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Angler Catches State-Record Skipjack Herring

MAY 31ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Angler Catches State-Record Skipjack Herring

Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reports that Steve Wengler of St. Louis became the most recent record-breaking angler in Missouri when he hooked a skipjack herring on the Mississippi River using a rod and reel.

The new “pole and line” record skipjack herring caught by Wengler on April 17 weighed 2-pounds, 5-ounces. It broke the previous state-record of 1-pound, 14-ounces. Wengler was using two 1/8-ounce white and chartreuse jigs to catch the skipjack herring. MDC staff verified the record-weight fish using a certified scale in Defiance.

“The skipjack put up a pretty good fight, but I got it in as fast as I could because I didn’t want to lose the nice fish,” he said. “Once I got it in, I had an idea that I had caught the state record, but wasn’t sure until I put it on the scale.”

Anglers often catch skipjack herring to use for bait. The fish is boney, lacking in flavor, and is seldom used as food. But it fights spectacularly when hooked and can provide considerable sport on light tackle. The oil present in its flesh is said by fishermen to attract catfish. Skipjacks can usually be found in swift water below dams and around the ends of wing dikes.

“2016 is shaping up to be a big year for state record fish in Missouri,” MDC Fisheries Programs Specialist Andrew Branson said. “We have already had nine 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.”

Wengler added that he intentionally tried catching a state-record skipjack herring.

“I’m really thrilled to have caught a fish like this,” he said. “I’m really glad I was able to get my name in the record books. My plan now is to get back on the water and go after many more records.”

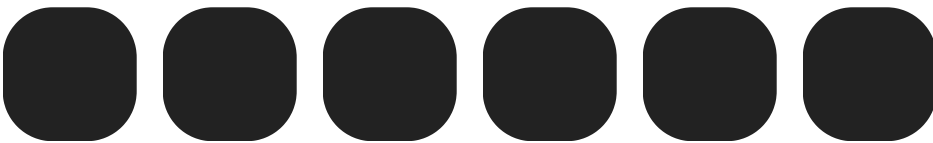
Missouri state-record fish are recognized in two categories: pole-and-line and alternative methods. Alternative methods include: throwlines, trotlines, limb lines, bank lines, jug lines, spearfishing, snagging, snaring, gigging, grabbing, archery, and atlatl.

James Lucas of O’Fallon recently snagged a state-record skipjack herring under the “alternative methods” category on the Mississippi River on April 8 that weighed 1 pound, 10-ounces with a length of 16 1/2 inches.

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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.

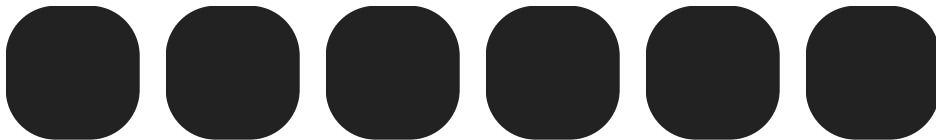
“I just can’t believe it! One day I’m fishing for fun and the next I could be a world-record holder,” he said. “I’m still in disbelief.”

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.

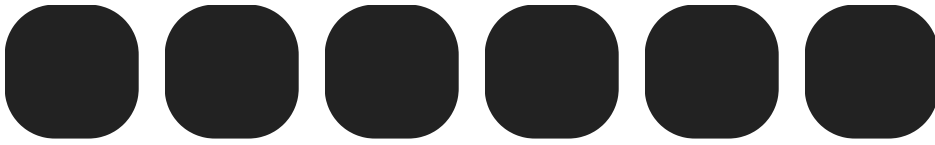
The three-toed box turtle is a species often seen crossing roads in Missouri. Primarily a woodland species, it is found everywhere but the extreme northern part of the state. The ornate box turtle is also a common traveler and is found in all but the southeastern corner of the state. It is more adapted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

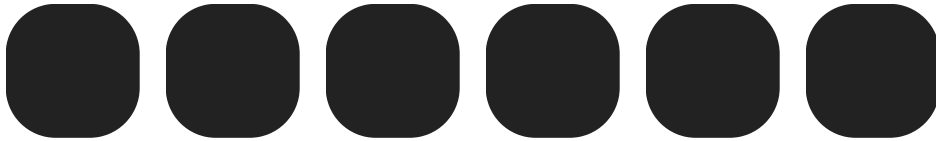
Turner said there’s something for everyone at the nature center. Youth and adult groups are welcome to attend and no registration is needed for this event.

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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