



**Feb. 26th** – Tom Ulrich!

**March 26th** – Program to be announced

## **SIAS Winter Seed Sale February 6th**

The SIAS fall seed sale is scheduled for Saturday, February 6th, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at D & M Feeds, Carterville. D&M provides outstanding service at a convenient location.

**See order form included with this newsletter.**

**Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to place your order.**

Please send your order with payment to Greg Kupiec, sale coordinator, at the address listed on the enclosed form. Orders can also be submitted at the January 22nd SIAS meeting or you can phone in your order to Greg at 618.684.5168. If you want to purchase seed but cannot pick up your order on the day of the sale, please contact Laraine to make arrangements for later pickup at D&M Feeds. If you misplace your seed order form, visit the SIAS website and click on the Seed Sale! link <http://www.siaudubon.org/>

All prices are at D&M's regular retail rate but there is no sales tax on pre-orders. Some prices have dropped since our 2009 fall sale. As in the past, D&M is giving SIAS a generous discount on the total sales, which is our profit. This year 50% of the sale's proceeds will be donated to Free Again Wildlife Rehabilitation. Volunteers are needed to greet customers and confirm orders.

**Orders are to be picked up on Saturday, February 6th, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the D&M Feeds, 4451 Herrin-Colp Hwy., Carterville, (east of the intersection of Division St. & Herrin-Colp Hwy).**

## **A Few Notes and Apologies from the Editor**

First, I apologize for again procrastinating on my newsletter duties resulting in another newsletter getting out later than expected. Mom always says, "Never put off until tomorrow what you could do today." I acknowledge and understand the concept but ...

I have another apology to make to a very nice woman who paid her dues to become a member at the fall SIAS seed sale. Her membership form was inadvertently destroyed. And because my memory is weak and because she paid with cash, I have been unable to track her down.

To David Brewer who's December presentation I missed, I apologize that we do not have highlights of your presentation in this newsletter. I was unable to attend the program and because I procrastinated on the newsletter, I was unable to request details in time to make it into this newsletter. David regularly sends out samples of his amazing images via email, which are always a joy to view. SIAS is very fortunate to have a talented imager like David Brewer as member and one is so willing to share his work with us.

**Recognizing Winter Waterfowl** is the title of a program to be presented by Chris Barrigar on Friday, January 22nd, for our annual meeting. The program will start at approximately 7:30 PM, after a short business meeting and election of officers.

The lure of waterfowl watching is that they are big, relatively stationary, colorful (males), and generally plentiful during this time of year given open water along the flyway; thus they are perfect to view for all levels of birders. Chris' presentation will take us through the field marks associated with the various waterfowl species: divers and dabblers, mostly males/drakes. Physical descriptions of key field marks, as well as vocalizations, will be discussed.

Chris Barrigar is an outdoor enthusiast from southeastern Missouri. Chris states that he has always admired the outdoors and its gems (except the chiggers and ticks). Chris, a manufacturing engineer, became a serious birdwatcher and "lister" in 2005 while living in Michigan. He now resides in southeastern Missouri where he is focusing his birding efforts toward building up Missouri Department of Conservation site checklists, stating that this area of Missouri is greatly under-birded and lacks true representation of its species potential based on its different habitats/terrain as compared to that of the rest of the state. Chris is a member and field trip leader for the Swamp Candle Birders, a newly formed birding group based in Cape Girardeau (based at the Cape Girardeau Conservation Campus.)

**SIAS will be returning to the Fellowship Hall at First United Methodist Church, 214 W. Main St., Carbondale for this our annual meeting. The evening will begin with a potluck dinner and a short business meeting.** Set-up starts at 6 p.m. with the potluck starting at 6:30 p.m. SIAS will provide the main course and some beverages. Bring an entree to share, dinnerware, and utensils.

The slate of officers to be elected/reelected are: Finance Chair - Greg Kupiec, Conservation/Education - Cathie Hutcheson, and Outings Chair - open. If you are interested in filling the Outings Chair position, please contact Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605.

SIAS will hold a door prize(s) drawing and a silent auction as part of the evening's events. Members are encouraged to bring items for the auction or to be given as door prizes. Auction and door prize items can be handmade, store bought, or used in good condition (as in books). Folks providing auction items are asked to suggest a value at which to start the bidding. In past years the silent auction has proven quite profitable for SIAS.

