



Winter 2022 Newsletter



Upcoming Events

(Check our Facebook page or our website: friendsofthecache.org for updates.)

Frog and Toad Survey Volunteer Orientation

Saturday, February 5, 2022, 1-3 p.m. Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen-Cache River Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064.



Citizen science volunteers are needed to conduct listening surveys of the frogs and toads of the Cache River Watershed for the Illinois Natural History Survey. Materials and instructions will be provided for the surveys, to be conducted four times between February and June. *Bird-voiced tree frog photo by William Parmley.*

Nature Movie: *Spiders*

Enter the world of the spider, an expert weaver and a skilled hunter with other surprising abilities.

Thursday, February 10, 2022, 2-3 p.m. and 6-7 p.m. Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064.

Nature Movie: *Bees*

Discover new-found facts about the fascinating and complex life of bees by watching *Bees Tales from the Hive* which details such events as the life-or-death battle between a pair of rival queens, and a bee eater's attack on the hive.

Thursday, March 10, 2-3 p.m. and 6-7 p.m.
Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen
Cache River Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064.
Bombus bimaculatus (two-spotted bumblebee) photo by William Parmley.



Nature Movie: *Beetle Bugs*

The humble beetle highlighted in *Beetles-Wildlife Stories* is among the greatest survivors the world has ever known being part aviator, woodworker, sewage disposal, strongman and athlete.

Thursday, April 14, 2-3 p.m. and 6-7 p.m. Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064.

Calling All Owls

Friday, March 18, 2022, 6:00 p.m. Cache River State Natural Area, Barkhausen-Cache River Wetlands Center, 618-657-2064.



Swoop on in to learn all about the owls of southern Illinois, then head out into the cool dark night to listen for the familiar calls. After the indoor program at 6 p.m. with natural heritage biologist Mark Guetersloh, there is an option to drive to Wildcat Bluff where Mark will lead a guided owl prowl. Questions, call the Wetlands Center at 618-657-2064.

Photo of Barred Owl from audubon.org.

Heron Pond Celebration Saturday, April 9, 2022

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Friends of the Cache River Wetlands, Illinois Nature Preserve Commission, and Friends of the Illinois Nature Preserves are hosting a 50th Anniversary Celebration for the acquisition of Heron Pond. The event

will take place at the Barkhausen Wetlands Center on April 9, 2022, and feature talks by notable conservationists that have contributed to the protection and management of Heron Pond including John Schwegman, Max Hutchison, and Andy West. Also offered will be multiple field tours, recorded talks, and exhibits at the Wetlands Center. Please mark the date on your calendars and keep an



eye out for further details. *Photo of Heron Pond by William Parmley.*

Birding Blitz of Southern Illinois, April 30, 2022

Barring any unpredictable future disruptions, the Birding Blitz will be held on Saturday, April 30th. An awards ceremony will follow on the Sunday, May 1st. This is the 20th Anniversary of the first Birding Blitz held in 2002. This birdwatching contest fundraiser for Friends of the Cache supports habitat preservation and restoration in the Cache River Wetlands.



See page 3 for details on how to participate. Photo of Summer Tanager by William Parmley.

2022 April 30 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 form of 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. 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 <http://americanbirding.org/bigday/index.html>. With the exception of category "Open B," teams may make observations as early as 12:01 a. m. on April 30th 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/>

The Birding Blitz is coordinated by the Southern Illinois Audubon Society. Inquires can be made to contact: 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).

From my 3x5 Notebook by Susan Post

Over the decades, I have had occasion to observe and fully appreciate the many unique properties of water, each displayed in an unusual way. A late winter visit to the wetlands of the Cache showcased hundreds of ice spiders in the partially frozen water—formed by water flowing from under the ice into snow that covered the ice sheet. A central hole had allowed water to infiltrate the snow layer, giving the *spider* its characteristic shape. Remarkably, the center of each ice spider contained a dead fish! I can only speculate that the freeze caused a late season fish kill and



perhaps the dead fish formed a warm nucleus around which the ice melted to create the initial opening in the ice. A search of *ice spiders* on the world-wide web will yield a plethora of more detailed explanations, but none of them explains my unique observation.

Photo by Michael Jeffords.

Who Am I?



