



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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

## NEWSLETTER

*Established in 1970*

### Marine Mammals and Their Foraging Behaviors

Dr. George Waring, SIUC Professor Emeritus of Zoology, will present a lecture titled "Marine Mammals and Their Foraging Behaviors" on Friday, February 25th at 7:30 p.m. to be held at the Carbondale Township Hall, 217 E. Main St., Carbondale.

How is it possible that approximately 125 marine mammals species can co-exist in the World's oceans? Dr. Waring's illustrated lecture will review the variety of marine mammals that exist around the world plus focus on the interesting ways marine mammals obtain their food and keep competition to a minimum.

SIAS meetings will be returning to the Carbondale Township Hall for this meeting. Use the back entrance where parking is available.

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

**March 25** – Janet Sunberg, *Texas Birding Trail*

**April 22** – Joseph McFarland, *Mushrooms*

### January Program Highlights

The annual meeting is always a fun evening and this year was no exception. Plenty of folks attended, bringing lots of great food and a hoard of interesting auction items to be sold. The silent auction netted \$246. The slate of officers were approved as presented: President - Joe Merkelbach, Vice President - Vicki Lang, Secretary - Mary McCarthy, Treasurer - Laraine Wright, Conservation/Education Chair - Cathy Hutcheson, and Membership Chair - Rhonda Rothrock but we are still looking to fill the positions of Hospitality Chair and Outings Chair. (No volunteer will be refused!)

Some 50 members and friends came in from the cold to spend the evening with nature photographer David Brewer as he reviewed his imaging experiences from 2010. Birds, mammals, insects, and landscapes were all represented in David's images. As always, David willingly shared tips on how he gets such great images and advice for others to use when out imaging in nature. Most outstanding were his swan images. What tundra and trumpeter swans lack in spectrum color, they make up in purity and majesty, with their black feet, bills, facial markings contrasting against their smooth, milk white plumage.

Many thanks go out to David for sharing his beautiful images and to all the members and friends who not only brought items for the silent auction but bid on items too. With the funds raised through the silent auction, SIAS can support several projects including Free Again Wildlife Rehabilitation, the CONWR Bluebird trail, and conservation/restoration efforts in the Cache River Wetlands.

-Rhonda R.

### *Upcoming Outings & Events*

Feb. 24 > Wild Cats! Science Café

Clay Nielson of the SIUC Cooperative Wildlife Research Lab will uncover the mysteries of nature's greatest predators -wild cats- in a program for the Science Center at University Mall at 7 p.m.

March-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. For more information or movie schedule, call the Wetlands Center at 618.657.2064.

March 12 > Native Plant Seminar at the Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center

The Missouri Dept. of Conservaton and the Cape Girardeau County Master Gardeners will be hosting their 5th annual native plant seminar from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Using native grasses, trees, wildflowers, and shrubs adds variety and color to your landscape, attracts wildlife and is a cost effective alternative to the traditional manicured lawn. To learn more about event activities, guest speakers, and native plant sales, call 573.290.5218. Registration required, beginning February 1st.

April 9 > LaRue Pine Hills Days

Mark you calendars for the LaRue Pine Hills Day celebration of nature. More details to follow.

April 30 > Cache River Nature Fest

Programs, exhibits, and activities for kids will take place at this year's Nature Fest. Guided canoe tours and nature hikes will be offered. Come early to watch hummingbird banding. Free-Again Wildlife will be there with owls and hawks. For full details, contact the Wetland Ctr. at 618.657.2064 or visit <http://www.cacherivernaturefest.org/>

June > 23<sup>rd</sup> Trinidad & Tobago Tropical Adventure *Where birds and beauty abound*

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.

## Coming soon: SIAS apparel!

SIAS Finance Chair Greg Kupiec has been working the folks at SilkWorm, Inc. on a possible SIAS apparel order. A select group of items, including hats and polo shirts, would bear an embroidered version of SIAS's logo. Tshirts with a silkscreened SIAS logo are also being considered.

