



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

January 2011 – Vol. 18. No. 1

P.O. Box 222  
Carbondale, IL 62903-0222

## NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

### Images from 2010

is the title of a program Dr. David W. Brewer will give for SIAS's Annual Meeting on Friday, January 28th at 8 p.m. Dr. Brewer is a Professor Emeritus of Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where he taught at the School of Medicine. He is a life-long naturalist, having taken up photography in 1967. Since retirement, Dr. Brewer has become a professional photographer, specializing in nature photography.

Spend an evening with David as he reviews his imaging experiences for 2010. David will present images from various imaging trips. Images will include those of the trumpeter swans and other birds imaged at the Burning Star #5 reclaimed mine property near Hurst as well as images from Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, Union County, and Mr. Brewer's own garden. Also included will be a selection of Bald Eagle images, which were on display at the Cache River NatureFest and butterfly images from an Illinois butterfly sanctuary. Information will be provided as to how images were captured and setting up feeding stations for avian observation and/or imaging

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 followed by 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

This meeting will include an election of officers. The slate of officers to be elected/reelected are: President - Joe Merkelbach, Vice President - Vicki Lang, Secretary - Mary McCarthy, Treasurer - Laraine Wright, Outing Chair - *Open*, Hospitality Chair - *Open*, Conservation/Education Chair - Cathy Hutcheson, and Membership Chair - Rhonda Rothrock. Interested in one of the open positions? Please contact Rhonda Rothrock at 618.684.6605. Nominations for positions can also be made the evening of the meeting.

SIAS will hold a silent auction and a door prize(s) drawing as part of the evening's events. Members are encouraged to bring items for the auction or to be given as door prizes. 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.

#### **Future SIAS Programs:**

**Feb. 25** – Dr. George Waring, *Marine Mammals*

**Mar. 25** – Janet Sunberg, *Texas Birding Trail*

### Nov./Dec. Program Highlights

A Call in the Wild – Echoes

El Lobo, the Mexican wolf, has been a missing voice in the southern Rockies for a few generations. The use of lands for grazing cattle and hunting and the emotional and effective campaigns waged by both governments and the public stripped the environment of almost all large predators. Poisoning and bounty hunting were very thorough in decimating predator populations.

Finally about the time of Silent Spring, some scientists began to study large predators and their impact on ecology. The work of the Craigheads on Grizzly bears, isolated into population pockets in Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, revealed that large predators could live natural lives, without garbage dump shows, in landscapes with only light human contact. These revelations lead to the idea of reintroduction of gray wolves into Yellowstone, where they are now firmly a part of the ecosystem.

The Endangered Species Act made it a legal responsibility of the federal government to protect animal and plant species, including predators, just at the time that this awakening understanding of predators as members of ecological communities was becoming accepted.

Two canids, the Red Wolf of the southeast U.S. and the Mexican Wolf, a distinct subspecies of the gray wolf, *Canis lupus baileyi* of the southwest benefitted from these events.

Kim Wrenn-King, currently a ranger in charge of public outreach at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, presented the December program about her experiences as a technician in the restoration program for el Lobo.

This animal, as well as the Red Wolf, and most famously the California condor, did not have a wild population for a period of time. Mexican wolves, taken from the wild as the population dwindled to zero in the United States, were established in breeding centers, including the Tyson center outside St. Louis, to save the distinct genes. While this population of captives was growing, the USFWS and affiliated state and private groups worked out a strategy for returning some wolves to the wild in the southwest. Although the wolf ranged over the deserts as well as mountains of the US and Mexico, the decision was that the best location to return a population to the wild was deep within a mountainous wilderness of the Gila National Forest. The Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, in New Mexico did the active management work within a collar of public lands and Native American Reservations to minimize wolf human conflicts.

The wolves, raised with restricted human contact in the breeding centers, were packed into the release area, well away from any roads, and released into large fenced enclosures. After a period of adaptation, the fences were opened and the

wolves are freed to live on their own.

Selected wolves have been radio collared since the first releases in 2000 and Kim told us of her experiences tracking these as a means of monitoring the reintroduced populations.

The delicate relations among the restored wolf packs and the surrounding human population, with cattle vulnerable to wolf predation, are one of the most sensitive aspects of the restoration of el Lobo. Kim's expertise in presenting programs for the public, including school groups, was an important part of keeping many people on the side of the restored wolf populations.