Lastly, I struggle getting the last pieces of the newsletter together because I cannot get my mind off the devastating tragedy that has hit Haiti. A disaster like this makes much of everyday life seem so trivial. If there is something you can do to assist or provide aid to the people of Haiti, please don't hesitate. They desperately need help and will need much more help in the days, weeks, months, and years ahead. -Rhonda R.

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## **SIAS Treasurer's Report for 2009**

SIAS ended the year with cash assets of \$8,064 including \$3,217 in the Gelman Endowment certificate of deposit. We continue to raise money for this endowment through the sale of Ben Gelman's books as well as accepting cash donations. This year, I hope the SIAS board will approve the offering of an annual grant to a local school teacher to fund a special environmental education project, a way of honoring Ben's life and interests.

Our fall and winter seed sales are our biggest fund-raising efforts. This year, the combined sales netted \$889.69.

In addition to thanking those who volunteer, purchase seed, participate in our annual auction, and pay membership dues, we appreciate the following people who made extra donations this year: Mike Brown, Virginia Gelman, Sylvia Greenfield, David Hoover, Genevieve Houghton, Judy Keasler, Rhonda Rothrock, Sarah Sykes, and Laraine Wright.

Our donations to other organizations in 2009 were \$743 to Free Again, \$500 to the Friends of Cache River, \$200 to the Illinois Audubon Society, \$100 to the Illinois Environmental Council, and \$35 to the Carbondale Public Library. -Laraine Wright

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## **Outdoor Enthusiasts Call for Dedicated Revenue Source in State**

The message was loud and clear from Illinois citizens who participated in the Conservation Congress this fall and who filled out a survey, both sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Simply put, the state must find a way to set up an annual, dedicated funding source for land purchase and conservation that is separate from the crises in politics and budgeting we see from one year to the next.

Many other states have dedicated sources of revenue that keep professional biologists in the field and long-term projects afloat. In Minnesota, for example, a constitutional amendment dedicating just 3/8th of 1 percent of the sales tax to conservation will yield \$5.5 billion over a 25-year period.

According to the December 2009 Outdoor Illinois magazine, the most popular outdoor activities among the 6,000-plus people who filled out the IDNR survey were wildlife observation (92 percent), hiking (90), paddling (69), biking (68), fishing (56), and hunting (26). Yet Illinois has relatively little public land

available for its 13 million citizens. Each of us "gets to claim a meager 1,200 square feet of state-owned land to hike, hunt or fish in Illinois," says the magazine. "That's the size of a mobile home."

New IDNR Director Marc Miller, appointed by Gov. Pat Quinn, seems to understand the long-standing problems in the agency and apparently wants to make substantial improvements. It is up to Illinois citizens to demand that our legislators support those improvements, most especially passing laws that will increase and make permanent the necessary money to sustain IDNR efforts in the decades to come. -Laraine Wright

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## **OUTINGS & EVENTS**

### **Jan. 28 > Frog and Toad Orientation**

Every year volunteers, armed with rubber boots, clipboards and data sheets, venture out in to the evening to conduct frog and toad surveys as part of a statewide monitoring program. Join the folks at the Cache for a volunteer orientation to learn how to get involved with this worthwhile effort! Form more information call 618.657.2064

### **Jan. 23 > Otter Slough (MO) Ducks/Geese**

The Swamp Candle Birders of Southeast Missouri is a fledgling group of birders that just formed in December 2009. Their Mission is to help discover, appreciate, and conserve southeast Missouri's birds and their natural habitats which includes bird outings open to the public.

On 01/23 the will be trekking to Otter Slough Conservation Area, west of Dexter Missouri. Folks are to meet on site at Otter Slough at 9:30 A.M. Directions are to take Hwy. 60 west to Rt. ZZ, then 10 miles to Country Rd. 675. Turn west on 675 and travel 2 miles to the areas entrance. For more information, email: [sebirding@yahoo.com](mailto:sebirding@yahoo.com)

### **Feb. - April > Movie Nights at the Cache**

The first Thursday of each month will be movie night at the Cache River Wetlands Center. Various nature films will be screened and a short discussion about the movie will be held after the screening. Movies will start at 7 P.M. and the evening's activities will run until 9 P.M. For more information, on featured films, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

### **Feb. 6 > SIAS Winter Seed Sale**

See order form included with this newsletter.

