

Fall 2022 Newsletter



Please visit friendsofthecache.org for past newsletters and more information about the Cache River Watershed.

2022 Cache Champion Kimberly Rohling

Kim began at the Cache as an AmeriCorps volunteer for Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge with Karen Mangan and Liz Jones, where she enjoyed assisting with swamp ecology, canoe tours, biological surveys, and bottomland forest restoration work.

Kim Rohling was the Conservation Education Representative for 2018 and 2019 at the Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center. She led several hikes on a variety of trails highlighting the many habitats and wildlife in the watershed. She conducted story hour once a month for children, highlighting animals found in the watershed. Kim developed and organized a birding event called the Fall Migration Mini Sit which has become an annual event. She also created Boo at the Slough, arranged volunteers, got the costumes, and invented games that she constructed with her husband Kevin. If that wasn't enough, Kim served as Board Secretary for the Friends of the Cache for several years. This is honestly the most time-consuming and work-intensive position on the board. While secretary, she often took on tasks beyond the scope of the secretary position. She always seems tireless in her efforts to promote and protect the Cache. Thank you, Kim, for your dedication and service to the Cache River Watershed. *(Photo by Maggie Ray)*



Event: Christmas Bird Count
Date: Monday, December 19, 2022
Location: Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge
Contact: Jeff Hoover for your assignment at:
hooover_jeff@hotmail.com

(Photo of Field Sparrow by Anne Parmley)

From my 3x5 Notebook by Susan Post — September 2, 2022

It is 9 pm and we have arrived at the Marshall Ridge Access parking lot. Michael and I are here to investigate the vegetation surrounding the parking area and accompanying trail. We will use our trusty small pen lights to illuminate the foliage and find the treasures it holds. We are hoping to locate feeding walking sticks on the foliage and glowworms on the gravel path. Unfortunately, both will elude us tonight.

Instead, my spotlight illuminates a rather large (3/4 inch), cream and black-colored weevil on a sassafras shrub. “Wow, what is this?” I shout for Michael to come see. “Have you ever seen this before?” This is a new species for both of us, and we will not learn its name or much about it until we return home to our library.

We had illuminated an avocado weevil, *Heilipus squamosus*, also known as the avocado tree girdler. This appears to be the first record or sighting of this insect in Illinois. A 2003 reference describes this large and distinctive weevil as *stately and impressive*; it has no close relatives in North America.

During the late 1930s to 1950s this weevil was a pest on avocado trees in Florida. (Note: The Florida avocado industry traces its roots to the early 20th century.) By the 1960s this species was rarely observed in Florida. It is found on members of the plant family *Lauraceae*, of which both avocado and sassafras are members.

While the species has been thought of as occurring only in the 8 coastal plain states, with the addition of citizen scientist records (I-Naturalist and Bug Guide) an additional seven states have been added. The weevil still exhibits a southeastern U.S. affinity. As we continually explore the Cache, there is always something new to discover.

(Photo by Michael Jeffords)



Who Am I? (Answer on Page 6)



Most folks who are familiar with salamanders expect them to breed with the first warm rains of Spring. I do just the opposite. When the temperature drops into the 50s in Autumn, I head for low ground and look for a mate. I'll lay my eggs under a rotten log or under moist leaf litter. Then I'll stay with them and keep guard until the nest is covered by water from fall rains. If it's a good location, I may use it year after year. Do you know me? (Photo by Tony Gerard)

Upcoming Event: *Volunteers are still needed. Please contact Erin Garrett, M.S., Extension Educator, at emedvecz@illinois.edu by October 21 if you can help.*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30

1-3:30pm

Boo at the Slough

Hike through the Egret Slough Trail on a guided trick-or-treating adventure to meet misunderstood creatures of the swamp.

Cache River Wetlands Center

8885 State Route 37 South | Cypress, IL 62923

Free and open to the public

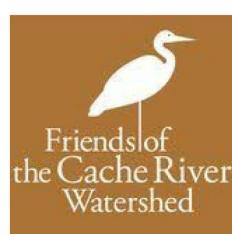
Register at go.illinois.edu/booattheslough22



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Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting your access needs.



Earth Day in the Park



On April 8, 2022, students from Field Community School, Texico, IL. helped to plant one hundred twenty-five plants to add to the prairie area at the Barkhausen-Cache River Wetlands Center.

On April 29, students from Whiteside Middle School, Belleville, IL. helped to plant one hundred twenty-five more plants to add to the prairie area at the Wetlands Center.

On April 22, Lick Creek fourth/fifth grade classes pulled exotic invasive garlic mustard along Tunnel Hill State Trail near community of Tunnel Hill.