A pre-order form will be made available to members and payment(s) will be required in advance. Prices will depend on the number and type of items ordered. A big combined order will mean lower prices.



### Bird Houses For Sale!

The SIUC Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society recently restored 70 "vintage" wooden bluebird/woodpecker type nest boxes that were previously used in a Cooperative Wildlife Lab research project. These "proven producers" are being offered for sale at the low price of 1 for \$7.50 or 2 for \$10.

If you're interested in purchasing one or more of these great nest boxes, contact Brenna Towery, President of the Student Wildlife Society, at 309.642.1580 or email Brenna at btowery@siu.edu

## Sandhill cranes may escape hunting (in Tennessee) for now

Members of Tennessee's state's wildlife commission have recommended that a proposal to allow hunting of sandhill cranes in be put off for two years. One of the issues was whether enough is known about the eastern population of sandhill cranes that migrates through Tennessee. Among issues of concern is the birds' slow reproduction rate. They reproduce after 5-7 years and lay only two eggs. Generally, out of every three pairs of cranes, only one baby will survive, one study indicates.

The state's Hiwassee Refuge at the confluence of the Tennessee and Hiwassee rivers in East Tennessee has lured more and more of the birds to rest and feed as they migrate through in increasing numbers. They are the focus of the state's largest bird viewing event – a 20-year-old annual festival that occurred last weekend. It draws in thousands of people who watch them preen and rise into the air in clouds as they call out in bugling voices. A total of 11,000 sandhills were counted during the first week of January 2011.

The public filed responses overwhelmingly against hunting sandhill cranes during a TWRA comment period on the proposal, according to agency information. Out of 753 responses, 72% opposed it and 28% supported it. TWRA also had a random telephone survey conducted by the University of Tennessee of 869 people. Out of those, 32 percent favored a hunting season and 37 percent opposed it. Of the non-hunters among them, 42 percent were against it and 24 percent in favor. About 55 percent of those who hunt said they wanted a season opened up on sandhills, while 22 percent said they did not.

The Tennessee Wildlife Federation, which petitioned TWRA to allow crane hunting, has said that the cranes are plentiful enough to be harvested and should be. Tennessee would be the only state in the southeast to allow hunting of sandhill cranes if the proposal were approved, though Kentucky is considering it. Eleven states to the west where there are other populations of sandhills allow it.

To view the complete article, go to:

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/201101201847/NEWS01/110120177>

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## House Bill Would Gut Decades of Environmental Protections

Formal debate began, on Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>, on House Republicans' spending bill that would, among other things, halt the reduction of dangerous carbon dioxide pollution, remove Endangered Species Act protections for the gray wolf and other imperiled species, loosen restrictions on toxic mercury pollution and mountaintop mining, and open up public lands to harmful activities.

Among the amendments to the bill are proposals that would:

- \* Stop federal agencies from protecting the public from the impacts of mountaintop-removal mining.
- \* Eliminate 2011 funding for implementation of Clean Air Act rules to curb CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas pollutants.
- \* Scuttle national forest travel plans that advance conservation, wildlife conservation and stream protection.
- \* Limit the president's ability to protect national treasures through the 1906 Antiquities Act, which Teddy Roosevelt used to save thousands of acres.
- \* Prohibit EPA from implementing portions of the Clean Water Act, threatening drinking water and potentially leaving wetlands without protection from pollution.
- \* Restrict EPA's ability to implement coal-ash safeguards
- \* Exempt Big Oil from Clean Air Act review for drilling in the Arctic.
- \* Prevent the Bureau of Land Management from implementing its new "wildlands" policy that allows the agency to survey and provide interim protections for certain public lands that have not received a formal wilderness designation from Congress.
- \* Slash spending on land and water acquisition and conservation programs by more than \$200 million compared to the 2010 funding level.

For the complete story visit: <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/>

## 26 Newly Accepted Important Bird Areas in Illinois

In June 2010, 26 new Important Bird Areas (IBAs) were recognized in Illinois bring the total of designated area in Illinois to 92. IBAs are important habitats that our birds depend on for survival. The sites selected may host tens of thousands of migrating landbirds, waterfowl, raptors or shorebirds throughout the year. They may provide nesting habitat or wintering.

