on Saturday October 4th. The SIAS display was set up. Kirsten Trimble, along with her 2 friendly 4-legged companions, greeted folks visiting our display. It was a beautiful afternoon to share with like-minded individuals and other agencies.

HawkWatch bird checklist:

2 Mourning Doves
3 Chimney Swifts
21 Black Vultures
34 Turkey Vultures
1 Red-tailed Hawk
1 Red-headed Woodpecker (thanks to Loretta Satterthwaite for her wishful suggestion)
4 Red-bellied Woodpeckers
6 Blue Jays
17 American Crows
1 White-breasted Nuthatch
1 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
264 White Pelicans (the highlight of the day, found soaring to the south and then moved to the north).

IAS Big Sit Results & a Special SunnySide Big Sit Visitor

Over 100 individuals participated in IAS's Big Sit weekend 09/26-28, thirty-six teams spread state-wide. Various awards were presented to teams and individuals in categories including Most Clever Team Name-First Place: No Egrets, Second Place: The Empire Shrikes Back, Third Place (and my personal favorite): Talk Birdy to Me; Most Species Seen by a Team-First Place: The Empire Shrikes Back (81), Second Place: Rollins Rockin' Robins (77), Third Place: Just Winging It (71); Most Species Seen in a Yard-First Place: No Egrets (58), Second Place: Rock Terrace Project Rewild (53), Third Place: Too Finch Too Furious (50); and Most Hours of Continuous Occupation by a Team went to Just Winging It (15 straight hours).

The SIAS team, SunnySide (not so) Swifts tallied 48 species for the day. Two registered team members were unable to attend. Three others, Vicki Lang, Phil Mendenhall, and Rob Rothrock, joined me (team Captain) and Bean (team mascot.) Our count started at 6:30 a.m. and went for 6.5 hours. Then, after a break, the count continued at 3:44 p.m. and went on till 5:30.

Our circle was set up on the east side of the house. At around 11:15 a.m., I heard an unusual rustle in the tall grass to the north of our circle. Stepping out of the tall grass onto the lawn, heading straight towards our circle, strolled an eastern box turtle! It walked to the circle, passed under the canopy, and continued south out into the prairie.

A special Thank You to Daniel Mattingly for the loan of a portable canopy and his help in setting it up. -Rhonda R.



What's Happening in Southernmost IL...

*...Armadillos are invading and digging up the countryside,
but at least they don't bother the bird feeders.*

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.

2nd Annual Southern IL Native Plant Seed Swap

Saturday, November 1st, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

To be held at the Carbondale Township Hall,
217 E. Main St., 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 over 36 species of native plant seed. Specialists will be there to guide you and answer questions about seed collecting, saving and storing, germination, and companion planting! While supplies last! Questions? Contact Rhonda Rothrock at woodthrushela@hotmail.com



Learn the ABC's of a CBC

2025 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Workshops!

Nov. 1st, 6th, 12th, & 13th

This workshop will set you on the path to CBC success. At this workshop, we will go over National Audubon Policies, local count circles, and practice how to count. Attendance is recommended for first-time CBC volunteers. As a CBC participant, you will coordinate with your local compiler prior to the count date. Get your questions answered from Illinois Extension

Horticulture Educator, Kimberly Rohling, about this annual event!

Contact Kimberly at kimrohli@illinois.edu Select the workshop you wish to attend. Register at: go.illinois.edu/25CBC Registration for all workshops will close Monday, Nov. 10. Workshop dates & locations:

Saturday, Nov. 1, 9 - 11 a.m. - Rend Lake Project Visitor Center, 11981 Rend City Rd, Benton. *TENTATIVE on whether the Federal Government shut down ends.*

Thursday, Nov. 6, 1 - 3 p.m. - Giant City State Park, 1-245 Giant City Rd, Makanda

Wed., Nov. 12, 9 - 11 a.m. - Marion Carnegie Library, 206 S Market St, Marion

Wed., Nov. 12, 1 - 3 p.m. - Pinckneyville Public Library, 312 S Walnut St, Pinckneyville

Thursday, Nov. 13, 1 - 3 p.m. - Coulterville Public Library, 103 S 4th St, Coulterville

Fall Trash Blast on the Shawnee National Forest

Friday, November 7th - Iron Mountain, Hardin Co., 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

The Friends of the Shawnee Nat Forest, the SNF Forest Service, and the IL Extension Office will host this Trash Blast. Attendees will break into small teams of volunteers to collect litter from selected sites. Volunteers should wear sturdy shoes, bring leather work gloves, wear long pants, and closed-toed shoes. If you do not have leather gloves we can help them for you. For

complete details and location directions, contact Anne Townsen

at cupquake@illinois.edu Register at

<https://registration.extension.illinois.edu/start/fall-trash-blasts-2025>

Friends of the Shawnee National Forest 15th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, November 8th - Alto Vineyard,

8515 Highway 127, Alto Pass, IL. Doors open at 5:00 p.m.

Join Friends for an evening celebrating their 15th Anniversary.

