



Winter 2023 Newsletter



Frog and Toad Surveys—29 Years

In 1991 the Declining Amphibian Population Task Force was formed because of the worldwide population declines of frog and toad species noticed in previous years. In some cases, there was a clear reason such as habitat destruction and degradation, but in other relatively pristine environments such as the cloud forest of Costa Rica, the decline could not be from direct impact of human activities. Were these declines actually normal population fluctuation experienced by healthy amphibian populations or a real global decline? In the mid-1990s long-term monitoring of amphibian populations was proposed by a group of scientists assembled by the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey. This would require baseline population data for as many species as possible over several years, twenty to twenty-five years. Following newly established long-term monitoring protocol this monitoring was to be carried out by volunteers to monitor terrestrial salamanders, anuran (frog and toad) calling surveys, aquatic surveys, and western surveys. (*Information from Illinois Natural History Survey web site.*)

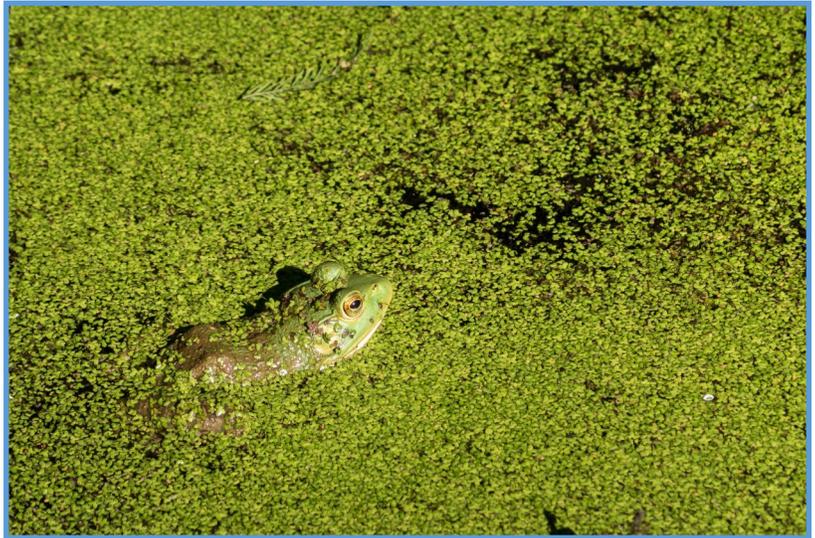


In 1995 the Illinois Natural History Survey began monitoring anuran (frog and toads) throughout Illinois. In the Cache River watershed, volunteers from the community, USFWS-Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge staff, The Nature Conservancy, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources staff conducted four monthly surveys in the late winter and early spring of 1995. Volunteers

on record during the first survey are Carol and David Parkhurst, Vienna; Mandy McGill, Simpson; Mary Dresser TNC,; Mark Guetersloh IDNR; Liz Jones USFWS; Roger Hazen, Dongola; and Paul Lett, Cape Girardeau. (*Photo by William Parmley*)

Since that first survey there have been numerous volunteers participating in frog and toad call surveys from one to a handful of years while others have volunteered year after year. These volunteers participated for a number of years and some continue, Bill and Mary Stammer, Alto Pass, 10 yrs., Hugh and Paulette Stempfley, Marion, 15 yrs., Sally Murphy, Cobden and Jean Snell, Carbondale 16 yrs., Cathie Hutcheson, Makanda, 17 yrs., Carol and David Parkhurst, Vienna, 16 yrs.

To participate in the 2023 survey in the Cache River watershed, please attend the volunteer orientation on **Saturday, February 4, 1-3:00p.m. at Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen-Cache River Wetlands Center, 8885 St. Rt. 37 South, Cypress, Illinois.** At the orientation you will be given packet of reference material, an overview of protocol, and choose one of six routes in the Cache River watershed to be surveyed four times from February through June. For more information call 618-657-2064. *(Photo by William Parmley)*



Movies at the Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen-Cache River Wetlands Center, 8885 St. Rt. 37 South, Cypress, Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. and a second showing at 6:00 p.m. Call 618-657-2064 for more information.

