

Nature Connections

News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • May/June 2014



Let's Go Fishing

Fishing is much more than fish. It is the great occasion when we may return to the fine simplicity of our forefathers. —Herbert Hoover

Wetting your family's appetite for the outdoors can begin by wetting a fishing line.

If your family's attitude about fishing can be described as long on desire, but short on experience, don't worry. There are several Missouri Department of Conservation events in May and June that can ease your angling anxieties.

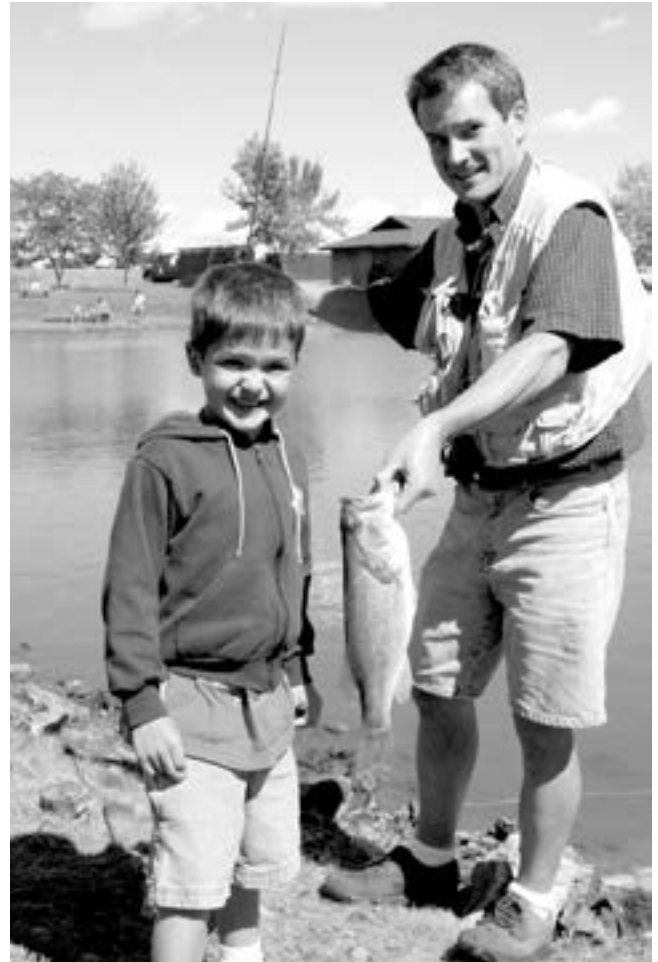
Look inside this newsletter and you'll find a number of special events that combine two of this area's favorite words—**free** and **fishing**. The fishing fun starts with *Kids' Fishing Day* at Bennett Spring State Park near Lebanon on May 3. Two weeks later on May 17, Roaring River State Park near Cassville hosts their *Kids' Fishing Day*. This will be followed by three area youth fishing events on June 7—*Kids' Fishing Fun Day* in Springfield, *Family Fishing Fair* at Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery in Branson, and *Kids' Fishing Day* at Kellogg Lake in Carthage. More information about these events is listed on page 7.

Free happens the weekend of June 7 and 8 in the form of *Free Fishing Days*. This event—which is set annually as the Saturday and Sunday following the first Monday in June—allows for an entire weekend of permit-free fishing at all public fishing areas in the state. Missouri fishing permits (including trout permits and daily trout tags) will not be required statewide at any public fishing area on these dates. It should be noted that all other fishing regulations (length limits, possession limits, etc.) still apply.

These events cover a range of angling opportunities. Trout will be the focus at the trout park events, channel catfish and hybrid sunfish will be on the hooks of lucky anglers at the youth fishing events in Springfield and Carthage, and *Free Fishing Days'* anglers can go after whatever is biting that day at the lake or stream they visit.

Regardless what species gets hooked at these events, it's hoped the biggest catch of the day will be new-found opportunities. Yes, fishing is a great way to develop an appreciation for the outdoors, and, yes, it's also a great way to provide tasty variety to the summer's table fare. But fishing's best benefits are the positive impacts it can have on family and friends. It can create bonds that last for a lifetime or strengthen ties that have weakened under the pressures of our hectic lifestyles. Fishing can be an investment that never stops paying dividends, even on days that you don't catch anything.

It should be pointed out that Missouri's *Free Fishing Days* weekend in June doesn't just apply to first-time fishing folks, die-hard veteran anglers have a role in this event too. It's their opportunity to show kids, relatives, or friends why fishing is such a great pastime. Think about it—just because a family has two days of permit-free fishing doesn't mean they're going to buy a bass boat and head for the lake. A neighborly invitation from an experienced angler can turn a fishing trip into an outing they'll remember all year. Experienced anglers can provide helpful advice on lure selection, casting techniques, and other tips that will add to the enjoyment.



Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

If you don't have the luxury of having an experienced angler show you the ropes on your initial fishing outing, don't worry. A good source for beginning anglers is the Missouri Department of Conservation's *An Introduction to Fishing*. This publication has information about rods and reels, lure selection, angling techniques, identifying common game fish species, and how to clean and prepare them if you plan to keep your catch. This free booklet is available at many Department of Conservation offices and online at <mdc.mo.gov>.

—Francis Skalicky, Media Specialist

Conservation makes Missouri a great place to hunt and fish.



The Joplin Conservation Office, located in the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center, is your local connection to Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife. Stop by and purchase hunting and fishing permits, attend a nature program, go for a hike, enjoy a picnic, or access Shoal Creek. Within the 190 acres of Wildcat Park, you will find a diverse mix of wildlife habitats rich with flora and fauna. From I-44, take exit 6, and turn south on MO-86. Turn right on Riviera Drive to enter Wildcat Park.

HOURS:

Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM
Closed all state holidays.
Audubon Center hours vary.

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-629-3423 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

Ask The Naturalist

My grandpa talks about catching shadow bass. Is that the same fish as a rock bass?

Chances are you are talking about the same fish, especially if you were both fishing in the same stream or area in Missouri. Today they are recognized as separate species mainly inhabiting different stream drainages in Missouri, but often still referred to by multiple common names by anglers. Northern rock bass (*Ambloplites rupestris*) is a thick-bodied sunfish with almost as many local nicknames as the number of fish stories told around the campfire. This game fish was formerly known as a "rock bass," but two nearly identical species are now recognized in Missouri. The Ozark bass (*Ambloplites constellatus*) and the shadow bass (*Ambloplites ariommus*) are both true rock bass but now regarded as separate species. All three of these fish are found in Missouri and are known by common names such as rock perch, goggle-eye, and redeye just to name a few. Lurking around boulders, logs, root wads, and in deep pools of many streams in the Ozarks, this fish—of many names—awaits your cast. No matter what you call them, these feisty members of the sunfish family put up quite a fight. Whether you wade fish, ride on a tube, or float in a canoe down a local stream, catching these fish can provide some tasty morsels to accompany those Ozarks gravel bar campfire stories.

—Kevin Badgley, Interpretive Center Manager

May and June Events

Conservation Issues

May 7 • Wednesday • 6:30–8 PM
Redings Mill Fire Station (Redings Mill)
No registration required (ages 12 and up)
Local conservation managers and landowners deal with all sorts of issues from sedimentation of streams to habitat fragmentation and impacts from continuous urban sprawl. These issues not only influence management decisions, planning, and wildlife, but all of our community. The MAKO Fly Fishers will host this interactive discussion on local conservation issues. Join us in learning about some local issues and find out how your local MAKO group promotes conservation education.

Introduction To Archery

May 23 • Friday • 9:30 AM–12 NOON
Prairie State Park (Mindenmines)
Register by calling 417-843-6711 (ages 6 and up)
This is a special event for homeschool families and organizations. Participants will learn the fundamental skills and safety of archery shooting. You will learn things like bow nomenclature, hand set, bow set, pre-draw, stance, and much more. All equipment will be provided.

Introduction To Archery

May 23 • Friday • 6–7:30 PM
Prairie State Park (Mindenmines)
Registration required (ages 6 and up)
Learn the fundamental skills and safety of archery shooting. You will learn things like bow nomenclature, hand set, bow set, pre-draw, stance, and much more. All equipment will be provided.

Glade Day

May 31 • Saturday • 9 AM–3 PM
Roaring River State Park Nature Center (Cassville)
No registration required (all ages)
Join us to explore the beautiful and unique glade habitats at Roaring River State Park. Learn about this extreme ecosystem and the hardy flora and fauna that call this place home. Local naturalists and land managers will showcase their efforts in restoring these hidden gems scattered amongst the Ozark forests. There will be scheduled activities, hikes, and discovery stations throughout the park.

Kellogg Lake Kids' Fishing Day

June 7 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON
Kellogg Lake (Carthage)
No registration required (families, ages 15 and under may fish)
Join us for the 13th annual Kellogg Lake Kids' Fishing Day. Registration starts at 8am at the pavilion, and then it is on to the education stations and the freshly-stocked lake for a morning of fishing fun. Bring your own pole; a limited number of loaner rods are available on a first-come basis. Bait and basic tackle will be provided at bait stations around the lake. Learn new skills from knot tying to casting a fly-rod. Conservation education stations make learning fun and interactive. Participating in education station activities earn kids the chance to register for the event prize drawing held at noon. Make it a great day of family memories at Kellogg Lake Park with conservation education, refreshments, prizes, and a chance for the kids to reel in a big one!

