



Southern Illinois Audubon Society

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

NEWSLETTER

Established in 1970

Wildlife of Chilean Patagonia

On Friday, August 26th, Trevor Hinckley will give a presentation on Wildlife of Chilean Patagonia. This program will be held at the Carbondale Township Hall, starting at 7:30 p.m.

Join our very own SIAS member and birder, Trevor Hinckley during his 2010 exploration of the Chilean Patagonia. During his three-month stay, he took photographs from the big island of Chiloe in the north to Lago Cochrane in the south. Trevor was able to capture much of the regions unique flora and fauna while exploring Southern Chile. This program is about the birds and other wildlife of Patagonia including the Reas and Guanacos of the patagonian steppe, the Rayaditos and Tapaculos of the Nothofagus, Alerce and Tepu forests and the Penguins, Cormorants and Albatrosses found on and off the coastline.

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

Future SIAS Programs:

Sept. 23 – Jeff Hoover, *Program title to be announced*

Oct. 28 – Program to be announced.

Nov./Dec. on Dec. 2 – Program to be announced.

Upcoming Outings & Events

Sept. 16-18 > IAS Fall Gathering & Annual Meeting

The 114th annual meeting of the Illinois Audubon Society (IAS) will take place at Rock Springs Nature Center, Decatur. The weekend event will include field trips on Saturday and Sunday and a pizza party on Saturday night. For more information contact Jo Fessett at 217.544.2473 or email Jo at jfessett@illinoisaudubon.org.

Sept. 23-25 > INPS 30th Anniversary Celebration

Join the Illinois Native Plant Society (INPS) for their 30th year as an organization dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and study of native plants and vegetation in Illinois. The celebration will be held at Camp Ondessonk, near Ozark, Illinois. Contact Chris Benda, INPS President for more information or to get a registration form. Phone Chris at 217.417.4145.

Vern's Nature Tours 2012 Trip Calendar

Vern Kleen has schedule two nature tours for 2012:

1. 12-Day Costa Rican Expedition, Feb. 18-29

2. 12-day Ecuador Birding Tour, March 10-21

For all details and reservations, contact Vern Kleen, 1825 Clearview Drive, Springfield, IL 62704.

Phone Vern at 217-787-3515 or email vkleen@comcast.net.

Editorial: A threat is once again looming over the Cache River Wetlands, the Shawnee National Forest, and possibly Mermet Lake Conservation Area.

As per recent news reports, the U.S. Dept. of Transportation has allotted \$3.6 million to conduct a feasibility study of the best route for a proposed Interstate 66, to connect Paducah, Kentucky, to Interstate 55 in Missouri via the Bill Emerson Bridge at Cape Girardeau. The preferred route would run, more or less, through Ullin and the heart of the Cache River Wetlands.

This project was proposed over 11 years ago. The original proposal was to connect the east coast to the west coast via a new interstate. Several eastern states bought in the plan but several western states showed no interest. Some powers-that-be in Kentucky and the bootheel of Missouri see this as a great thing. The original proposal did not route the interstate through Illinois but someone in IL government, possibly governor Rod B., decided that the state needed a piece of this federally funded boondoggle so an option appeared to run the interstate through the southernmost tip of Illinois, from Paducah to Cape Girardeau. Some politicians and businessmen in these two cities as well as a few in Illinois enthusiastically support this version.

A need for such an interstate route has not been proven. Many organizations in Kentucky are working to stop the plan as it would take the interstate straight through many sensitive karst and cave filled areas of the state. They have developed a website devoted to fighting the plan under the heading of "Kick 66". The site can be easily located by doing an internet search for "Kick 66".

Illinois has more than our share of interstates when compared to the surrounding states, as reflected on the U.S. map during any TV weather report. Many folks have concluded that running a route from Paducah to Cape Girardeau would cause more harm than good. When looking at the state of IL map, it's easy to see that an interstate from Paducah to Cape Girardeau would nearly sever the tip of Illinois from the rest of the state. The proposed route would cut through the Cache River Wetlands, a RAMSAR wetland of international importance. Some of the Shawnee National Forest lies in the path as well.