This year the focus is on Raptors or Birds of Prey. These are hypercarnivorous bird species that actively hunt and feed on other vertebrates (mainly mammals, reptiles and other smaller birds).

January 19: American Eagle, our national symbol.

February 16: Osprey, the fish hawk which is not a hawk.

March 16: Peregrine falcon, the world's fastest animal.

April 13: Owls, a mysterious silent night hunter.



Who Am I? (Answer on page 8)

If you don't look closely, you might mistake me for my cousin, the American Goldfinch, in his winter colors. We often hang out together at feeders and such. In the summer I usually nest and live much further north. Do you know me?

(Photo by Tony Gerard)

Invaders! A new feature by Tony Gerard

Brown Marmorated Stinkbugs

At some time, we've probably all had the disagreeable experience of a bug landing on our face while we were in bed. If that has happened to you in recent years, there's a high probability that the culprit was a Brown Marmorated Stinkbug.

Stinkbugs get their name from the disagreeable odor they produce when frightened. This is an effective defense against predators. The term *marmorated* means variegated or veined, like marble, which refers to the markings unique to this species, including alternating light-colored bands on the antennae and alternating dark bands on the thin outer edge of the abdomen.



The brown marmorated stink bug is a sucking insect (like all Hemiptera or true bugs) that uses its proboscis to pierce the host plant to feed. This feeding results, in part, in the formation of dimpled or necrotic areas on the outer surface of fruits, leaf stippling, seed loss, and possible transmission of plant pathogens. It is a serious agricultural pest across the Eastern United States. They feed on a wide array of plants including many fruit trees, as well as corn, grapes, lima beans, peppers, tomatoes, and soybeans.

Native to China and Japan, it is believed to have hitched a ride as a stowaway in packing crates or on various types of machinery. The first documented specimen was collected in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in September 1998. Since that time the species has explosively spread across the US. By 2012 it was reported from 40 states in addition to Ontario and Quebec.

The North American climate was ideal for this invader. In many areas there are multiple generations produced per year. The brown marmorated stink bug is more likely to invade homes in the fall than our native stinkbugs. The bug survives the winter as an adult by entering houses and structures when autumn evenings become colder. Once inside the house, they go into a state of hibernation and wait for winter to pass. Sometimes the warmth inside the house causes them to become active, and they may fly clumsily around light fixtures. Two other invaders are also helping the spread of this unwanted guest. Tree of heaven and princess tree, both often used in landscaping, are both important vectors for Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs.

Butterfly Monitoring at the Cache

For the past two years, I've been involved with the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network, headquartered at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum in Chicago.

The Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network engages citizen scientists in the process of collecting quantitative data on butterfly populations. Their goal is to provide data collected with a standardized protocol that allows land managers to evaluate long-term trends in a changing landscape. The Network also offers opportunities for fellowship, mentorship, and continuing education between citizen scientists and professional biologists. *(Photo of Little Wood Satyr butterfly by Anne Parmley)*



My route has been at the Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center. It is approximately one mile long and takes me approximately one hour to complete. In 2021 I did 5 surveys and recorded 15 species of butterflies with 274 individuals and in 2022, I completed 8 surveys with 17 species and 410 individual butterflies. That made for a total of 684 individual butterflies of 20 distinct species. It has been a fun and interesting project. However, next year I hope to find someone to take over this location so that I can begin surveying my own 15-acre pollinator field. Training is required and I will accompany you on the first survey. If interested, please email anne.parmley@gmail.com.