Gettin' Twiggy With It

June 17 • Tuesday • 6:30–8:30 PM
Walter Woods Conservation Area (Joplin)
Registration required (ages 4–8)
Parents and grandparents, bring your young explorers to the woods and see the wonders of late spring. From the tree canopy to the forest floor, secrets are revealed of an important place for both humans and wildlife. Local naturalists will help the children discover nature as we overturn fallen leaves, explore the world of twigs, and create a woodland nature craft.

Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

4897 N. Farm Road 61, Ash Grove, MO 65604 • mdc.mo.gov/node/288



May and June Events

Archery Shooting Basics

May 10 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (all ages)

Discover the basics of archery shooting. We will cover things like bow nomenclature, hand set, bow set, pre-draw, stance, and much more and then go shooting on the static archery range. You may bring your own bow to the program or use ours.

Free Shooting Day

May 11 • Sunday • 12 NOON–4:30 PM

No registration required (all ages)

In honor of all mothers on their special day, everyone may enjoy one free hour of shooting or a round of trap or skeet shooting on us.

.22 Rifle Shooting Basics

May 17 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (all ages)

Discover the joys of shooting one of the all-time favorite rifles—the .22 rifle. We will discuss rifle nomenclature, dominant eye, sight picture, sight alignment, breath control, trigger squeeze, shooting positions, plus much more. You may use our rifles or plan to use your own. Please make sure your rifle is completely unloaded before you arrive at the range.

Handgun Shooting Basics

June 5 • Thursday • 6–7:30 PM

Registration required (ages 18 and up)

Join us to discover the basics of responsible handgun ownership and the joys of shooting. We will cover safety, handgun nomenclature, sight picture, sight alignment, breath control, trigger squeeze, and much more. Please make sure your handgun is completely unloaded before arriving at the range. You may use our handguns if you prefer.

Archery Shooting Basics

June 7 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (all ages)

Discover the basics of archery shooting. We will cover things like bow nomenclature, hand set, bow set, pre-draw, stance, and much more and then go shooting on the static archery. You may bring your own bow to the program or use ours.

Free Shooting Day

June 15 • Sunday • 12 NOON–4:30 PM

No registration required (all ages)

In honor of all fathers on their special day, everyone may enjoy one free hour of shooting or a round of trap or skeet shooting on us.

Day at the Range And Outdoor Adventure Fair

June 21 • Saturday • 8 AM–2 PM

Registration required (all ages)

Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center will be closed to public shooting for the *Day at the Range and Outdoor Adventure Fair* for persons with disabilities. This event is a partnership effort between the Southwest Center for Independent Living, The National Wild Turkey Federation, and Missouri Department of Conservation. If you have a friend or family member who is disabled, this is their event. Come and enjoy a day in the outdoors shooting, fishing, and participating in a variety of other nature-related activities at this one day event. To register, please call the Southwest Center for Independent Living at 417-886-1188 or go online to SouthwestMissouriDayattheRange.com.



To get to the Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center, take US Highway 160 west of Willard, turn south on Farm Road 61, and go 2.5 miles, facility on the west side of road. Facilities include an outdoor education center and archery, rifle, pistol, and shotgun ranges, including skeet and trap.

HOURS:

September 14–April 14

Monday and Thursday: 9 AM–4:30 PM

Friday–Sunday: 12 NOON–4:30 PM

April 15–September 13

Monday: 9 AM–4:30 PM

Thursday: 9 AM–7:30 PM

Friday–Sunday: 12 NOON–4:30 PM

Closed Tuesdays, Wednesdays and all state holidays. Hours are subject to change.

FACILITIES AND FEES:

Available for individual and group use. Call for information and possible restrictions.

- Rifle/pistol range fee: \$3 per booth per hour
- Trap/skeet range fee: \$3 per person per round of 25 clay targets
- Shotgun patterning range: \$3 per person per hour
- Archery range: \$3 per person per hour
- Group use fee: \$20 per hour plus \$3 per round of 25 clay targets

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-742-4361 or email DaltonRange@mdc.mo.gov to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

Summer Hours Change

Beginning April 15, the range will be open later every Thursday evening to accommodate shooters' busy schedules more effectively. Hours of public operation on Thursdays will be 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. until September 14 when the hours will return to the 4:30 p.m. close time.

Holiday Closings

May 8 • Truman Day
May 26 • Memorial Day

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • mdc.mo.gov/node/287



The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). Indoors, enjoy nature exhibits, attend programs, purchase hunting and fishing permits, browse through a nature-related gift shop, and pick up free conservation brochures. Outdoors, enjoy three miles of hiking trails through a variety of natural communities. Call to schedule a naturalist-led program for your organized group.