### **Jan. 30-Feb 15 > Rusty Blackbird Blitz**

Last year over 200 birders submitted 453 Rusty Blackbird Surveys during the first annual Rusty Blackbird Blitz. Your participation in this event is needed. Illinois has historically been a hotspot for over-wintering Rusty Blackbirds. Information gained from this effort will provide focus to local conservation efforts to benefit Rusty Blackbirds.

To participate, simply visit locations where they have previously sighted or would expect to encounter Rusty Blackbirds (e.g. wet forested areas) and submit your observations at the <http://www.EBird.org>. You can go wherever you like, whenever you like, and as often as you like anytime between the dates of 01/30 – 02/15/10. Just record the number of birds present at each location you visit, along with very basic habitat information. Even if you do not see any Rusty Blackbirds during your survey, this information should still be reported. Feel free to contact Jeff Hoover, the Blitz coordinator for Illinois at [jhoover@inhs.uiuc.edu](mailto:jhoover@inhs.uiuc.edu) or 217-244-2922, or Matt Mckim-Louder at [mckimlou@illinois.edu](mailto:mckimlou@illinois.edu) if you have any questions. Datasheet can be downloaded here:

[http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty\\_Blackbird/Blitz%20Data%20Form.pdf](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty_Blackbird/Blitz%20Data%20Form.pdf)

### May 29-June 5 > Annual Adventure To Trinidad & Tobago

Here's your chance to experience the beautiful and wonders this two-island nation in the Caribbean. From snorkeling in coral reefs and bird watching in a mangrove swamp to giant leatherback turtle ecology and searching for orchids and bromeliads, this trip is the opportunity of a lifetime. The cost is has not changed since last year.

For complete details, contact Nelda Hinckley, Professor of Biology, John A. Logan College, 700 Logan College Rd., Carterville, IL 62988 or phone Nelda at 618.549.5588 or 618.457.7676 ext. 8323.

## Seeing Birds

A new species of warbler has been discovered in the forests of Vietnam and Laos. The Limestone leaf warbler (*Phylloscopus calciatilis*), a small green and yellow bird was first sighted in 1994, but at the time was thought to be a different species surviving 1000km from its usual home. But a specimen was caught at Thai An Commune, Quan Ba district, Ha Giang Province, East Tonkin, Vietnam on 1 June 2008.

Initially, the bird was identified as a Sulphur-breasted warbler, in itself an interesting finding, since it was apparently breeding more than 1000km south of its previously known breeding areas in China. To see a picture of the bird (which looks a bit like a worm-eating warbler), visit:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/earth\\_news/newsid\\_8413000/8413590.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/earth_news/newsid_8413000/8413590.stm)

While on a drive on 12/10, Linda and Russ Dutcher spotted a bald eagle perch in a big tree by the truck bypass river road south-west of Chester.

The species list for the 12/14/09 Cypress Creek NWR Christmas Bird Count was boosted at the end of the day when several sandhill cranes flew in to Grassy Slough Preserve at sunset.

The following day a friend of John Schwegman reported to John that on the morning of 12/15, a flock of 20-30 sandhill cranes flew over the friend's home near Ozark (IL). Heading south.

David Brewer had an interesting day of swan watching on 12/16. While on location near a winter wheat field east of Rt. 149 and north of Bush (in the vicinity of Royal Falcon Mine Road, Burning Start #5 coal mine), David viewed several flocks of swans coming in from various directions and ended the day seeing over 150 trumpeter swans. He separated out four swans that he identified as tundras.

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## Suet for Bluebirds

If you have access to the internet and are a fan of bluebirds, visit the following site for several suet recipes made especially for bluebirds: <http://www.sialis.org/suet.htm>

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## Rusty Blackbirds In Decline

The Rusty Blackbird has been steeply declining with estimates of an 85-99% population drop over the past 40 years. The cause for this alarming decline is not known and the increasingly sparse and patchy winter distribution of the Rusty Blackbird is making it more difficult to learn more about distribution, abundance, and ecology as a basis for conservation efforts.