Spending an additional 3.6 million to study the best route is a waste of taxpayer money. The cost of the actual project greatly dwarfs that figure and, it's my understanding, the State of Illinois would need to provide at least 10% of the cost. Speculating on "new jobs" as a reason to support the project is a bad gamble with no real guarantee of new jobs coming to Illinois. A quick stop at Metropolis or Cairo offers evidence that interstates have done little to improve the economy of southernmost Illinois. As it would be a federal project, companies bidding are not restricted to Illinois. The jobs would go to the companies with the lowest bid, be it from Kentucky or Missouri or Arkansas. Such a route could actually have very negative economic effects in the region, as it would quicken the route through Illinois to Kentucky or Missouri where the gasoline is less expensive as are other popular commodities such as alcoholic beverages and cigarettes.

I personally urge everyone, no matter which state you live in, to contact your elected officials in opposition of this misguided and destructive proposal.

Nix I66! Enough with the asphalt already! -*Rhonda Rothrock.*

-- 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: _____

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

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.

✂—cut here and return with dues—cut here and return with dues—✂

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SIAS Website: <http://www.siaudubon.org> Email: siaudubonsociety@gmail.com

Why are there so many bird species in the tropics? Excerpts from Research Blogging by GrrlScientist of the guardian.co.uk

Since before the time of dinosaurs, species diversity is related to latitude. Basically, species richness increases as distance from the equator decreases. As any sweaty bird watcher dragging a heavy field guide through the tropics will tell you, this is especially obvious for New World where 3,370 species breed in the Neotropics whilst only 732 species breed in the Nearctic. Even Charles Darwin commented on this latitudinal diversity gradient.

Hypotheses abound – hypotheses with hairsplitting and convoluted minutiae (sometimes known as "arm waving") that usually give me a migraine – yet the biogeographical reasons underlying this curious phenomenon remain elusive. But that said, the most widely accepted explanation for this tremendous latitudinal diversity gradient in bird species is the refuge hypothesis. This hypothesis proposes that the climate and habitat changes that occurred due to the glacial cycles that started during the late Pliocene and continued through Pleistocene caused bird populations to become isolated into small refugia, and this population fragmentation triggered increased speciation rates during that particular time period – a rapid rate that still continues to this day. According to this hypothesis, it was this rapid diversification that created the high Neotropical bird diversity seen today.

Another explanation for this avian latitudinal diversity gradient is the climate stability hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that the stable environment found in the tropics provided birds with the opportunity to specialize on predictable resources, thus allowing them to occupy narrower niches and this in turn, facilitated speciation.

Both hypotheses sound reasonable, so how can one decide which of the two is more likely? One way to figure this out is to test each hypothesis's predictions. Because the refuge hypothesis suggests there is greater evolutionary potential in the tropics, one would expect that tropical birds consistently speciate rapidly, so tropical species should be younger than those found in temperate regions. In contrast, the climate stability hypothesis predicts that species found in high (tropical) regions speciated early, filling up all available niches, and therefore should be older than birds found in low biodiversity (temperate) regions, which had the opportunity to speciate only recently, after the glaciers disappeared.

For the complete story, visit <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/punctuated-equilibrium/2011/aug/18/2>

SIAS T-shirts Should Be Ready Soon! – T-shirts might possibly be available by this Friday's SIAS meeting.

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*Affiliate of the Illinois Audubon Society,
the Illinois Environmental Council,
& the North American Bluebird Society*

Don't forget to Save Your Stamps for the IAS Land Acquisition Fund. ☒

Bring 'em to any SIAS meeting!

For more info visit: www.illinoisaudubon.org



Black-necked Stilt family -photo by David Brewer

