Local News



Angler Catches State-Record River Redhorse

MAY 31ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Angler Catches State-Record River Redhorse

Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reports that Dan Schmitz of Jefferson City became the most recent record-breaking angler in Missouri when he hooked a river redhorse on Tavern Creek using a rod and reel.

The new "pole and line" record river redhorse caught by Schmitz on April 15 weighed 9-pounds, 13-ounces. It broke the previous state-record pole-and-line river redhorse of 9-pound, 10-ounces caught on the Osage River in 2006. Schmitz was using worms when he caught the fish. MDC staff verified the record-weight fish using a certified scale in Jefferson City.

"I fought the fish for about ten minutes before I got it to the bank," said Schmitz. "I knew the fish was pretty big, but I didn't know it was a state record until talking to MDC. I really can't believe I caught a fish like this! I'm not a master angler. I'm just a hobby fisherman who loves to fish. I'm super excited to have the honor to be a state-record holder."

River redhorse fish are a part of the sucker family. They are a moderately chubby, coarse-scaled fish with a dorsal fin containing 12 or 13 rays. These fish are can be found mostly throughout the Ozarks.

Schmitz's fish also beats the current world record. While the river redhorse does get much larger, the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) only recognizes fish taken by pole

and line.

"Larger river redhorses are usually taken by gigging and do not qualify for the IGFA world record," MDC Fisheries Programs Specialist Andrew Branson said. "Conservation makes Missouri a great place to fish and this new unique record clearly shows why. This fish could be the largest river redhorse ever taken with a pole and line."

Schmitz added it's hard to believe he may be a world-record holder.

"I just can't believe it! One day I'm fishing for fun and the next I could be a world-record holder," he said. "I'm still in disbelief."

Missouri state-record fish are recognized in two categories: pole-and-line and alternative methods. Alternative methods include: throwlines, trotlines, limb lines, bank lines, jug lines, spearfishing, snagging, snaring, gigging, grabbing, archery, and atlatl.

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MDC Encourages Motorists to Give Turtles a Brake!

MAY 15TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

MDC Encourages Motorists to Give Turtles a Brake!

Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) encourages motorists to give turtles crossing roads a brake. Turtles are struck by cars throughout warmer months, but are at special risk this time of year because they are on the move. Young males make up most of the travelers as they search for territories of their own and for female turtles. Comfort is also a factor. Like other reptiles, turtles are cold-blooded so basking on warm asphalt feels good on cool spring days.

MDC encourages motorists to slow down when they see a turtle in the road and check to be sure they can safely steer around it. If helping a turtle cross a road, keep human safety as the number-one concern. Check for traffic and move the turtle across the road in the direction it is traveling.

The three-toed box turtle is a species often seen crossing roads in Missouri. Primarily a woodland species, it is found everywhere but the extreme northern part of the state. The ornate box turtle is also a common traveler and is found in all but the southeastern corner of the state. It is more adapted to grasslands and is most common in western Missouri.

Shown in the photo is Elvis, a 3 toed-box turtle owned by Jessica Loflin.

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Cape Nature Center Holds Earth Day Celebration on Saturday

APRIL 22ND 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Cape Nature Center Holds Earth Day Celebration on Saturday

Cape Girardeau, Missouri - Friday, April 22 is Earth Day and there are plenty of ways to take part in celebrating the Earth. From taking a day to go fishing, planting a tree or digging in the dirt of a flower bed, time in nature is the best way to celebrate according to Sara Turner, manager of the Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center.

"Whether you do something on your own, like add native plants to your landscaping that day, or join us at the nature center for a formal program, Earth Day is a great time to pause and enjoy nature," Turner said.

The nature center will celebrate Earth Day this Saturday, April 23, with A Southeast Earth Day. Events will be from 1 to 4 p.m. and will focus on the amazing plants, animals and habitats in diverse southeast Missouri habitats.

"Guests can walk our trail to find answers to trivia questions, make a recycled Earth Day craft, enjoy a nature film and many other activities that day," Turner said.

Turner said there's something for everyone at the nature center. Youth and adult groups are welcome to attend and no registration is needed for this event.

The Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center is located in Cape County Park North near the intersection of Kingshighway and Interstate 55.

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Cape Fair Angler Catches State-Record White Bass

APRIL 14TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Cape Fair Angler Catches State-Record White Bass

Stone County, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reports James Wright of Cape Fair became the most recent record-setting angler in Missouri when he hooked a white bass on Table Rock Lake on a trotline. The new "alternative method" record white bass caught by Wright on April 6 weighed 3-pounds, 4-ounces with a length of 18 3/4 inches. Wright was using shad for bait to try to catch catfish, but instead he caught a state-record white bass.

"I was in my new boat baiting hooks on a trotline, and out of nowhere something hit the line hard," Wright said. "I grabbed the line and yanked it, and then the fight was on. I finally got it in the boat after about three minutes and was totally shocked to see that it was a white bass."

Wright added that he wasn't sure if it was state record so he contacted MDC immediately.

"Once MDC confirmed that the fish was a state record I was so excited," he said. "This was my dad's and my dream. I just can't believe it came true! This is by far the biggest white bass I have ever caught on a trotline. I plan on having it mounted so I'll never forget catching a fish like that."

MDC staff verified the record-weight fish using a certified scale in the town of Galena.

"2016 is shaping up to be a year for state-record fish," said MDC Fisheries Programs Specialist Andrew Branson. "We have already had six new records so far, which is more than an entire year sometimes. The mild weather we have had so far this year means more anglers are fishing, and catching big fish."

Wright's recent catch set the state record for white bass in the alternative methods category.

Missouri state-record fish are recognized in two categories: pole-and-line and alternative methods. Alternative methods include: throwlines, trotlines, limb lines, bank lines, jug lines, spearfishing, snagging, snaring, gigging, grabbing, archery, and atlatl.

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Fisherman Takes State-Record Freshwater Drum

APRIL 14TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Fisherman Takes State-Record Freshwater Drum

Missouri - MDC congratulates Joshua Cole on breaking the state record by shooting 30-pound, 15-ounce freshwater drum with bow and arrow on Table Rock Lake.

REEDS SPRING, Mo. – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reports that Joshua Cole of Reeds Spring became the most recent record-breaking fisherman in Missouri when he shot a freshwater drum on Table Rock Lake using a bow and arrow. The new "alternative method" record drum taken by Cole on March 31 weighed 30-pounds, 15-ounces. It was 33 inches long and had a girth of 30 inches. He shot the fish around 10 p.m. about one mile from Point 10 on Table Rock Lake.

"I can't believe I shot a state-record drum," Cole said. "I knew I was shooting at a big drum, but I didn't realize how big it was until we got it in the boat."

Cole added that it took two arrows to get it in the boat.

"It really didn't put up much of a fight with two arrows in it," he said. "I'm just glad we got it in the boat with no problems."

The new freshwater drum broke the previous alternative-method state record of 26-pounds, 8-ounces taken on the Lake of the Ozarks in 2008.

"March was a great month for catching record-breaking fish throughout the state," said MDC Fisheries Programs Specialist Andrew Branson. "There were four new state records set in March. 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 at MDC's Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery in Branson.

"Once my friends and I got the fish in the boat, I knew that it was a state-record fish," Cole said. "This is by far the one of biggest fish I have ever caught in my life, and I still can't believe it!"

Cole hasn't decided what to do with the fish just yet, but his hopes are high to shoot something bigger.

"This was my first time out bowfishing this year, and I can't believe I shot a state-record fish," Cole said. "I'm so ready to get back out on the water and find bigger fish."

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.

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