The Illinois IBA program is part of a worldwide effort. Sites like Pyramid State Park, designated in 2004, might be chosen for their statewide value and for the global network. Illinois now has a number of sites that meet the global criteria.

Included in the new 26 areas are:

- Burning Star #2 reclaimed coal mine near Hurst – used by Henslow's sparrows and swans
- Carlyle Lake Complex
- Ferne Clyffe State Park – used by chuck-will's-widows
- Mermet and Rend Lakes – used by wintering rusty blackbirds
- Thebes – an area used by large number of Mississippi kites
- Alexander County – areas are used as nesting habitat by Least Terns

More information about the program and a map with site locations is available at [www.audubon.org/bird/iba](http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba)



## President Obama Announces Plan for Community-Based Conservation through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative

On Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> President Barack Obama announced the Administration's action plan, under the America's Great Outdoors initiative, to achieve lasting conservation of the outdoor spaces that power our nation's economy, shape our culture, and build our outdoor traditions. By making the Federal Government a better partner with American communities, this initiative seeks to reinvigorate our approach to conservation and reconnect Americans, especially young people, with the lands and waters that are used for farming and ranching, hunting and fishing, and for families to spend quality time together. Recognizing that the best ideas come from outside Washington, the report outlines ways in which the Federal Government will help empower local communities to accomplish their conservation and recreation priorities. Last summer, senior Administration officials held 51 listening sessions across the country to gather input from Americans about the outdoor places and activities that they value most. These sessions drew more than 10,000 participants and more than 105,000 written comments, shaping an action plan that, based on local initiatives and support, when implemented will result in:

Accessible parks or green spaces for our children.

A new generation of great urban parks and community green spaces.

Newly restored river restorations and recreational "blueways" that power economic revitalization in communities.

Stronger support for farmers, ranchers, and private landowners that help protect rural landscapes and provide access for recreation.

The reinvestment of revenues from oil and gas extraction into the permanent protection of parks, open spaces, wildlife habitat, and access for recreational activities.

With children spending half as much time outside as their parents did, and with many Americans living in urban areas without safe access to green space, connecting to the outdoors is more important than ever for the economic and physical health of our communities," said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "Through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, this Administration will work together with communities to ensure clean and accessible lands and waters, thriving outdoor cultures and economies, and healthy and active youth."

The full report and additional information is available at:

<http://www.doi.gov/AmericasGreatOutdoors>.

## Get on the right track with hummers

For anyone seeking a source for information about hummingbird migration, the following are two great internet links that not only provide info on hummingbirds but also provide access to interactive maps that track hummingbird migration.

<http://www.hummingbirds.net/> is a source for information on attracting, watching, feeding, and studying North American hummingbirds. It was designed and is maintained by Lanny Chambers, an accredited hummingbird bander who's from St. Louis, Missouri.

The bird feeder manufacturer Perky- Pet<sup>®</sup> also maintains a website that includes a hummingbird migration map. This interactive site uses the Google's map application to track hummers arriving from southern climes.

<http://www.birdfeeders.com/advice/bird-watching/hummingbirdmigration> is a website

DNA studies of songbirds have shown that among any four baby birds in a single nest, it is typical that only an average of two are the creations of the parent birds that are raising them. The other two nestling have either a different father or mother, or both. In other words, it is a common practice among songbirds to copulate with birds other than their mates, thus producing broods of nestlings with mixed parentage. Yet, there are some birds that are faithful to their mates.

Geese, swans and some seabirds are uncommonly faithful, often for life. *From: <http://wild.enature.com>*



-- 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—✂

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Always leave 'em laughing...



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



10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
**Birding Blitz of  
Southernmost  
Illinois**  
**Saturday**  
**April 30, 2011**  
the Blitz is a Big Day event  
& a restoration fundraiser  
<http://www.birdingblitz.org>



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

Bring them to any SIAS meeting!

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