CURRENT HOURS:

March 1–October 31

Building: Tuesday–Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM

Sunday: 12 NOON–5 PM

Closed Monday

Trails: Sunday–Saturday: 8 AM–8 PM

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-888-4237 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to others.

May Events

Babes In The Woods

May 2 • Friday • 10–11 AM

May 3 • Saturday •

10–11 AM

Registration begins April 15 (ages 0–2)

Bring your children ages 0–2 for a guided nature walk with Volunteer Naturalist Dana Tideman. Bring a stroller and join the fun!



May Events

Hiking Club

May 3 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON

Registration begins May 1 (ages 18 and up)

Hike at Ritter Springs Park with Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam on this **three-mile** trek. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring water and snacks and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Hike is easy to moderate** in difficulty.

Primitive Skills Series

Flint Knapping Demonstration

May 4 • Sunday • 1–3 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Volunteer Naturalist and primitive skills specialist Don Brink returns for another primitive skills session. Watch him transform simple rocks into artistic and functional points similar to the ones used by early man for arrowheads and other tools. See the basics of flint knapping and try your hand at this age-old skill. Stop by anytime.

Conservation TEEN Club

Wildlife And Photography Hike

May 10 • Saturday • 10 AM–3 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 12–17)

Join us for a wildlife and photography hike at the nature center to take pictures and identify wildlife. Bring a digital or film camera. After the hike, we will look at all the digital photos. Lunch and drinks will be provided.

Summer Hummers

May 10 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 6 and up)

The ruby-throated hummingbirds are back from their wintering grounds in Mexico and Central America. Join hummingbird expert Sarah Driver to learn more about these fascinating, bold little birds and discover how to attract them to your yard.



Spring Migrants

May 13 • Tuesday • 9–11 AM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 7 and up)

Spring is a good time to view migratory songbirds. While some stay and nest here, others are just passing through on their way to northern breeding grounds. Join Volunteer Naturalist Myra Scroggs to walk the trails looking for birds following an introductory program. Bring field guides and binoculars if you have them.

Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

May 14 • Wednesday • 11–11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 2–6)

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

Nature And The Arts—The Photography Of Noppadol Paothong

May 15 • Thursday • 7–8 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 12 and up)

Wildlife Photographer Noppadol Paothong returns to share stories from his 11-year journey creating his long-awaited book, *Save the Last Dance—A Story of North American Grassland Grouse*. He spent over a decade documenting these highly endangered birds and recording captivating images of their mating rituals and habitats. This book strives to rescue grassland grouse from the brink of extinction by showing the world what it stands to lose if these species are allowed to disappear. Whether you're interested in photography, conservation in general, or grouse specifically, you're sure to be captivated by this presentation cosponsored by the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society.

Prairie Photo Foray

May 17 • Saturday • 12 NOON–4 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 12 and up)

Join Volunteer Naturalists Bob and Ruby Ball on a hike to a local prairie to photograph wildflowers, insects, and landscapes. For this trip, you need to bring wide-angle, telephoto, and macro lenses or have a digital camera that covers these focal lengths. A tripod and flash would also be useful. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Wear appropriate clothing and bring insect repellent, sunscreen, snacks, and water.

Advanced Nature Photography

May 24 • Saturday • 9 AM–12 NOON

Registration begins May 1 (ages 15 and up)

Sharpen your photography techniques with Volunteer Naturalist A.D. Daniels. Discussion topics include: composition, lens selection, tripods, shutter speed and ISO, apertures, and close-ups. After the indoor program plan on a short hike (weather permitting), so bring your hiking shoes, water bottle, cameras, memory cards, assorted lenses, camera manuals, and tripods.

Conservation Kids' Club The Game Of Life

May 29 • Thursday • 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 7–12)

Spring is here. The forests are alive with blooming plants and baby animals. From birth to death, survival is a "gamble" for wildlife. Join us to discover the daily "jeopardy" that young wildlife experience. Learn how newborns hope the "price is right" as they take their chance on life's "wheel of fortune." Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

Temporary Exhibits

May • **Original Artwork** by Christian Dixon

• **Nature's Art** Handcrafted Wood Pieces by John Reger

June • **The Wonderful World Beneath The Surface—Caves**

Photographers of Springfield Plateau Grotto <www.spgcavers.org>

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • mdc.mo.gov/node/287

Little Acorns

Please limit to one per month.

Programs are 45 minutes in length.