Birding Blitz of Southern Illinois, April 29, 2023

The 21st Birding Blitz of Southernmost IL will take place on April 29, 2023! This birdwatching contest fundraiser for Friends of the Cache supports habitat preservation and restoration in the Cache River Wetlands. To date over \$50,000 has been raised, directed to habitat acquisition and restoration. *(Photo of Northern Cardinal by Anne Parmley)*

The Birding Blitz is coordinated by the Southern Illinois Audubon Society. Inquires can be made to Rhonda Rothrock at woodthrusheola@hotmail.com / 618.684.6605 (H) / 618.534.8659 (C) or Vicki Lang-Mendenhall at vickil@siu.edu / 618.687.9868 (C).



2023 April Birding Blitz Instructions

The Birding Blitz of Southernmost Illinois is an event held where teams compete to see and hear the most species of birds in a 24-hour period, while raising money for conservation in southernmost Illinois. Teams can search for birds throughout the eleven-county area of southernmost Illinois, from Jackson, Williamson, Saline, and Gallatin counties south through Union, Johnson, Pope, Hardin, Alexander, Pulaski, and Massac counties. This area includes cypress swamps, upland forests, grasslands, and big rivers. Public lands in the area include Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Cache River State Natural Area, Mermet State Fish and Wildlife Area, Horseshoe Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area, Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, Giant City State Park, Trail of Tears State Forest, the Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge, and the Shawnee National Forest. (Birds counted along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers must be no further than half way across the river when seen or heard.)

There are five competition categories. Teams must have a minimum of two members.

Open A: This category is the true Big Day challenge, within the competition boundaries.

Open B / Dawn to Dusk: It mirrors category Open A with the exception that participants in this category may start no sooner than an hour before sunrise and must quit no later than an hour after sunset. Starting time will be 5:00 a.m. Ending time will be 8:45 p.m.

County Big Day: Teams restrict their Big Day to one selected county of their choice within the competition boundary; enticing birders to more intensely explore previously under-birded areas.

Senior: Follows the true Big Day rules but all team members must be 55 years of age or older.

Muscle-powered: Teams cannot use any motorized transportation in their pursuit of a Big Day.

The registration fee to compete is \$25 per team member (\$15 each for students). Prizes will be awarded to the winning team in each of the five competition categories. Each winning team member receives a certificate and a Federal Duck Stamp as their award. *(98 percent of the Federal Duck Stamp purchase price goes directly to help acquire and protect wetland habitat and purchase conservation easements for the National Wildlife Refuge System. It also provide you one year's admittance into those National Wildlife Refuges that charge fees.)* <https://www.fws.gov/service/buy-duck-stamp-or-e-stamp>. **All registered team members will receive a Birding Blitz t-shirt.**

