

A history of Riverbend Bigfoot sightings

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - While The Nature Institute (TNI) is not currently worried about a seven-foot-tall ape man harassing hikers (April Fools!), several sightings of a creature fitting the description of the mythical Bigfoot have been reported throughout the Riverbend.

According to the [Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization \(BFRO\)](#), an organization dedicated to investigating the authenticity of Bigfoot sightings based on both witness reports and scientific evidence, as many as 284 sightings of an ape man have been

reported in [Illinois](#), with the most sightings being set in [Madison County](#), which has 23 itself. This number is compared to other "squatchier" states like [Oregon](#) having only 243 sightings. In fact, only [California](#), [Florida](#), and [Washington](#) have more reported sightings than Illinois with 434, 310 and a whopping 623 respectively.

Looking at counties in or near the Riverbend, Madison has 23, [Macoupin](#) has 15, [Jersey](#) has two, [St. Clair](#) has four, [Calhoun](#) has three, [Pike](#) has one and Greene does not have any. These numbers may be surprising to many, because Madison County seems to have the most population of them. Perhaps, however, that is why it reports the most sightings - because more people are around to squatch watch.

The most recent sighting from Madison County came in November 2016 in Troy. According to the BFRO's website, a witness reported the following sighting near Scott-Troy Road:

"I was driving along Scott-Troy Road after work one night. It was around 8:15 p.m. when I was driving through some wooded parts of Scott-Troy. I saw something large, black and hairy take two-three giant bounds across the road before it disappeared on the other side. I slowed for a bit, trying to see what it was, but it was too dark to see what it was or where it had gone."

The single witness said it was very large, standing at least eight feet tall. He or she said the creature was fast enough to take a two lane road in three bounds.

In October 2011, another sighting was reported by a homeowner near Edwardsville. The event occurred near I-55, according to the witness report in the BFRO's website. The homeowner reported the following incident:

"I had just gotten my son down to sleep. It was 1 a.m. He sleeps in the back bedroom. I happened to walk by the window in the hallway, because I had to go to the bathroom. For some reason, I heard a cough. It sounded like somebody clearing their throat. I had just put the pool down. We have one of those quick set ring pool that you blow up for my son. I just took it down, and it was drying off. I thought somebody was out there looking at it or messing with it, so I opened the blinds and looked. I didn't see anything right off the bat.

"But then I saw something between the woods and my shed. It was just standing there, and it was big. The head looked huge. So, I ran upstairs and got my night vision. When I kicked that night vision on, I could see every detail. It was staring up in the trees. He was at least eight and a half feet tall. He was about 40 years from the window. He looked gray in color.

"It looked like a really big human. If people want to know what the face looks like, if you put this guy in a Viking movie with a horned helmet on, people would say he was a Viking. That's how human looking he was. He had really sunken eyes. But, he was just looking up in the trees.

"And then, I heard somebody's radio down at the parking lot of the bike trail. It was pretty amazing. I was watching him and thinking 'he's hanging out there because he's waiting for people to leave.' Nobody could see him there, and the only reason I did is because I was walking by the window and saw something in my yard that is not normally there.

"I even went to wake my wife and have her see too, but he was gone."

That sighting was investigated by BFRO Investigator Stan Courtney, who is BFRO's main investigator in Illinois. His blog can be found [here](#). He has a special interest in wildlife recordings.

While Angie Moan and the rest of the crew at TNI have not had Bigfoot sightings (gray foxes, whistle-pigs and homeless people, however, have been spotted at TNI), that does not mean the ape-like man, or man-like ape has not made a few excursions into Godfrey. In the winter of 2011, a witness in Godfrey, near Route three reported several incidents near his or her home. The person reported several sightings across his or her property, even saying members of the family have heard mysterious howls.

After investigating reports of several incidents, Courtney reported the following:

"I spoke with the witness by phone and met him at his home.

"The witness went into great detail about a series of events. The home is surrounded by woods on all sides. He and his family have had the feeling of being watched several times. He had a friend that would come over to go mushroom hunting. The friend returned from the woods frightened, saying that he felt like he was surrounded and being escorted out of the woods. He never came back to mushroom hunt.

"Just before Christmas of 2012, the witness put up Christmas lights along his porch and bushes in the front of his home. While doing so, the witness said that a large bush 50 yards from him and along the edge of the woods started to shake. The witness was quite upset and could not see what was making the bush shake.

"The family hears distant vocalization frequently. He said the howls match those on our site, and what he has heard on 'Finding Bigfoot.'

"The witness walked me to the location where he had seen an animal walking up the ridge as he pulled his vehicle into his lane from the paved highway. He was only able to watch the animal for 15 seconds as it walked through the woods and out of sight over the ridge."

In that instance, the reported creature was seven to eight feet tall, weighed well over 350 pounds and was dark brown in coloring.

Two teenagers also reported seeing a broad, hairy creature, weighing about 250 pounds and walking upright like a man in Alton during the summer of 2004 while building a fort. Courtney said the two young witnesses were "very polite and serious." He also spoke with one of the witness's parents and walked the area of the sighting for approximately 90 minutes.

The two teens were building a blind for squirrel hunting and tried, to no avail, to push a dead tree to the ground. Later, the tree cracked and fell to the ground, possibly pushed by a large creature, seven to eight feet tall. The teens said the creature also howled and threw rocks - typical Bigfoot behavior, witnesses say.

Outside of Madison County, residents of Otterville have also reported startling accounts of a bipedal, non-human hominid. On May 23, 2008, a driver said he or she almost hit such a creature on Otterville Blacktop north of Shiloh Hill Road. The witness recounted the following chilling tale:

"It was right around the time of my birthday. I was on vacation visiting with my cousin at his girlfriend's house. We had ran into Jerseyville for cigarettes, and were on our way back to her house off of Otterville Blacktop. I was driving about 55 m.p.h. around the curves just before Shiloh Hollow Road when I caught something running across the field heading for the road in the headlights."

"At first, I thought it was a man in a trench coat. It ran up the embankment and onto the road in front of he car. I barely missed it. It just made it in front of the car as I passed and half turned towards me a the center line of the road - within four feet from the side of my car."

"I realized that it wasn't a man in a trench coat. It was covered in hair and his face looked flattened with a wide nose and large nostrils - and huge eyes. I continued to watch this thing run up a 20 foot embankment on the other side of the road without ever losing its pace. In shock, I turned to look at my cousin. His eyes were as big as mine, and we found ourselves asking, 'what the hell was that?' He agreed it wasn't human."

The witness also reported a friend spotted something similar running directly in front of his four-wheeler approximately 10 miles from that location near a bridge. The friend also almost hit the creature, saying it was not a man, but was running on two legs. The friend described the creature as "heavily built, and covered in hair."

While no definitive evidence such creatures are part of the local fauna, several witnesses have claimed to have seen it. True enthusiasts of this hairy hominid offer several explanations for this, including claims the creatures are migratory in nature, they bury their dead, and some more "out-there" claims believe they could be extra-dimensional or part of the extraterrestrial visitation phenomenon to which many paranormal researchers also describe.

So, what do you think? Take the poll below and share your opinion. If you have any further sightings not included in BFRO's website, feel free to email reporter Cory Davenport at cory@riverbender.com, or contact him at the info provided below.