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

Free admission to Friends members. Memberships available at the door.

The Friends will highlight its many projects practicing "Stewardship at Work!" Complimentary So. IL produced hors-d'oeuvres. Other foods/wine/beer will be available for purchase. Live music by Stick Gilbert from 5:00-6:30 p.m.

The Swamp Tigers will play from 7:00-8:30 p.m.

RSVP requested but not required to: friendsoftheshawnee@gmail.com

To review details, visit: <https://www.shawneefriends.org>

INPS Southern Chapter "Science On Tap"

Wednesday, November 12th, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Join the Southern Chapter of the IL Native Plant Society for Science on Tap at Brews Brothers Taproom, 1106 Chestnut St, Murphysboro.

Come sip a brew and enjoy engaging talks about native plants.

There will be two guest speakers.

Debbie Newman on "SW IL Old-growth Treasures: Our Strategies and Opportunities to save 8000-Year-old Hill Prairies and their rare plants."

Cullen Mackenzie on "Not Your Dad's Lawn Grass! Research and Conservation focused on Southern Illinois's Imperiled Tall Grass

Prairie Communities" For more details, contact SINPS at

southernillinoisplants@gmail.com

Cherokee Trail of Tears in Southern Illinois

Saturday, November 15th 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Heather Carey, Heritage Program Manager/Tribal Liaison for the Shawnee National Forest and President of the IL Chapter of the Trail of Tears Assoc. will present on

the Cherokee Trail of Tears through southern Illinois at the Giant City St Park Visitors Center, 1-245 Giant City Rd, Makanda.

Heather will discuss the historical background leading up to the forced removal of the Cherokee, information about local resources related to the Trail, and initiatives being undertaken to learn more about the Trail and the Cherokee experience while traveling through southern Illinois. Registration requested, phone 618.457.4836 to register or for more details

Attracting Wild Birds to Your Feeder Seminar

November 22nd, 10:00 a.m.

Learn how to attract and recognize the birds at your feeders by attending this seminar presented by Vicki Lang-Mendenhall, President of the Southern Illinois Audubon Society, at Plantscape Nursery, 720 N. 33rd St., Herrin. This seminar is free but registration is required. To register call 618.942.4865. Participants can register that day for bird products that will be given away after the seminar.

Dogtooth Bend: Maximizing Channel Stability, Ecosystem Restoration, and Human Dimensions

Thursday, December 11th, at 7:00 p.m.

Tharran Hobson, Southern IL Program Director for the Nature Conservancy (TNC) will present on Dog Tooth Bend, a landscape-scale floodplain restoration project in Alexander County. Tharran will also discuss TNC partnerships with the Army Corps, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

This talk will focus 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.** Park behind the Hall., off Monroe St. Enter through the back door. Sponsored by Shawnee Group Sierra Club, free and open to the public.

For more details, contact Barb McKasson at 618.549.9684.

National Audubon Society 126th Christmas Bird Count Season, 2025-26

Christmas Bird Count Season is Dec. 14th to Jan 5th. It will be the 126th year of this important bird census, a time of shared bird loving consciousness. It fuels the National Audubon's work, providing vital bird statistics for use by scientists and land managers.

In southernmost IL there are more than 10 counts:

Rend Lake, War Bluff Valley, Crab Orchard NWR, Cypress Creek NWR, Arklands/Pyramid, Horseshoe Lake, Union County, Mermet Lake, Middle Miss NWR, and Jackson County. All local count dates and details will follow in the November/December SIAS newsletter.

Never participated before? Consider signing up for a Christmas Bird Count Workshop. See details above on this page of the newsletter! See a CBC in action at www.instagram.com/reel/DF1wt_GMwxF/?hl=en

Interior Dept changes Land and Water Conservation Fund Rules - On Oct. 9 2025, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum announced that the Administrations was making changes to the popular Land and Water Conservation Fund program.