May Events

Registration begins May 1 (ages 3–6)

“Tree”mendous Trees

May 15 • Thursday • 1:30 PM

May 16 • Friday • 1:30 PM

May 17 • Saturday • 11 AM

Trees are “tree”mendously important. Bring your favorite Big Person and find out why.

Bigmouth Bullfrogs

May 23 • Friday • 1:30 PM

May 24 • Saturday • 11 AM

From tadpoles to adult bullfrogs, we'll learn the life changes of frogs and why they are such good leapers.

Roly-Poly Roundup

May 28 • Wednesday • 11 AM OR 1:30 PM

Hey, partners, join the roly-poly fun as Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan returns for this year's roundup!

June Events

Registration begins June 3 (ages 3–6)

Busy Beavers

June 6 • Friday • 11 AM OR 1:30 PM

June 7 • Saturday • 11 AM

How are beavers able to live in the water? Why are they so busy? Discover the answers to these questions and learn more about this remarkable water-loving animal.

Nature's Nightlights

June 11 • Wednesday • 11 AM OR 1:30 PM

Summer evenings will be filled with magic and fun when your little ones discover fireflies with Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan.

Let's Go Camping

June 27 • Friday • 11 AM OR 1:30 PM

June 28 • Saturday • 11 AM

Camping can be fun for all ages! Join us at our indoor campsite to experience what it's like to spend a night in the woods. You'll sit in a tent, toast some pretend s'mores, and gather around the campfire for a story.

June Events

Primitive Skills Series Fire And Flintstone

June 1 • Sunday • 1–3 PM

Registration begins May 15 (ages 12 and up)

Volunteer Naturalist and primitive skills specialist Don Brink returns to demonstrate how to start fires without matches and butane. Different primitive fire-making techniques will be demonstrated. Afterward, try your hand at starting a fire the primitive way.

June Events

Our Nesting Birds

June 3 • Tuesday • 9–11 AM

Registration begins May 15 (ages 7 and up)

Early summer is a busy time for nesting birds. Come learn about commonly seen nesting birds, as well as some that are not so easy to spot, during this indoor and outdoor program.

Babes In The Woods

June 6 • Friday • 10–11 AM

June 7 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

Registration begins June 3 (ages 0–2)

Bring your children ages 0–2 for a guided nature walk with Volunteer Naturalist Dana Tideman. Bring a stroller and join the fun!

Firefly Frolic

June 10 • Tuesday • 8–9 PM

Registration begins June 3 (all ages)

Fireflies have intrigued and fascinated children and adults on countless summer evenings. Join Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan to learn everything you ever wanted to know about nature's “flashlights.” Bring your flashlight and join the fun.

Tree Pest Clinic

June 11 • Wednesday • 9 AM–1 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Do your trees have disease or insect problems? Bring infected twigs (at least 12” long), branches, or leaves to Urban Foresters for identification and a solution to your tree problems. Stop by anytime.

Conservation TEEN Club Overnight Camping Trip

June 11–12 • Wednesday, 2 PM–Thursday, 1 PM

Registration begins June 3 (ages 12–17)

Enjoy an overnight campout at Bushwhacker Conservation Area. We'll tour the area and fish the lakes for bass, bluegill, crappie, and catfish. If the fish cooperate, we'll even have a fish fry! Fishing equipment and bait will be provided or you may bring your own. Participants 16 years of age and older must have a valid fishing permit. Transportation, food, and drinks will be provided. Additional equipment will be required.

Hiking Club

June 14 • Saturday • 8 AM–2 PM

Registration begins June 3 (ages 18 and up)

The Cedar Gap Plateau is recognized as the second highest point in Missouri. Volunteer Naturalist Pat Stritzel will lead you to this point and to where three watersheds begin—the Gasconade River, Finley River, and Bryant Creek. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Hike is four miles and rated difficult.**

Medicinal And Edible Plants Of The Ozarks

June 17 • Tuesday • 5–6:15 PM OR 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins June 3 (ages 15 and up)

Join Bob Liebert, owner of Teeter Creek Herbs and author of *Common Medicinal Herbs Of The Ozarks*, for an indoor program and guided hike to learn how Native Americans and early pioneers relied on plants for curing their ailments and feeding their families. His book will be available to purchase and to have autographed.

Fizz, Boom, Read . . . About Nature

June 20 • Friday • 9 AM–12 NOON

No registration required (all ages)

Explore the secret world of caves and the hidden wonders of prairies and the animals that live in these habitats as we team with the Springfield-Greene County Library during their summer reading program, *Fizz, Boom, Read*. Bring your entire family and have fun enjoying activities, stories, crafts, and more. Drop by anytime and plan on spending at least an hour inside and outside. The Mobile Library will be present during the program so bring your library card.