Collaborating with Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's and National Audubon Society's e-Bird project, the Rusty Blackbird Technical Working Group (RBTWG) is asking for the help of citizen scientists to find local, but predictable wintering concentrations of Rusty Blackbirds by participating in the Rusty Blackbird Blitz. As a result of these efforts, the RBTWG is hoping to create maps of wintering Rusty Blackbird "hot spots" that will help direct research, monitoring and conservation attention. The main overview website:

[http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty\\_Blackbird/blitz.cfm](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty_Blackbird/blitz.cfm)

Last year's results are posted at this site:

[http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty\\_Blackbird/blitz\\_results.cfm](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty_Blackbird/blitz_results.cfm)

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## Concern Rising Over the Drop in Population of Whooping Cranes

There are only two flocks of whooping cranes in the world. One winters in Florida and one in Texas. The Texas flock, which spends the summer in the Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Canada, is now arriving in Texas. Early indications are the flock will be smaller than last year. This is the first drop in the flock's population in seven years. It is estimated that there will be 247 adult birds this year, down from 270 a year ago. The flock hatched 52 chicks this past summer, a six-year low. Only 22 of the chicks survived.

Scientists are also concerned about the lack of food for the wintering cranes in south Texas. A drought has depleted the crane's usual food sources.

From: <http://www.birdersunited.com/>

## Audubon Survey Shows Many Bird Populations Moving Northward

A study by the National Audubon Society of its annual Christmas bird counts over the past 40 years found that, on average, bird species have been moving about one mile north each year. Nearly 60 percent of all bird species in the Audubon surveys have shown a distinct movement to colder, more northern climates.

The report states that of the 305 species studied, 208 (68.2 %) shifted north. Wetland birds, forest birds, shrub birds, and generalists all had a majority of the species shifting northward, but grassland birds did not. These results and others are correlated with the warmer January weather experienced in the contiguous 48 United States over the past 40 years. There is no evidence that the species moving north are currently suffering population declines related to those moves, but if winters continue to warm, bird habitats and food supplies may not be able to track the warmer weather as effectively as many birds can.

The purple finch was found to have moved its habitat northward by 433 miles over the past 40 years. Other birds that have shown a dramatic northward shift are the robin, wild turkey, and the red mergansers. The complete report can be found at: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/abc>

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**New Members:** We welcome new member Mike Ladd of Thompsonville. We welcome back Tracy Evans of Mechanicsburg (Tracy migrated north a few years ago but is still interested in what SIAS is up to!)

*If you recently joined SIAS but were not formally welcomed in the newsletter, please forgive us our oversight and know that your membership is greatly appreciated!*

## Scientists Petition Obama Administration to End a Bush Policy That Limits the Scope of Endangered Species Act Protections

BirdersUnited.Com reports that a group of 129 scientists has petitioned Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to abandon a Bush administration policy that limits the scope of the Endangered Species Act.

The Bush policy states that if a bird or other species has become extinct or is extremely rare in areas where historically it has existed in large numbers but is doing well in some other habitat, it should not be protected under the Endangered Species Act. The policy also limits endangered species safeguards to areas where the bird currently exists and does not allow for establishing critical habitat in areas where the bird has historically thrived but now has become extinct.

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## Salazar Awards Funds To Support Wetlands

In December, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced the award of \$19.2 million to support 25 conservation projects benefiting fish and wildlife on more than 6,100 acres of coastal habitat in 11 states, including Illinois, through the 2010 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. The federal grants will be matched by nearly \$26 million in partner contributions from state and local governments, private landowners and conservation groups.

The grants will be used to acquire, restore or enhance coastal wetlands and adjacent uplands to provide long-term conservation benefits to fish, wildlife and their habitat.

For more information on this and other USFWS news, visit: <http://www.fws.gov/>

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## 2010 Annual Membership Renewal

Annual membership renewal month is January, that coincides with board elections held at the annual meeting in January.

*Member address labels reflect current dues status.*

To join or renew your membership, fill in the following form and return it along with your dues to:

**Southern Illinois Audubon Society**

**Attn.: Membership**

**P.O. Box 222**

**Carbondale, IL 62903-0222**

*Individual voting member \$15*

*Additional member in a family \$10*

*Student voting member \$5*

*Amt. Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_*

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City,  
State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone  
Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I/we would be interested in being on the Board. (circle one): YES/NO  
I/we would like to receive my newsletter via email. (circle one): YES/NO