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Welcome Back Hummingbirds!

APRIL 06TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Welcome Back Hummingbirds!

Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) encourages people to discover nature this spring by learning about the ruby-throated hummingbird. Missourians will be seeing this delightful bird this time of year a lot more now due to migration. In an average year, ruby-throated hummingbirds arrive in Missouri around early to mid-April.

“Hummingbird migration all depends on the weather,” MDC Wildlife Ecologist Brad Jacobs said. “This year’s migration should be about average for hummingbirds and they should be increasing in numbers over the month of April.”

Jacobs noted a great website map from hummingbirds.net to visit to see when and where hummingbirds are migrating: <http://bit.ly/1cCTWae>. The hummingbird migration map shows locations of where ruby-throated hummingbirds have been spotted already this year in North America. The website allows visitors to help out with this by entering the dates and exact locations where people have spotted hummingbirds.

Just like most birds, hummingbirds typically migrate south in early fall and migrate back north in the spring.

“Our hummingbirds begin their southward migration in mid-August and most are gone by early October,” Jacobs said. “A few overwinter in extreme southern coastal states, with most wintering from southern Mexico to Costa Rica. Migration means some of them fly nonstop for 600 miles from the Gulf coast of the U.S. to the Yucatan Peninsula over the Gulf of Mexico. The often lose half their body weight during this trans-Gulf, 24-hour

flight.”

Early spring migrant hummingbirds in Missouri rely on sap oozing from sapsucker-drilled holes and insects for food. With warmer weather they soon will switch to eating nectar from many different kinds of flowers later in spring, which gives them energy needed to catch insects all day long to feed their young.

Hummingbirds are more than just a delight to watch flying around, they also play a very important part in our ecosystem.

“Hummingbirds are important pollinators for many species of plants that require just such a long-billed pollinator,” Jacobs said. “Because of their small size, hummingbirds also risk ending up as food for many predators such as, large insects, spiders, birds, and frogs.”

Hummingbirds are summer residents throughout the state either around nectar feeders outside homes and in parks and gardens. Hummingbirds nest in wooded areas, and are frequently observed near forests, and streams.

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Buoy Near Bill Emerson Memorial Bridge Tests Water Quality

APRIL 04TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Buoy Near Bill Emerson Memorial Bridge Tests Water Quality

Cape Girardeau, Missouri - As people stroll along the riverfront in Cape Girardeau, they may notice a yellow buoy that arrived this week. It looks like a small boat floating near the Bill Emerson Memorial Bridge. According to the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), the buoy is part of the MDC's cooperative effort with the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center's (Great Rivers Ecological Observatory Network (GREON) project to monitor water quality.

The local buoy is one of seven buoys placed in various places along the Mississippi River housing water quality and weather monitoring equipment. The Cape Girardeau buoy is monitored by Molly Sobotka, MDC resource scientist.

“This buoy allows us to monitor the water for oxygen, temperature, nutrients, and clarity and collects data on wind and sunlight,” Sobotka said. “All of this information helps us understand the water quality in the river, regional differences in river reaches, and how sediments and nitrogen flow through the system.”

Sobotka said data from the buoy will help scientists understand how major events like floods impact the river in real time.

“It takes hourly water quality and weather data and transmits it to the project server,” she said. “By using the buoy, we can collect data during floods or storms when we would otherwise have trouble collecting it ourselves.”

Ultimately, the GREON project has a goal of establishing a network of identical water quality monitoring buoys in great rivers around the world. The work in Cape Girardeau is an important preliminary step in establishing this network.

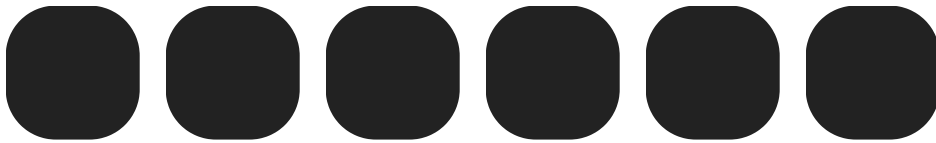
The monitoring station is marked with reflective tape and lights for nighttime visibility. The monitoring equipment is fragile and difficult to replace and the scientists request that boaters, anglers and hunters avoid disturbing this equipment.

For further information, contact Sobotka at the Big Rivers and Wetlands Field Station, at Molly.Sobotka@mdc.mo.gov or (573) 243-2659, extension 1048.

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Fisherman Takes State-Record Black Buffalo

MARCH 25TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Fisherman Takes State-Record Black Buffalo

MDC congratulates Travis Cardona on breaking state-record by shooting 74-pound black buffalo with bow and arrow at Duck Creek Conservation Area.

Hillsboro, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reports that Travis Cardona of Hillsboro became the most recent record-breaking fisherman in Missouri when he shot a giant black buffalo on a lake at Duck Creek Conservation Area using a bow and arrow. The new “alternative method” record black buffalo taken by Cardona on March 14 weighed 74 pounds. He shot the fish at 11 p.m. in one of his secret “honey holes.

“Believe it or not, once I shot the giant, I didn’t know it was that big of a fish until it started swimming back to the boat,” Cardona said. “Believe you me, after it swam towards the boat the fight was on.”

Cardona added that it took a total of four arrows to get the behemoth in the boat.

“It was a five minute battle that seemed like an eternity,” he said.

The new black buffalo broke the previous alternative-method state-record of 59-pounds-8-ounces taken on the same body of water three days prior by David Burle of Bloomsdale.