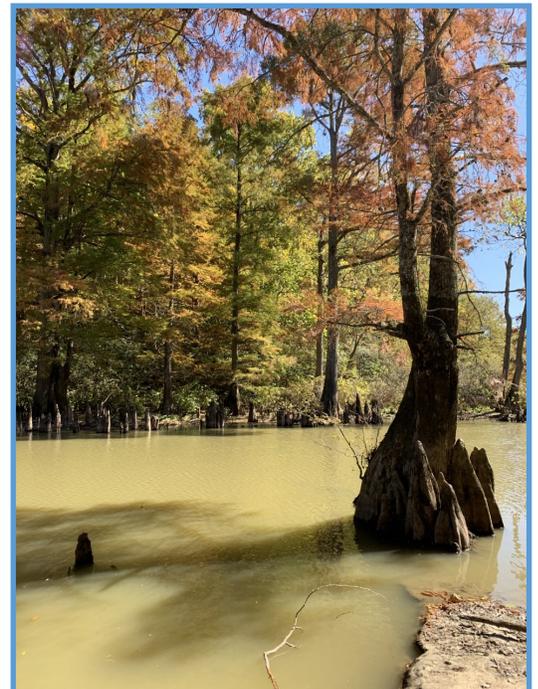
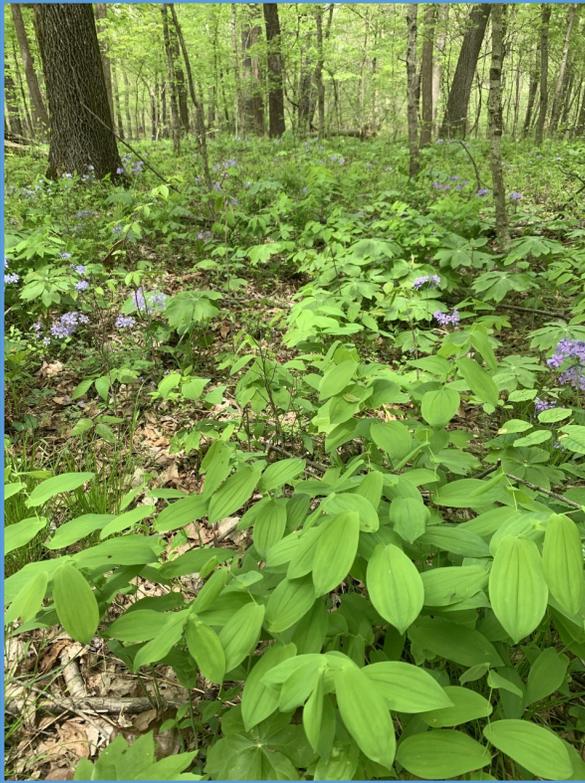
All teams must follow the American Birding Association's Big Day Count rules, a copy of which will be provided upon registration, or can be reviewed at <https://www.aba.org/aba-big-day-count-rules>. With the exception of category Open B, teams may make observations as early as 12:01 a. m. on April 29th and continue until as late as 12:00 p.m. that night. As a part of the competition, each team must gather a minimum of \$100 in pledges, either for each bird species recorded or just a flat pledge. After the designated 24-hour competition period is completed, each team submits a list of birds documented to the Birding Blitz Awards Committee to determine winning teams. Winning teams in each competition category are announced and awarded prizes during the Birding Blitz Awards Brunch held the following day. After the awards event, each team is responsible for collecting pledge donations. Pledge donations are used to help support wetland restoration and preservation efforts in the Cache River Watershed. These details, along with downloadable registration and pledge forms will be available at the Birding Blitz Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/317666471615613/>.