You may not recognize me, 'cause I'm just a kid. I bet you'd know my parents right away. Our sort has become a lot more common in the Cache watershed over the last couple of decades.

Photo by Tony Gerard.

(Answer on page 7.)

2021 Fall Migration Mini Sit Results

This year 20 birders registered in the fall migration mini sit and counted at 10 eBird hotspots. Collectively birders put in 19 hours of effort identifying all birds by sight or sound in their circle on Saturday, October 16. Fifty different species of birds were identified and 516 individual birds were counted. Three birds were not identified to species: a warbler and two passerines. To compare from 2019, efforts from 17 birders resulted in a final count of 336 individual birds of 53 species. If interested, a species list can be emailed to you; contact Kim Rohling at kimrohli@illinois.edu.



We achieved our goal of adding species to different eBird hotspots in the Cache River Watershed. This year was the first time sharp-shinned hawk and cattle egret were reported at the Michael Wolff Wetlands; hairy woodpecker at the West Route 37 Access; and belted kingfisher, blue jay, brown creeper, Canada goose, Carolina wren, downy woodpecker, eastern phoebe, fish crow, golden-crowned kinglet, hooded merganser, northern flicker, red-bellied woodpecker, white-breasted nuthatch and wild turkey at East Karnak Access. Black-throated green warbler, blue-headed vireo, European starling, greater white-fronted

goose, hairy woodpecker, ruby-crowned kinglet, swamp sparrow, white-crowned sparrow and yellow-bellied sapsucker were added to Cave Creek Glade Nature Preserve.

At the picnic participants enjoyed swapping stories of the birds they observed and what they were surprised they missed. To make the event more fun, the count week is changed each fall which gives a greater probability of different species being found. Since it was the third week of October, we said goodbye to some of the straggling neotropical migrants like warblers and vireos and welcomed our wintering sparrows and kinglets.



The mini sit event celebrates 19 hotspots on eBird, a citizen science platform that documents the abundance and distribution of species via user-submitted electronic checklists. This data helps biologists understand bird populations at a global scale. By using eBird while you explore the Cache, you are contributing to science and may help others see “life birds” with your real-time submissions. To find the Cache hotspots, check out the Cache River SNA site map on IDNR’s website: all public parking access points (black squares) and dedicated nature preserves are eBird hotspots. If you plan to participate in the Backyard Bird Count or Birding Blitz, please target a hotspot in the Cache to collect much-needed data. *Compiled by Kimberly Rohling. Photo of White-crowned Sparrow and of Ruby-crowned Kinglet by Kevin Rohling.*

IDNR December Update for the Friends of the Cache

The IDNR continues to work on natural community management within the Cache River State Natural Area. In November, we collaborated with UI-Extension volunteers to collect acorns to reforest an open field near Cave Creek Glade Nature Preserve. 13,016 acorns and nuts were collected by IDNR staff, volunteers, and community members for this project, and all were hand-planted in the 3.2 acre field by IDNR staff.



We also completed a fall burn on the east side of Wildcat Bluff as part of our efforts to restore limestone glade and woodland communities. Concurrently, contractors are working on conducting removal of understory mesophytic woody plants and exotic shrubs and vines starting on the west side of Wildcat Bluff.



Other burns are being planned for the season including at Cave Creek Glade Nature Preserve, Glass Hill, Marshall Ridge, the Wetlands Center, and Boss Island.

Article and photos submitted by Christina Feng, District Heritage Biologist, Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources.

Answer to Who Am I? (From page 4.)



I'm a Bald Eagle.

I'm probably only about 3 1/2 years old. I may not get my solid white head and tail feathers until I'm 5 1/2, although some of us get them sooner. Here's a shot of me with an old guy!

Photo by Tony Gerard.

We are saddened by the death of former board member Paula Havlik. Paula served as membership director for the Friends of the Cache River Watershed and edited the organization's quarterly newsletter. She is survived by her husband John, 2 children, and 2 grandchildren.

Donations in Paula's memory are suggested to the Friends of the Cache River Watershed, 8885 IL State Route 37 South, Cypress, Illinois 62923 or the Illinois Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 60694, Chicago, IL 60660. To share a memory of Paula or to leave an online message of condolence for her family, please visit www.baileyfh.com.



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.