“The month of March has been full of potential record-breaking fish caught throughout the state,” said MDC Fisheries Programs Specialist Andrew Branson. “This just goes to show you that conservation makes Missouri a great place to fish.”

MDC staff verified the new record-weight fish using a certified scale in Fenton.

“Once my friends and I got the fish in the boat, we knew that it was a state-record fish,” Cardona said. “This is by far the biggest fish I have ever caught in my life, and I still can’t

believe it!”

The longtime angler said that the fish is in the freezer and will be sent off to be mounted very soon.

“I already have a place on the wall picked out for this once-in-a-lifetime fish. Now I’m ready to get back out on the water and try to take another giant,” he said.

Missouri state-record fish are recognized in two categories: pole-and-line and alternative methods. Bowfishing is considered an alternative method and consist of a bow or crossbow that shoots arrows attached to a string so that the fish can be retrieved after they’re pierced. Other alternative methods include: throwlines, trotlines, limb lines, bank lines, jug lines, spearfishing, snagging, snaring, gigging, grabbing, and atlatl.

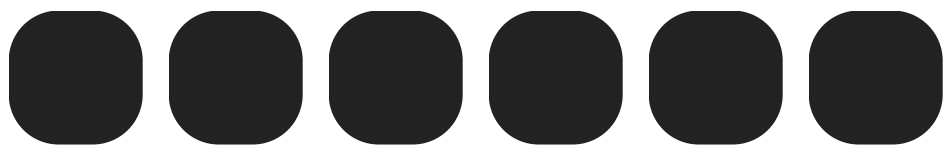
For more information on state-record fish, visit the MDC website at <http://mdc.mo.gov/fishing/state-record-fish>.

Shown in the photo: Travis Cardona of Hillsboro shot this 74-pound state-record black buffalo on a lake at Duck Creek Conservation Area on March 14, 2016.

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Garden Symposium Workshop

MARCH 18TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Garden Symposium Workshop

Dexter, Missouri - The University of Missouri Stoddard County Extension Office has announced plans for a Garden Symposium workshop to be held on Thursday, March 31, 2016, at the Faith Lutheran Church, 1002 Saddle Spur Road in Dexter, MO.

The program will bring Extension Specialists to Dexter who will provide practical knowledge on building a healthy soil, hoop houses, lawn care and weeds, farmers markets and practical pests.

This is a great opportunity for garden enthusiasts and small commercial growers in the area to ask questions and gain knowledge on garden related topics.

The Garden Symposium will begin at 9 a.m. with a welcome followed by presentations by Donna Aufdenberg - horticulture specialist, Dr. Van Ayers – community development specialist, Sarah Denkler - horticulture specialist, Kate Kammler - horticulture specialist and Anthony Ohmes - agronomy specialist.

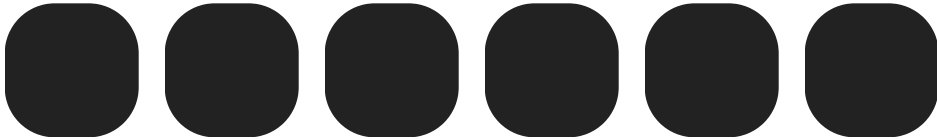
The event includes lunch with activities concluding by 1:30 p.m. To register call the University of Missouri Stoddard County Extension Office at 573-568-3344.

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Disabled Veterans Spring Turkey Hunt

MARCH 18TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Disabled Veterans Spring Turkey Hunt

Disabled veterans may apply for this hunt until March 31.

Cape Girardeau, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is hosting a Disabled Veterans Spring Turkey Hunt April 24-26 in Bollinger County. The event is open to any disabled veteran with service-related injuries.

“We want to proudly honor those who have defended our freedoms,” said Conservation Agent Alan Lamb.

The goal of the program is to assist disabled veterans who are not able to go turkey hunting on their own. The event begins April 24 with morning turkey hunts on April 25 and 26.

MDC Outdoor Skills Specialist DeeDee Dockins said all participants will be given basic instruction on how to pattern their shotgun the evening before the first hunt.

“Then the veterans will hit the field the next morning for some top notch Missouri turkey hunting,” said Dockins.

Each veteran will be guided by conservation agents or MDC employees. Other activities planned include target shooting and fishing. Hunting and camaraderie will continue until the event concludes on the afternoon of April 26.

“We’re dedicated to providing veterans with positive recreational opportunities,” said Lamb. “It isn’t just a hunt, it is an experience and we get as much out of the program as the veterans do.”

Lodging at an MDC facility and all meals and equipment will be provided throughout the event. The event is free to participants but applicants must apply and purchase the necessary permits. Applications are available at the MDC Southeast Regional Office in Cape County Park North or by emailing Dockins at DeeDee.Dockins@mdc.mo.gov. The application deadline is March 31.

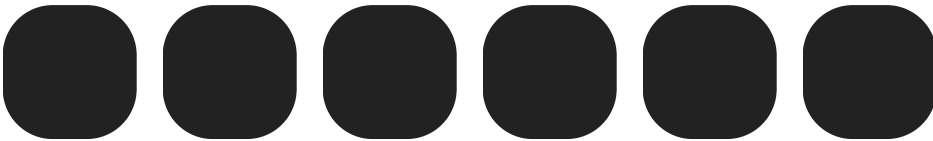
The Veterans of Valor Turkey Hunt is in cooperation with the Southeast Regional Disabled Veterans Recreational Program which provides outdoor recreational opportunities for disabled veterans.

For more information, or to apply, call the Southeast Regional Office at (573)290-5730 or email Dockins at deede.dockins@mdc.mo.gov.

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