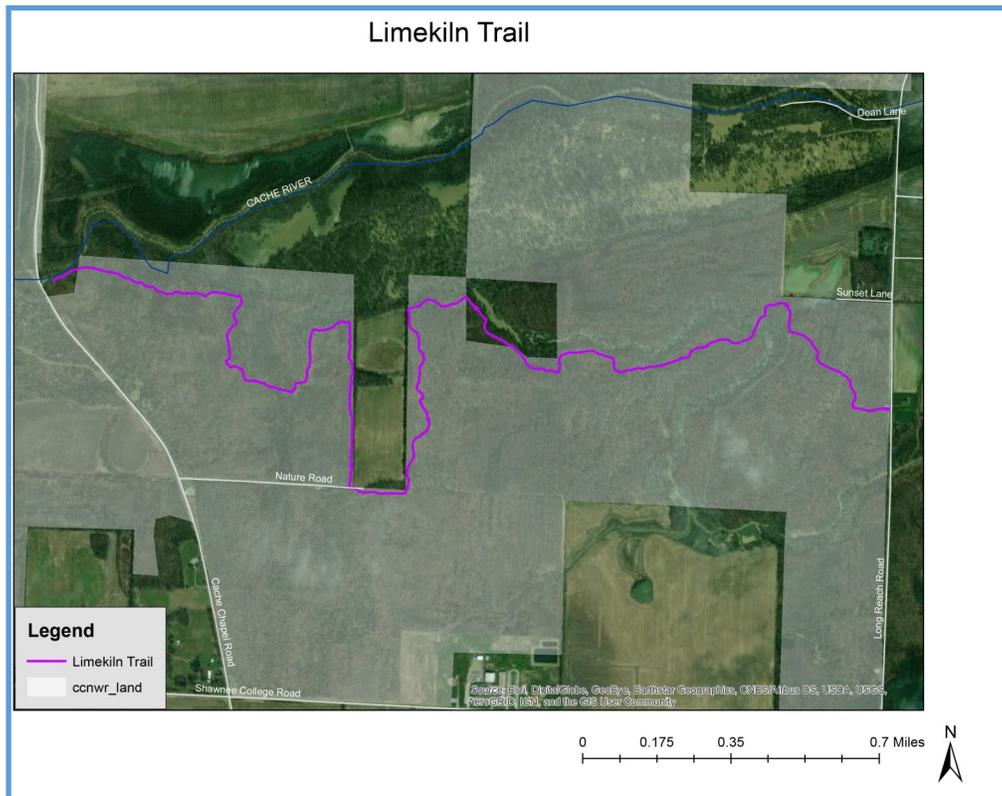
Cypress Creek NWR

The Limekiln Springs Trail renovation was completed in fall 2022. Renovations included removal of the two boardwalks, rerouting of the trail, trail improvement, new signage, parking lot improvement, and gates and large stones at trail access points to restrict ATVs.

Boardwalk removal was necessary as the existing boardwalks were often flooded and unusable, replacement was cost-prohibitive, and large amounts of tree removal likely would have been necessary to install and protect a new set of boardwalks.

See map on page 7.





We are all sorry to lose Jean Hinkle, a dear friend and supporter of the Cypress Creek/Cache River Wetlands.

In 1990, Jean was the first staff member hired to assist Refuge Manager Jerry Updike with the establishment of the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. As the Refuge Administrative Assistant, Jean was the *perfect fit*. Her education from Shawnee Community College provided the skills to run the office; and her local residence and love of birding and nature provided the knowledge to eagerly greet all who called or walked through the doors of the Refuge office. As a resident of Dongola with her husband Ben, Jean knew *everybody* and was able to assist locals and visitors alike with questions of concern or tourist information. Jean loved to plan educational events and was instrumental in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, Union County Colorfest and Refuge Holiday Open House.



We were fortunate Jean spent her U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service career at Cypress Creek Refuge. When she retired Jean continued her support of the area as a Refuge volunteer and board member of the Friends of the Cache River Watershed. Jean Hinkle made a difference in people's lives with her smile, warm greeting and dedicated support for her community and the valuable natural resources of southernmost Illinois. *Submitted by Elizabeth Jones, retired Refuge Manager*

Answer to Who Am I? (From page 2.)

I'm a Pine Siskin! I get that name because I typically spend the summer in the coniferous forests of the north where I feed on seeds, buds and small insects. I often, but not always, come further south in the winter. I love those black oil sunflower seeds, so keep your feeder stocked if you want to see me.

(Photo by Tony Gerard.)



The Friends have provided significant support for a wide range of efforts to protect, restore, and enhance the Cache River Watershed's natural wonders and to spread the word about the Cache's many educational and recreational opportunities. With your help, we can do so much more!

A recent accomplishment was to purchase and install a replacement for the projector at the Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center. Thank you to William Parmley for your expertise in choosing the projector and installing it!

As a Friend of the Cache, you'll receive our newsletter, invitations to members-only events, such as the popular annual Moonlight Paddle, a 10-percent discount on all Friends Store items at the Wetlands Center, volunteer opportunities, and more. *One such volunteer opportunity is helping with the pollinator gardens. We will have a cleanup day in late March or early April. Details will be announced later.*

Become a Friend of the Cache River Watershed

\$15 Individual

\$50 Contributing

\$250 Sustaining

\$25 Family

\$100 Supporting

\$1000 Lifetime

New Member

Current Member

Name _____ Date _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

To remain budget and environmentally friendly, most communications are by e-mail.

Check here if you need to receive information by U. S. Mail.

All contributions are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to Friends of the Cache River Watershed and mail to 8885 State Route 37 South, Cypress, IL 62923.

OR go to our website: friendsofthecache.org and click "join" to become a friend online.