



# Southern Illinois Audubon Society

February 2011 – Vol. 18. No. 2

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

## NEWSLETTER

*Established in 1970*

### The Texas Birding Trail

On Friday, March 25th, Jan Sundberg will take us on a photographic tour of the Texas Birding Trail. This program will be held at the Carbondale Township Hall, starting at 7:30 p.m. Jan will show images of Santa Clara Ranch in Starr County taken during early August of 2010. Santa Clara Ranch is a 300-acre parcel of pristine virgin and native South Texas brush. It is a photographer's dream with four photo blinds to capture the native wildlife as they visit the watering holes and protected underbrush. Roadrunners, green jays, pyrrhuloxia, groove-billed ani, painted bunting and diamondback rattlesnake are among the images Jan will share with us. For more information on the ranch visit [www.santaclararanch.com](http://www.santaclararanch.com).

Jan obtained her first camera in 2003 as she realized others were not only seeing but capturing the beauty that we are surrounded by while Jan seemed to miss out on the opportunity. Now it is difficult to find Jan in the field without her camera. She has transformed her images into note cards and calendars.

Carbondale Township Hall is located at  
217 E. Main St., Carbondale.  
Parking is in the rear of the building.



### *SIAS outing to see Prairie Chickens this weekend!*

On Saturday, March 19, Joe Merkelbach will lead an outing to view Prairie Chickens near their "booming grounds" area where the males display and court hens. They can be viewed from the road side BUT folks must be on site before sunrise!

Meet under the Murdale Shopping Center sign, West Main St., Carbondale, at **3:45 a.m.** Or, meet Joe Merkelbach at exit 127 (east) off I-57 at 6:15. We'll then drive to Kinmundy where we'll meet up with Bob Shelby and Leroy Harrison, then on to the viewing site. Bring your spotting scope.

After viewing the Prairie Chickens we'll drive to Alma for a property tour of photographers and nature writers Susan and Richard Day. The Day's have landscaped for wildlife.

This will be a long morning so bring a brunch and refreshments. If you have questions, phone Joe at 618.532.2112. If you plan on meeting the group at Murdale that morning for carpooling but are running late, phone Rhonda at 618.319.3186.

### February Program Highlights

*Under the Waves* - Dr. George Waring, emeritus professor of zoology at SIU Carbondale, immersed us in the subject of marine mammals at the February meeting of SIAS.

Mammals that live primarily in water are a diverse group. Almost all are carnivores, but with tastes ranging from high calorie blubber through sushi to enormous helpings of shrimp cocktail.

However Dr. Waring started with the big salad eaters; manatees and dugongs. These are large, marine, though some move into fresh water, and relatives of elephants. Their highly flexible lips allow them to pull in and process large quantities of vegetation.

Polar bears and otters are the closest forms to land dwelling animals that we know. The South American marine otter that lives on rocky southern Pacific coasts was a new species to me.

The pinnipeds include the walrus, eared fur seals and sea lions, and true "earless" seals. Walruses have muzzles very similar to manatees, but with added tusks useful for rooting out their favorite food, bottom mud dwelling mollusks. The seals, in many different species, are found all over the planet. They also have a range of diet preferences from crustaceans and fish through penguins and other seals.

Finally the largest group is cetaceans; whales and dolphins and porpoises. These mammals are streamlined swimmers that spend all of their lives in water. The largest whales sieve out their food with specialized plates in the roof of their mouths. These baleen whales target krill and small fish in bushel basket sized mouthfuls. The largest known animal of all time is the blue whale that can grow to more than one hundred feet long.

The differences in feeding behaviors between rorquals, whales with pleated expandable throats, and skimmers such as right and bowhead whales are interesting. The rorquals gulp in clouds of krill or fish and water that expand their throats like balloons and then force water out through the baleen plates while retaining the food animals. The skimmers swim through congestions of small animals and strain out the food with the baleen. The largest whales are all mysticetes, equipped with baleen.

The odontocetes include the sperm as well as a few other smaller toothed whales and all of the dolphins and porpoises. These animals eat larger prey, including squid and octopi as well as fish. Sperm whales can dive to extreme depths and go long periods without breathing during their search for deep-water squid. The narwhal is a toothed whale with a very special tooth; a long spiral incisor that is often cited as the basis for the unicorn legend.

Some dolphins, including several river species, as well as the franciscana of the southeast coast of South America, have beak like jaws for nabbing their prey.

The many interesting physiological adaptations and exotic means of living of marine mammals were an absorbing topic and we appreciate Dr. Waring bringing them to us.

*-Joe Merkelbach, President*

## **Future SIAS Programs:**

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

**May 22** – Annual Picnic

## **Upcoming Outings & Events**

### **April 9 > LaRue Pine Hills Appreciation Day**

Mark your calendars for the LaRue Pine Hills Day, a daylong celebration of nature.