We appreciate the opportunity to learn about wildlife related activity in other parts of the US from professionals close to home. *-Joe Merkelbach, President*

## October Program Highlights

### Threatened and Endangered

Our Jackson county neighbor, Debbie Newman, the area 7 biologist for the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, presented a program about the threatened and endangered species of Illinois in September.

Illinois is so centrally located in the United States that there are few nationally endangered charismatic species that occur only within the state. However, the microhabitats within southern Illinois are sufficiently small and distinct that small populations with specialist requirements make up quite a few T & E populations within Illinois. The few national birds and mammals that are on the Illinois list include the least tern that nests on river sandbars in southwest Illinois, and the Indiana and gray bats.

Smaller critters, like snakes, turtles, salamanders, frogs, and invertebrates are among her favorites. The timber rattlesnake, that likes rough southern Illinois topography, and is found on the Newman's own property, was the subject of discussion because it suffers from human prejudice.

Quite a few of the species on the lists that occur in area seven are specialists in thriving in the open glade like hill prairies that border the Mississippi River. Many of the threatened and endangered species are plants that have adapted to tolerate heat, shallow soils, dryness, and fire exposure. The relatively recent suppression of fire has begun to allow woody species to invade, but now biologists and land managers are using managed blazes to preserve the habitat and the species adapted to it.

Several species are more typically found in Missouri, but have small populations found in the river bottomlands or on the adjacent bluffs.

The one globally endangered species from area seven is a humble creature indeed. The Illinois Cave amphipod, *Gammarus acherondytes*, is known only from the caves and sinkholes in Monroe and St. Clair counties in Illinois. It is a small crustacean related to the common wood louse or pill bug, although it lives in water instead of on land. It is a bluish white color, about .8 - .5 inch long, and looks like a miniature shrimp.

Our belated thanks to Debbie for this interesting program, and we hope she will be back to visit us in the future.

*-Joe Merkelbach, President*



Since 2006, U.S. honey bee populations have been in precipitous decline, with some estimates suggesting losses as high as 30% per year. Without bees, a big piece of our food supply is in serious danger. Pollination by honey bees is key in cultivating the crops that produce a full one-third of our food.

Scientists have been scrambling to understand the crisis — termed Colony Collapse Disorder — but have yet to find a single, definitive cause. There are likely multiple interacting causes, and mounting evidence suggests that one widely used class of pesticides may be a critical factor.

One such chemical, called clothianidin, is produced by the German corporation Bayer CropScience. It is used as a treatment on crop seeds, including corn and canola, and works by expressing itself in the plants' pollen and nectar. Not coincidentally, these are honey bees' sources of food.

Additional independent studies have shown that neonicotinoid pesticides like clothianidin are highly toxic to honey bees, providing compelling evidence that they should be immediately taken off the market until the E.P.A. can conduct a full and valid scientific review. France, Italy, Slovenia, and Germany — the home of Bayer — have already banned clothianidin.

Visit Credo's website to learn more and to sign a petition to E.P.A. Administrator Lisa Jackson demanding an immediate ban and full scientific review of this pesticide.  
<http://act.credoaction.com/r/?r=6802&id=15142-1759794-P4Vn8Iz&t=5>

Earlier this month, the Environmental Protection Agency made a historic decision to halt the most massive mountaintop-removal mine ever proposed for Appalachia. The permit had already been approved by the Army Corps of Engineers, but the EPA — for the first time in history — exercised its mining-permit veto power over the agency, ruling that the destructive project would have too many water-pollution impacts, including downstream fish kills. The Spruce mine would have destroyed 2,300 acres of forest and buried nearly seven miles of streams depended on by countless wildlife species — not to mention local human communities. Coal-field residents have been fighting the Spruce mine in West Virginia since 1998.

## Upcoming Outings & Events

### Jan. 29 > Swan Viewing At CONSOL Burning Star #5

The Cooperative Wildlife Research Lab at SIUC has studied trumpeter swans, on lakes at CONSOL Coal Company 's Burning Star #5 reclaimed mine land northeast of DeSoto for several years. SIAS has been invited to this CONSOL property to view the swans wintering there.