Nature Art With A Chinese Brushstroke

June 21 • Saturday • 1–2:30 PM (ages 8 and up)

2:45–4:15 PM (ages 15 and up)

Registration begins June 3

Art instructor and nature enthusiast Hing Wah Hatch will increase your powers of observation as she demonstrates, step-by-step, how to capture the essence of local plants and animals through Chinese-style painting. Participants will go home with more nature knowledge and their own artistic masterpiece.

Conservation Kids' Club–Bee Buzz

June 26 • Thursday • 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins June 3 (ages 7–12)

Bees do far more than sting and make honey. They are an important part of Missouri's ecosystem. Learn bee-related facts, see a live hive, and enjoy a taste of honey during an un-“bee”-lievably cool evening. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.



Celebrate *National Trails Day*® on Saturday, June 7, by taking a hike on a trail near you.

Visit mdc.mo.gov/atlas to discover a trail at a nearby Conservation Area. To learn more about events associated with *National Trails Day*®, visit americanhiking.org.

Trails provide access to the natural world for exploration, nature education, family fun, solitude, inspiration, health benefits, and much more.

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center

483 Hatchery Road, Branson, MO 65616 • mdc.mo.gov/node/290



The Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center is located on 221 acres in Branson off Highway 165 next to Table Rock Dam. Outdoors, visitors will experience an active fish hatchery with 700,000 rainbow and brown trout in 30 pools with opportunities to feed the fish. Indoors, enjoy a 3,500 gallon aquarium and hands-on nature exhibits and purchase hunting and fishing permits. The area also features four hiking trails, a picnic area, a boat ramp, and access to Lake Taneycomo.

FACILITY HOURS:

Memorial Day–Labor Day

Sunday–Saturday: 9 AM–6 PM

Remainder of Year

Sunday–Saturday: 9 AM–5 PM

AREA AND TRAIL HOURS:

4 AM–10 PM

The area is open to fishing 24 hours daily, but special permits and regulations do apply. Check the current fishing regulations or call for details.

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-334-4865, Ext. 0, to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

FISHING

LAKE TANEYCOMO:

Before fishing on Lake Taneycomo, become familiar with the regulations and restrictions. Come by for a free brochure of the entire lake including fishing accesses. For specific details about trout fishing here and across the state, visit mdc.mo.gov/node/5603.

May and June Events

Hunger Games II

May 17 • Saturday • 10 AM–12 NOON

Registration required (families and scouts with ages 11–18)

This is the second of our “build upon” programs which feature skills from the book/movie *Hunger Games*. This will be a safe, teen-friendly hike for both girls and boys. During the hike, small groups get to accomplish a variety of outdoor skills. The event will conclude with samples of foods cooked over a fire started by participants. No previous outdoor skill experience is required. Bring a water bottle and dress for the weather.

Lightning Bugs

May 23 • Friday • 7–9 PM

Registration required (all ages)

What are those tiny flashlights in the air, flitting here and there? What is the difference between a lightning bug and a firefly? What makes them light up? Are they really flies? Where do they live? Have you ever caught one? These are some of the most fascinating insects to both kids and adults. Join us as we discuss fireflies/lightning bugs, bioluminescence, and catch some for an up-close look.

Family Fishing Fair

June 7 • Saturday • 9 AM–2 PM

No registration required (Families, only ages 15 and under may fish)

Join us for our annual free event where you get to fish in a stocked pond and learn how to be a better angler. In addition to being able to go fishing with your family, several activity stations will help you learn how to tie knots, fillet and cook fish, bait and fly-cast, rig up a pole, make fish print art, and fish ethically. Free goodie bags will be given to every kid and there will be a drawing for a free rod/reel combo at the end of the day. There will be a limited number of loaner fishing poles, but you won't have to wait if you bring your own pole and cooler. The *My First Fish* station is for anyone who catches their very first fish. Bring your first fish to this station and you will have your photo taken and a certificate will be mailed to you. At noon there will be a special performance by the *Fishin' Magicians* who will introduce you and your family to the importance of water resources and amaze you with their fun magic. Call for more details.



Year of the Salamander



When you think of amphibians, salamanders are probably not the first group you think of. Unlike their frog and toad cousins, salamanders have tails which make them look a lot like lizards. Like toads and frogs, salamanders have moist skin, backbones, four limbs, and lack scales. Most amphibians—not all—live a dual life in the water and on land.

Worldwide, the United States is home to more salamander species than any other country. Most of the U.S. salamanders are found in the Ozarks and Appalachian Mountains. Missouri is home to 19 species of

salamanders and most live right here in the Ozarks. This means that here in southwest Missouri, we have one of the best places in the world to find salamanders.