*Early Morning Fieldtrip* - Meet at Pine Hills Campground

7 a.m.-9 a.m. BIRD WATCHING - Vicki Lang, Rhonda Rothrock

-All other Fieldtrips will register at and depart from Trail of Tears State Forest-

9 a.m. – Registration at Trail of Tears Picnic Shelter

*Fieldtrips to sites*

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. CANOE LARUE SWAMP - Curt Carter, Terri Treacy; *Land for Learning*

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. HERPETOLOGY, WILDFLOWERS, & BIRDS - Scott Ballard, Dr. Ron Brandon, John & Martha Schwegman, Beth Shimp

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. PLANT COMMUNITIES & ECOLOGY OF LARUE PINE HILLS- Chris Benda, Bob Lindsay

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. GEOLOGY OF THE IL OZARKS-

*Fieldtrips at Trail of Tears – Two morning sessions / each tour is given twice*

9-11 a.m. & 11-12:30 p.m. MUSHROOMS - Joe McFarland

9-11 a.m. & 11-12:30 p.m. INVASIVE PLANTS & NATIVES-Chris Evans, Terri Treacy

9-11 a.m. & 11-12:30 p.m. NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY - Kaysie Cox

9-11 a.m. & 11-12:30 p.m. STREAM HABITAT WALK -

9-11 a.m. & 11-12:30 p.m. MAMMALS - Dr. George Feldhamer

9-11 a.m. & 11-12:30 p.m. NATURAL HISTORY OF LARUE SWAMP –

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. JUST FOR KIDS: (Ages 5-10) – Kids Nature Activities  
Includes visit with Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl

12:30 p.m.-1:00 p.m. LUNCH-bring a sack lunch and a lawn chair

1:00 p.m. WELCOME-Allen Nicholas, Acting Forest Supervisor,  
Shawnee National Forest

1:05 p.m.-2:00 p.m. ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVE SYSTEM, PAST & PRESENT  
-John Schwegman, Chris Benda

For Further Info & Directions, Contact:

Shawnee National Forest Headquarters at 618.253.7114 / <http://www.fs.usda.gov/shawnee>

### **April 30 > Cache River Nature Fest *Rain or Shine!***

A day of nature fun from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Cache River Wetlands Center.

-Guided hikes & canoe tours (registration required for canoe tours)

-Swamp ecology exhibits & film screening: Cache River Cultural & Natural History

-Nature Journaling workshop

-Birds of Prey Program with live raptors

-Live wildlife demonstrations: Fish, Snakes, & Turtles of the Cache

-Eagle viewing

-Hummingbird banding demonstrations

-Nature Activities: Ecological Fitness Trail, Kidz Birding, & the Cache Challenge

-Kidz Corner: critter tattoos, kite creations, wildlife track bandana designs, and more

-Free native trees

-Saturday Evening Social 5-8 p.m. at The Gambit; dinner \$12/person, live music from music 6-8 p.m., 50-50 drawing & silent auction.

For more info or to register for canoe tours, phone 618.657.2064 or 618.634.2231

Or <http://cacherivernaturefest.org>



### **May 7 > Spring Bird Count**

Spring Bird Count takes place on one day a year everywhere. This year that day is May 7<sup>th</sup>. Illinois spring bird counts are designated county by county, with nearly all counties participating.

Local counts and contacts are:  
Williamson Co. - Vicki Lang-Mendenhall 618.697.9868;  
Jackson Co. - Rhonda Rothrock 618.684.6605; Union Co. - Vern Kleen at 217.636.8476. For unlisted counties contact Vern Kleen at the number above.

### **May 21 > 1<sup>st</sup> Festival of Birding The Bottomlands**

This will be a kick-off for the new birding the Bottomlands Map and an event to spark interest in local birding and local natural resources along the Mississippi River corridor. More details to follow in April's newsletter.

### **May 22 > SIAS Annual Picnic**

SIAS's Annual Picnic will be Sunday, May 22nd, from 12 noon-4 p.m. at Lake Murphysboro State Park, at the same pavilion as past years. Dining starts at 1 p.m. SIAS will provide the main course cooked on the grill. Members are asked to bring a dish to share and their own beverages and utensils.

Directions to Murphysboro State Park: Take IL Rt. 149 west out of Murphysboro (from the train underpass) for approx. 1/2 mile. Turn north on Murphysboro Lake Road, follow this road north then west where it meets Main Park Road, turn north on Main Park Road. Watch for the SIAS banner. We hope to see you there!

### **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.

**You saw a cougar?  
Not in eastern U.S., you didn't!  
'Cause the USFWS Declares  
Eastern Cougar Extinct**

The eastern cougar, a large and elusive tawny wild cat that once prowled over wilderness in 21 states, is now extinct, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said on Wednesday, March 2nd. Experts had long questioned the cougar's existence. Though it has been on the endangered species list since 1973, the animal likely has been extinct since the 1930s, said Dr. Mark McCollough, a senior scientist with the USFWS.