It is necessary to get an early start if we want a chance to see the swans **so we'll meet at Murdale Shopping Center parking lot, West Main St., C'dale, for carpooling at 7:00 a.m.** or onsite at Burning Star #5 at 7:30 a.m. (take IL Rt. 51 to DeSoto, turn east on IL Rt. 149, cross the Big Muddy River then turn north onto Mine Road. This road deadends at the meeting spot. ) The mine roads are passable but 4-wheel drive vehicles are suggested so be prepared to carpool. Each attendee will be required to fill out a visitor's release form on site.

We have Jack Nawrot, with the Wildlife Research Lab, to thank for arranging this outing.

### Jan.-May > Movie Night at the Cache, 1st Thursday of the Month

Grab your family & friends for a relaxing and fun evening of watching movies about nature at the Cache River Wetlands Center. Movies will be followed by a discussion. For more information or movie schedule, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

### April 30 > 10<sup>th</sup> Birding Blitz

Don't wait until the last minute! Get your birding team together, chose a category, and start working on your strategy. Also, start collecting pledges! <http://www.birdingblitz.org>

### June > 23<sup>rd</sup> Trinidad & Tobago Tropical Adventure

Learn about Tropical Ecology in this beautiful two-island nation in the Caribbean. Details to follow. Contact Nelda Hinckley at 618.549.5588 or 618.457.7676 ext 8323 for more information.

## February 2011, A Month Filled With Exciting Events:

### Feb. 12 > Houses! That's for the Birds!

Spring to an early start this season by learning how to build bird houses at the Cache River Wetland Center, 8885 State Route 37 South, Cypress, from 1:00-3:30 p.m. Draw birds to your yard by setting up homes for them. Learn the differences in nest constructions for and by different bird species and how to identify a bird species by the nest you see. For more information, phone 618.657.2064.

### Feb. 15 > Tom Ulrich, Photographer, A Presentation

Tom Ulrich, Nature Photographer, will be in Southernmost Illinois to give a special presentation at Lawson 161, SIUC Campus, Tuesday, Feb. 15th, starting at 7:00 p.m. This year's presentation features hummingbirds of Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands, and wildlife and scenes of North America, including Texas, Glacier National Park, Yellowstone, and the Tetons.

Tom grew up in Chicago, graduated from SIUC with a degree in biology, and taught for four years before launching a career as a freelance photographer. In 35-plus years as a nature photographer, he has assembled a library of 800,000+ images that includes birds and mammals from all over the world. His photos have been featured in National Geographic, National Wildlife, Audubon, and many other publications. He has published seven books.

Program sponsored by: Department of Zoology, Zoology Club, Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society, and the Southern Illinois Photographic Society.

### Feb. 18 > Dr. Douglas Tallamy,

#### ***Bringing Nature Home: A Case for Native Gardening***

The Illinois Native Plant Society Southern Chapter is hosting this special lecture by Dr. Douglas Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home: A Case for Native Gardening*, on Friday, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. in the Browne Auditorium, Parkinson Lab Bldg, 1259 Lincoln Dr., SIUC Campus.

Dr. Tallamy teaches at the University of Delaware, in Newark. He is a professor and the chair of the Entomology and Wildlife Ecology department there, where he has been studying insects and their role in the environment for over 20 years. Among his research areas are the impact of alien plants on native ecosystems, the interactions between plants and insects, and the conservation of biodiversity.

**See attached flyer for all details and list of sponsors including SIAS.**

### Feb. 19 > Birds of Peru & Night Shift Owls

Join biologists Michael Jeffords and Susan Post on a journey across one of the world's most biodiverse countries, Peru, on Saturday, Feb. 19th, from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. at the Cache River Wetlands Center, 8885 State Route 37 South, Cypress.

Enjoy images and commentary from the seacoast, across the Andes, into the humid rainforest of the Amazon basin, and to the awesome spectacle that is Machu Picchu. Michael and Susan spent most of August 2010, exploring the landscapes of this new world biological wonderland.

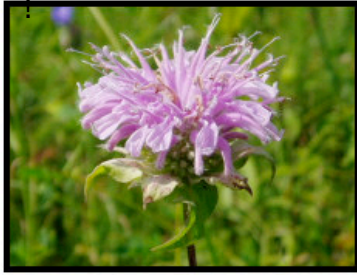
On that same evening, from 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. at the same location, Mark Gueterslogh, IDNR Natural Heritage Biologist, will present a program on Night Shift Owls. Mark will present information on owls then lead a night walk. The walk location is to be announced, but will be close by.