Salamanders contribute to many food webs because they are both prey and predators. All salamanders are carnivores and feed on a wide variety of foods which in turn contributes energy input for fragile habitats such as caves and springs. Salamanders are of particular interest to scientists because of their ability to grow limbs and tails. Probably the most important thing salamanders do for all ecosystems is serve as a living indicator of the health of the environment. Their moist skin and eggs have a low tolerance for pollution or toxins. If a habitat is being degraded, the loss of salamanders is often the first sign of trouble.

There are several ways to be more involved. One way is to take part in the conservation promotion of “Year of the Salamander” at YearoftheSalamander.org. Promoted by Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC), their mission is to raise awareness and interest in salamander conservation, education, research, and appreciation. Another great salamander resource is mdc.mo.gov/node/73 and click on “Reptiles and Amphibians.” You will be very pleased with viewing photos of some of the beautiful and unique salamanders that call Missouri their home.

We hope that everyone will take the time to learn about these unique and interesting amphibians this year. Whether you are driving down a country road on a cool rainy evening or moving an old rotten log in your backyard, take the time to look down and take notice of our amazing salamanders. Being in the world's “hot spot” for salamanders makes 2014 all the more reason to appreciate and share this remarkable critter in this “Year of the Salamander.”

— John Miller, Interpretive Center Manager

Southwest Regional Office

2630 N. Mayfair Avenue, Springfield, MO 65803 • mdc.mo.gov/node/257

Stream Fishing

Missouri's stream black bass season is a popular outdoor pastime that begins with little fanfare each year. If you're not a stream angler, you may not have heard of the state's stream black bass season, which starts Saturday, May 24, and runs through the end of February. This season, which applies to most of the streams in southern Missouri, allows anglers to keep some of the black bass that thrive in those waterways. Limits vary according to species and some designated stream areas have special restrictions.

Though this season opens on the fourth Saturday each May with little publicity, some Ozarkers have a greater love for this season than any other fishing event. Of course, you can fish a stream anytime during the year, you don't have to wait until late May. The difference is that outside the dates of this season, you have to release the black bass you catch in this part of the state. (In some portions of the state—primarily the north and extreme southeast—you can keep black bass caught in streams throughout the year. Check the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* for details.) Smallmouth bass are the primary focus of this season, but largemouth bass and spotted bass (also called Kentucky bass) can be found in some streams. Rock bass (also called goggle-eye) are another favored stream catch, although this fish is not a species of black bass and, thus, can be caught and kept all year.

As mentioned earlier, some designated stream areas have special restrictions. Your nearest Department of Conservation office or contact person can provide specifics on stream fishing regulations in your area. A handy guide for stream anglers is the Department of Conservation's *A Paddler's Guide to Missouri* book. This publication, which can be purchased at the Department of Conservation's Southwest Regional Office in Springfield and the Springfield Conservation Nature Center, provides floating information about streams in the Ozarks. Another Department of Conservation booklet, *A Summary of Missouri Fishing Regulations*, is a free publication that serves as a good overview of the state's fishing guidelines. Stream fishing information can also be found on the Department of Conservation's website at mdc.mo.gov.

—Francis Skalicky, Media Specialist



The Southwest Regional Office is conveniently located just west of the intersection of US-65 and Kearney in Springfield. The public may obtain information on land management, nuisance wildlife, educational opportunities, river and pond management, and more, as well as purchase hunting and fishing permits and obtain area brochures for Conservation Department areas.

HOURS: Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM
Closed all state holidays

PHONE: 417-895-6880



Free Fishing Days June 7 and 8

Any person may fish state waters without permit, trout permit, and prescribed daily tag during *Free Fishing Days*. It's the perfect opportunity to try a new sport or introduce someone to fishing. Special permits still may apply at some county, city, or private areas.

Here are opportunities to introduce kids to fishing.

May

Kids' Fishing Day

May 3 • Saturday • 6:30 AM–8:15 PM

Bennett Spring Hatchery and State Park (Lebanon, MO)

Call 417-532-4418 for details

Kids' Fishing Day

May 17 • Saturday • 6:30 AM–8:15 PM

Roaring River State Park (Cassville, MO)

Call 417-847-2430 for details

June

Kids' Fishing Fun Day

June 7 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Site to be determined (Springfield, MO)

Call 417-864-1049 for details

Kids' Fishing Day

June 7 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON

Kellogg Lake (Carthage, MO)

See page 2 for details

Family Fishing Fair

June 7 • Saturday • 9 AM–2 PM

Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery (Branson, MO)

See page 6 for details

We help people discover nature.

We work with you and
for you to sustain healthy
forests, fish, and wildlife.

Nature Connections Newsletter

To begin receiving the newsletter by mail, call any of the offices listed in the newsletter and leave your name and address.