Federal researchers had been studying whether the eastern cougar was present in the 21 states where it had a historical range. "(Researchers) found no information to support the existence of the eastern cougar," said Martin Miller, the USFWS Northeast head of endangered species.

The federal agency said individual sightings of cougars in the wild in recent years actually matched other subspecies, including South American cats that had either escaped from captivity or were released to the wild as well as wild cougars from Western states that had migrated east. *-Zach Howard/Reuters-*  
[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41871301/ns/us\\_news-environment/from/toolbar](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41871301/ns/us_news-environment/from/toolbar)

**Electronic SIAS**

SIAS has been discussing transitioning willing members to strictly an electronic version of the newsletter. Many members have stated that they would like their newsletter via email. I've been sending out email versions of the newsletter for a couple years now. If you are currently receiving an email version of the newsletter and that is adequate, please reply to the March newsletter email stating so. If you are only getting a hard copy but are interested in getting an electronic version instead, please email me at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com. If you are getting only a hard copy via U.S.P.S. and wish to continue getting the newsletter as a hard copy, you needn't do anything. Please bear with me during my mental and technical conversion. Once I have the system squared away, I intend to start sending the newsletter from the SIAS email address but will warn folks in advance so that they can add the SIAS address to their authorized email recipient list. For now I will continue sending it from my woodthrusheola@hotmail.com address. *-Rhonda R.*

Speaking of transitions, webmaster/guru Jim Shofstall is moving the SIAS website to a new web-hosting location. (Forgive me Jim if I'm using incorrect terminology.) The move will make the website easier to change and update but the web address will remain the same. <http://www.siaudubon.org>.  
Thanks a bunch Jim!!

**Forest Service Unveils Proposed Planning Rule; Seeks Public Comment**

The U.S. Forest Service unveiled its proposed Forest Planning Rule which would establish a new national framework to develop land management plans that protect water and wildlife and promote vibrant communities. Forest Service land management plans guide management activities on the 155 National Forests and 20 Grasslands in the National Forest System. The proposed planning rule provides a collaborative and science-based framework for creating land management plans that would support ecological sustainability and contribute to rural job opportunities. The proposed rule includes new provisions to guide forest and watershed restoration and resilience, habitat protection, sustainable recreation, and management for multiple uses of the National Forest System, including timber. The Shawnee National Forest is holding a meeting 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. March 23 at the Shawnee National Forest Headquarters to explain the new rule and how people can get involved in shaping its final form. View the plans at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule>  
The comment period is open for 90 days and will not close until May 16, 2011.

Written comments may be submitted electronically to <http://www.govcomments.com/> or <http://www.regulations.gov>

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**SIAS Apparel Order Form (with logo as it appears at the top left corner of the newsletter's first page)**

SIAS is taking pre-orders for SIAS apparel. If you are interested in purchasing an SIAS logo item, please complete and submitted this order form by May 22, 2011. SIAS needs to get a minimum of 12 pre-orders in each of three categories listed on the form to make an order in that category. Shirts sizes: S, M, L, or XL. *For shirt sizes of XXL add \$2 each, for shirt sizes of XXXL add \$3 each.*

**Category 1 – shirts, embroidered version**

	<b>size</b>	<b>quantity</b>	<b>subtotal</b>
50/50 Blend Crewneck Sweatshirt (7.75 oz. weight) - \$19.50 each	_____	_____	_____
50/50 Blend Crewneck Sweatshirt (9.3 oz. weight) - \$24.00 each	_____	_____	_____
100% Cotton Short-Sleeve Polo Shirt - \$29.50 each	_____	_____	_____

**Category 2 – shirts, silkscreen version**

	<b>size</b>	<b>quantity</b>	<b>subtotal</b>
50/50 Blend Crewneck Sweatshirt (7.75 oz. weight) - \$19.50 each	_____	_____	_____
50/50 Blend Crewneck Sweatshirt (9.3 oz. weight) - \$24.00 each	_____	_____	_____
50/50 Blend Short-Sleeve T-Shirt (5.6 oz. weight) - \$14.00 each	_____	_____	_____

**Category 3 – cotton twill cap, one size fits all** - \$12.00 each \_\_\_\_\_

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

**total enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

Make check payable to: *Southern Illinois Audubon Society*

Mail order to: *SIAS, P.O. Box 222, Carbondale, IL 62903* or hand it in to Greg Kupiec or Rhonda Rothrock at SIAS meeting or picnic.

-- 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—✂

Always leave 'em laughing...

**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)



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*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)



The last known eastern cougar was trapped in Maine in 1938. It was mounted for display and is seen in this undated photo with wildlife biologist Bruce Wright. USFS photo