Call the Cache River Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064 for more details on either of these two activities.

### Feb. 25 > Dr. George Waring, "Marine Mammals"

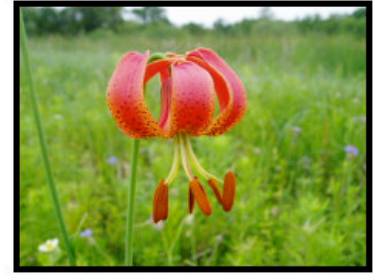
Program speaker for the Feb. SIAS meeting. Details to follow in Feb. newsletter!





**Mark your calendars!**

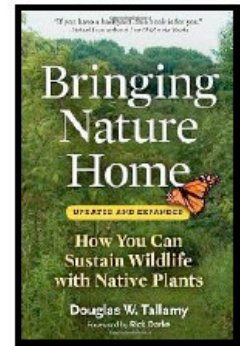
**Coming soon to  
Southern Illinois**



The Illinois Native Plant Society is pleased to host a presentation by

# Dr. Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*

*How to sustain wildlife with Native Plants*



**Friday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011 @ 7:00pm**

**Browne Auditorium, Parkinson Lab bldg, SIU Campus**

**1259 Lincoln Drive, Carbondale, IL**

**This event is free and open to the public**



*"People in the gardening world are calling Douglas W. Tallamy's book on native plants the next Silent Spring."* —Westchester Journal News

*"Tallamy communicates a hopeful message: It's not too late to save the ecological community of fauna and the answer is as simple as replacing foreign plants with natives."* —Garden Compass

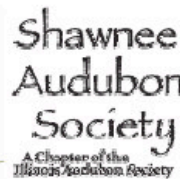
**Gardening For Life:** Chances are, you have never thought of your garden – indeed, of all the space on your property – as a wildlife preserve that represents the chance we have for sustaining plants and animals that were once common throughout the U.S. But that is exactly the role our suburban landscapes are now playing and will play even more in the near future. For more information visit <http://bringingnaturehome.net/>.



Douglas Tallamy is professor and chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology and Director of the Center for Managed Ecosystems at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware, where he has authored 73 research articles and has taught Insect Taxonomy, Behavioral Ecology, and other courses for over 20 years. His book "Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in our Gardens" was published by Timber Press in 2007 and was awarded the 2008 Silver Medal by the Garden Writer's Association.

This presentation was organized by the  
along with the following sponsors:

**SOUTHERN CHAPTER of the ILLINOIS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
EVERGREEN GARDEN CLUB, SIU RESTORATION CLUB**



## A Little Birdie Told Me...

...David Hoover spotted and snapped a photograph of a late/lingering black-crowned night heron at Crab Orchard NWR on 12/7/10.

...David Brewer has kept himself busy this winter surveying and imaging trumpeter swans and will be sharing some of those photos at SIAS's annual meeting.

...there were an estimated 70,000 snow geese in Alexander County in late December.

...several over-wintering flocks of chipping sparrows were seen during the Christmas Bird Count season in southernmost Illinois.

...loggerhead shrikes still exist in southernmost Illinois and were recently seen at Arklands/Pyramid St. Pk. and near Metropolis.

...80+ short-eared owls were seen at Arklands/Pyramid St. Pk. during the Arklands Christmas Bird Count.

...Don Mullison, Cathie Hutcheson, and David Kvernes saw a golden eagle at Union County Refuge on 01/08/11 while counting eagles for the Mid-winter eagle survey.

...Cathie Hutcheson saw two swans flying west over the Lowe's shopping area in Carbondale on 01/11/11.

...the early January snow was good for bringing nice birders to Dennis Hale's feeders. He has had both male and female yellow-bellied sapsuckers visiting his feeders.

...Anton Kvernes makes the best gumbo and split pea soup.



In January, the Midwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released an Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluating farming and the use of genetically-modified, glyphosate-tolerant corn and soybeans on National Wildlife Refuge System lands for public review and comment.