Created by Congress in 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was a bipartisan commitment to safeguard natural areas, water resources and our cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities across the nation through land acquisition. National parks like Rocky Mountain, the Grand Canyon, and the Great Smoky Mountains, as well as national wildlife refuges, national forests, rivers and lakes, coastal areas, community parks, trails, and ball fields in all 50 states and multiple U.S. territories were set aside to enjoy thanks to funding from LWCF.

The LWCF uses revenues from the depletion of one natural resource, offshore oil and gas, to support the conservation of our land and water via acquisition of new land. Thanks to passage of the Great American Outdoors Act in 2020, every year, \$900 million in royalties paid by energy companies drilling for oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) are put into the LWCF. The money helps protect national parks, areas around rivers and lakes, coastal areas, national forests, and national wildlife refuges from development, and to provide matching grants for state and local parks and recreation projects. Over the years, LWCF has also grown and evolved to include grants to protect working forests, city parks, wildlife habitat, critical drinking water supplies and disappearing battlefields, as well as increased use of easements.

The Interior Dept said Order 3442 "is designed to provide clarity and consistency in how the Land and Water Conservation Fund is implemented, while aligning with the Trump administration's priorities of cutting red tape, promoting outdoor recreation and, ensuring responsible stewardship of public lands."

In the Secretarial Order 3442, are modifications that include directions broadly discouraging the Bureau of Land Management from acquiring additional property, while also supporting the sell-off of federal lands to states.

In Order 3442, Burgum is limiting how money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund can be used. The order prioritizes acquisitions for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the National Park Service, which will have the result of discouraging land acquisition for the Bureau of Land Management. It also calls for the selling of federal lands to states, requires a state's governor and local leaders to agree to any federal LWCF acquisitions, and would limit the ability of non-profits to participate.

Some conservation groups argue Order 3442 puts up barriers to access the program. Amy Lindholm, national coordinator of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition, said the Order is severely restrictive. One of the biggest concerns her group has is that the order restricts a landowner's rights to sell their land to whoever they choose, by requiring local approval from their state or county government for those sales. "No other landowner in America has to get the sign off of their governor or their local county commissioner to sell their land to whoever they want to sell it to," she said.

At the same time, other conservation groups are flagging the likelihood public lands could be transferred in the opposite direction. That's the biggest concern for Devin O'Dea, western policy manager for Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. He fears the new order could be a back door to selling off public lands. The fears also come on the heels of Republican Sen. Mike Lee's attempt to include large public land sales in the GOP's One Big Beautiful bill.

While conservation groups generally said the order was not a surprise, many were relieved it didn't go further, like diverting money from the LWCF to unauthorized purposes like National Park maintenance. One advocate equated that notion to robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The order does not apply to the U.S. Forest Service, which is overseen by the Dept of Agriculture.

-Excerpts from:

<https://lwcfcoalition.org/press-releases> <https://www.cpr.org/2025/09/10/interior-department-conservation-funding-changes-lwcf-public-lands-blm/>
<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2025/09/04/interior-drops-plan-to-shift-money-for-buying-lands-to-repairs-00545037>

Past projects funded by the
Land and Water Conservation Fund

<https://lwcf.tplgis.org/mappast/>

Funding benefited US Fish
& Wildlife Service: Cypress
Creek, Crab Orchard, &
Middle Mississippi National
Wildlife Refuges

Funding benefited the US
Forest Service: Shawnee
National Forest

Funding benefited State &
Local Assistance: C'dale
Bikeway, Ferne Clyffe St
Pk, Devil's Backbone
St Pk, & more.