To begin receiving the newsletter electronically by e-mail, go to <mdc.mo.gov/govdelivery>, enter your email address, and subscribe to "News, Events and Newsletters—Southwest Region." There is also an option to enter your phone number and receive by SMS/Text Message.



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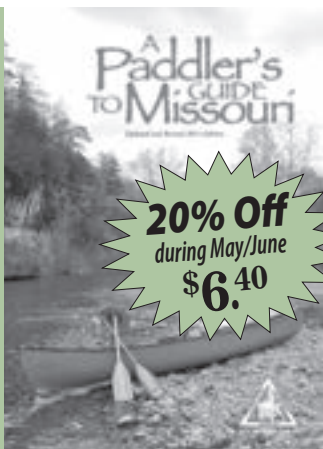
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Missouri Department of Conservation



Featuring
58 rivers
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streams
to canoe
and
kayak

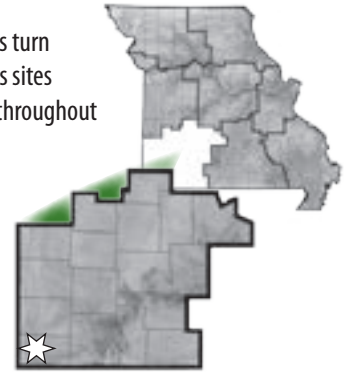


Available at the
Springfield Conservation Nature
Center and Southwest Regional Office.

Conservation Showcase:

Elk River Stream Accesses

LOCATION/PURPOSE: In summer, many outdoor enthusiasts turn their recreational attention to the more than 280 stream access sites managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) throughout the state. The Missouri Department of Conservation also has Community Assistance Program (CAP) agreements with communities on some stream access sites the Department doesn't own. The Elk River watershed in the far southwest corner of Missouri is a very popular destination for floating and fishing. It boasts six public access points; all provide a parking area and some manner of watercraft access. Town Hole Access in Anderson and Lanagan City Park are cooperatively managed CAP accesses located on Indian Creek. Deep Ford Access is located on Big Sugar Creek. City of Pineville Elk River (CAP) Access, Mount Shira Access, and Cowskin Access are on the Elk River. Regardless of where they're situated and how they're administrated, the purpose of access sites is the same—to provide access to area streams.



ABOUT THESE AREAS: These accesses are all less than 50 acres in size. Cowskin, Lanagan, and Pineville accesses feature concrete boat ramps where both canoes and motorized boats can be launched but only Cowskin is on a large enough stream where motorized boats could reasonably expect to be utilized most of the year. Most Elk River accesses are small and offer primarily a watercraft launch area and bank-fishing opportunities. A map of these stream accesses can be found at <mdc.mo.gov/node/5894>. Floating and stream-fishing enthusiasts can learn more about these and other stream access locations in *A Paddler's Guide to Missouri*. This Department of Conservation publication can be purchased online through the Nature Shop at <mdcnatureshop.com> or at Missouri Department of Conservation offices and nature centers.

FISHING: Anglers who use access sites as entry points can catch a variety of species. Rock bass (goggle-eye), black bass, channel catfish, and longear sunfish are among the most common catches. In addition to statewide species regulations, Elk River watershed stream anglers need to be mindful of the smallmouth bass special management area (SMA). All 22 miles of the Elk River in Missouri has a daily limit of two black bass, fifteen inches or longer. Canoe anglers also need to remember that Indian Creek, managed under statewide regulations, empties into Elk River and at that point the SMA regulation immediately goes into effect. Check at your nearest Department of Conservation office, with a conservation agent, or online at <mdc.mo.gov/node/3104> for fishing regulations.

Angling for black bass (especially smallmouth bass) is excellent on streams in the Elk River watershed. Pole and line, fly-casting, spinning/spin-casting, or bait-casting methods all can be used successfully. Crayfish and small fish are primary prey items fed upon by stream smallmouths so capturing a few to use as bait or using lures that imitate them are the most effective ways to be successful. Fly-casters usually use floating poppers and hair flies, mid-water minnow imitators, bottom-hugging crayfish imitators, and hair leeches. Rock bass (also commonly called goggle-eye) are present in good numbers but rarely exceed eight inches. Worms and crayfish are very effective live baits and small jigs, crankbaits, and inline spinners can work well too. Cast around fallen trees and large rocks to target rock bass. Channel catfish angling is excellent in the Elk River from below the dam at Noel downstream to the Oklahoma state line. A variety of baits will work including live and cut bait, crayfish, shrimp, worms, and prepared baits. Cast your bait near deeper areas around fallen trees, outside bends, and large rocks to improve your chances of encountering catfish.

—Rick Horton, Fisheries Management Biologist