The document is posted on-line at:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/FarmingNEPA>

If you have any questions on the EA or on farming on Refuge System lands, please call Mike Brown, Refuge Manager at Cypress Creek NWR, at 618.634.9473. If you would like to receive a paper copy of the EA, please call Jane Hodgins in the Midwest Region's Division of Conservation Planning at 612.713.5395.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service invites you to send written comments on the EA either via e-mail or by standard mail. The e-mail address is: [r3planning@fws.gov](mailto:r3planning@fws.gov) Please be sure and use the words "Farming EA" in the subject line. Standard mail can be sent to us at:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Attention: Farming EA Comment  
Division of Conservation Planning, Room 530  
BHW Federal Building  
1 Federal Drive  
Ft. Snelling, MN 55111

The following is an Abstract from Effect of urbanization on the avifauna in a tropical metropolitan area. *Landscape Ecology - Online First, 6 December 2010*

The rapid and unplanned expansion of urban areas is a common pattern in neotropical developing countries. Urbanization has eliminated or drastically altered large areas of natural habitats used by the rich neotropical avifauna. In our study area, in Costa Rica's Central Valley, urbanization increased 72% in 33 years with the consequent destruction, fragmentation, and isolation of forest tracts, shade plantations, and other semi-natural habitats used by a rich avifauna. We show that over the last 16 years 32 resident species of birds have disappeared from this area. Species with specialized habitat requirements or particular life history traits (e.g., altitudinal migrants) are disproportionately represented among those birds that have disappeared from the region. Another 34 latitudinal migrants have gone undetected as nearly all habitats these species used as a stopover site during the autumn migration have disappeared; many of these migrants were very abundant 16 years earlier. Relative abundance has also decreased for most resident and migratory species that remained or visited the area. If uncontrolled urban expansion continues, we predict that the rate of extinction of the avifauna that originally inhabited this region would continue possibly increasing.

-Biamonte, E., Sandoval, L., Chacon, E. and Barrantes, G. (2011).

## Opposable Chums – Guts & Glory at the World Series of Birding

Birding (birdwatching) has many aspects. Depending to whom you speak, it's a hobby, a passion, an obsession, or a sport. I view birding as a many-leveled thing, with levels in levels like that on a dartboard. For some folks, it's very competitive and more and more this competitive energy is being funneled into high-stakes birding events. Although it might sound a bit crazy, it really isn't so because these high-stakes events are used to attract attention and funding for conservation.

Jason Kessler made a documentary film about one such competition, the World Series of Birding. This event takes place in New Jersey every spring and attracts the top birders from across the nation who form teams and compete in various categories. They get sponsors like Swarovski and raise money for conservation related charities. Sound familiar? You won't be surprised to hear that I loved the movie and recommend it to all level of bird enthusiasts. The movie is interesting, entertaining, and a hoot! -Rhonda R.



-- Join SIAS or Renew Your Membership --

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

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Southern Illinois Audubon Society** Individual member \$15  
 Attn.: Membership Additional member in a family \$10  
 P.O. Box 222 Student voting member \$ 5  
 Carbondale, IL 62903-0222 Amt. Enclosed:\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annual membership renewal month is January and coincides with board elections held at the annual meeting in January. Member address labels reflect current dues status.

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

✂-----cut here and return with dues-----cut here and return with dues-----✂

✂-----cut here and return with dues-----cut here and return with dues-----✂

**SIAS Board of Directors**

President: Joe Merkelbach 618.532.2112  
 Vice President: Vicki Lang-Mendenhall  
 618.697.9868  
 Secretary: Mary McCarthy 618.684.8182  
 Treasurer: Laraine Wright 618.457.8769  
 Conservation/Education Chair:  
 Cathie Hutcheson 618.529.2022  
 Finance: Greg Kupiec 618.684.5168  
 Hospitality: *Open* Outings: *Open*  
 Membership: Rhonda Rothrock 618.684.6605  
 Newsletter Editor: Rhonda Rothrock 618.684.6605  
 email woodthrusheola@hotmail.com

**SIAS Website:** <http://www.siaudubon.org>  
**Email:** [siaudubonsociety@gmail.com](mailto:siaudubonsociety@gmail.com)

Always leave 'em laughing...



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

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

Don't forget to Save Your Stamps for the IAS Land Acquisition Fund. ☞

Bring them to any SIA's meeting!

For more info visit: [www.illinoisaudubon.org](http://www.illinoisaudubon.org)



Image by David Brewer