 Bureau of Land Management

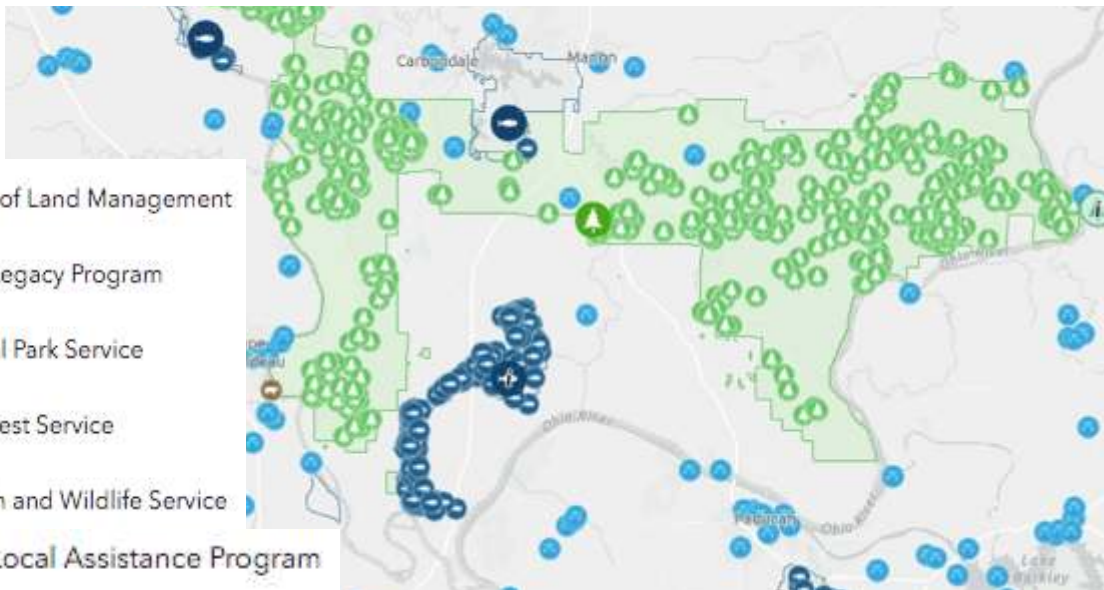
 Forest Legacy Program

 National Park Service

 U.S. Forest Service

 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

 State and Local Assistance Program



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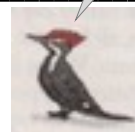
Attn: Membership

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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.

No need to
be an owl to
give a hoot
for SIAS!



For The Snowbirds: Orange Audubon Society's 2025 North Shore Birding Festival

The 10th Annual North Shore Birding Festival will take place December 11–15, 2025, based out of Central Florida's Lake Apopka North Shore. Location: Lake Apopka North Shore, Florida — a 20,000-acre restoration site and top eBird hotspot. Base Camp is at Wekiwa Springs State Park Youth Camp.

Registration opens October 1. Field Trip Fees: \$25–\$95 (no additional festival registration fee). College Students, half-price participation and travel scholarships available. Registration includes box lunches for many trips, keynote dinners, and night activities. Over 370 species recorded at Lake Apopka North Shore — more than any inland site in the U.S. 2024 sightings included: Brewer's Sparrow, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black Rail, Tropical Kingbird, Painted Bunting, and 22 species of ducks and mergansers. In 2023, 193 species recorded. Field trips for all skill levels, including: birding by kayak, bicycle, and canal boat, young birders trips, nature photography sessions, trips to explore Lake Apopka and other Central Florida hotspots, and family-friendly options available. For full details or to register, visit <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/north-shore-birding-festival/>

Southern Illinois is home to the 'most popular' hiking trail statewide, report says

The most popular hike in Illinois is located within Shawnee National Forest, according to a July 13, 2025 analysis from outdoor clothing retailer Kuhl*. The "Most Popular Hiking Trail in Each State" report named Little Grand Canyon Trail the Land of Lincoln's most popular hiking trail, based on the number of reviews on trail navigation service AllTrails, rating scores, frequency of Google searches, and Instagram popularity.

Little Grand Canyon Trail scored a 62.8 out of 100, with the nation's top-ranked trail, found in Arkansas, receiving an 88.2. While Starved Rock was recently named among the best state parks in the U.S., Shawnee's Little Grand Canyon Trail outperformed Starved Rock's trails in the Kuhl report on most popular hikes. Starved Rock and Sandstone Point Overlook Trail scored a 52.9. Along with being the home of Little Grand Canyon Trail, Shawnee National Forest spans 290,000 acres including biking paths, rock climbing areas, and opportunities to horseback ride and camp.

In a 2016 document, the U.S. Dept of Agriculture advises hikers to stay on the designated trail to avoid disturbing the rocks, plants, and animals. Those enjoying the trail should also exercise extra caution where the trail is near the bluffs and when traversing slippery rocks, the USDA says. **(Kuhl is German for "cool".)** Read more at: <https://www.bnd.com/news/state/illinois/article311839024.html#storylink=cpy>

Consider Compiling a CBC?

Enjoy birding and recognize the importance of collecting bird population statistics? Consider becoming a Christmas Bird Count Compiler! It's not hard and takes a commitment of only a few days, once a year. You'd be helping to continue the longest, persisting bird data collection endeavor in the U.S. If interested, just speak to Rhonda Rothrock at the next SIAS meeting. Or email her (me) at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com



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