(Photos submitted by Molie Oliver, Cache River State Natural Area, Natural Resource Coordinator)



On April 20, students from Vienna High School ecology classes helped hand cut two- and three-year-old saplings, making wildlife habitat piles from the cuttings, and clearing more than an acre of overgrown prairie area at the Wetlands Center.



The Rediscovery of the Taillight Shiner

The Taillight Shiner (*Notropis maculatus*) is state endangered and had not been seen in Illinois for over 30 years. Little did anyone know that this fish has been hiding close by. In September of 2020 it was rediscovered in Buttonland Swamp within the Lower Cache River by Hannah Holmquist. Hannah Holmquist is a graduate student at Southern Illinois University – Carbondale’s (SIUC) Center for Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Aquatic Sciences in Greg Whittlesey’s lab.

The Taillight Shiner was last seen in 1988 in Mud Creek. Illinois is the northernmost range of the Taillight Shiner, which is typically found in the southeastern states in turbid and silty stagnant swamps, oxbows, rivers, and lakes near vegetation. Taillight Shiners are short lived, typically living one to two years, reaching around 76mm in length. During the summer when they spawn, males have vibrant red on the edges of their fins and on their head, whereas the females tend to be more drab in color.

Buttonland Swamp is located at the headwater of the Lower Cache River, which is a 450-acre Cypress-Tupelo swamp that is valued for its unique habitat that provides habitat for 11 state threatened, endangered, and imperiled fish species. It is considered a National Natural Landmark, an Illinois Land and Water Reserve, and a Wetland of International Importance. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has done annual fish surveys within the swamp since 2010, but never came across the Taillight Shiner, mostly likely since they were only sampling the same single location each year. Holmquist started her fish surveys within Buttonland Swamp in June 2020 and has observed over 270 Taillight Shiner in Buttonland Swamp since September 2020. The occurrence records are sent to the IDNR Division of Natural Heritage Database to further understand and protect these fascinating fish. Larval Taillight Shiner have also been found in June and July showing recruitment is occurring in Buttonland Swamp. Dr. Brooks Burr (SIUC Professor Emeritus and ichthyologist) confirmed the ID of these shiners.



A male Taillight Shiner found in Buttonland Swamp during spawning.

(Photo by Hannah Holmquist)

Through these fish surveys at Buttonland Swamp, other rare fish species including state threatened species (Bantam Sunfish *Lepomis symmetricus*) and species in greatest conservation need (Flier *Centrarchus macropterus* and Pugnose Minnow *Opsopoeodus emiliae*) have been identified. This rediscovery of the Taillight Shiner further confirms the uniqueness and conservation value of Buttonland Swamp and the Lower Cache River.

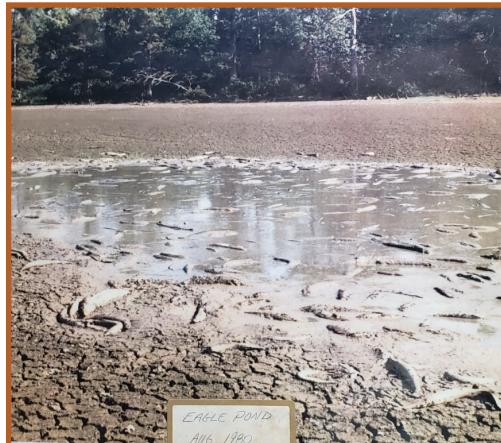
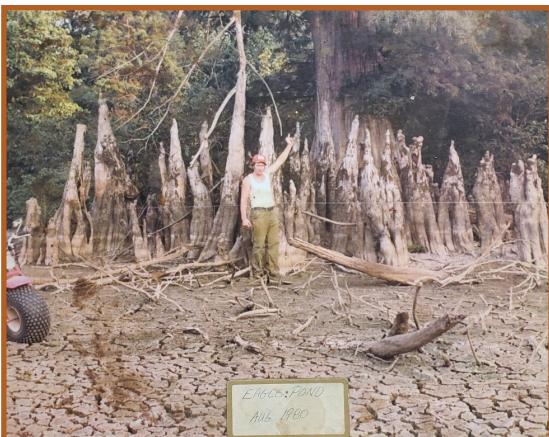
Answer to Who Am I? (From Page 2)

I'm a Marbled Salamander, and I'm rather common in the Cache watershed if you know where and when to look. Males of my species are black with white crossbands, while females have crossbands that tend to be more silvery-gray.

(Photo by Tony Gerard)



1980—A Dry Year in the Cache: Eagle Pond pictures, courtesy of Darby Ryan, taken by Anise Corzine. Amos Corzine is shown in front of the big cypress.



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

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