

# Nature Connections

News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • May/June 2015



Imagine for a moment that it is a beautiful spring day. The sun is shining, the weather is warm, and somehow among the chaos of family obligations, intramural sports, and the myriad of other activities to which you or your kids are beholden, your family has managed to find a free Saturday. Everybody is itching to get outside. So, what do you do?

Go fishing, of course! What better way to spend quality time outdoors in the Ozarks? There is just one problem; it's been years since you have been fishing and the last time you saw your fishing rods they were encased in a cocoon of cobwebs in the back of your basement. No worries! The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has just the thing to wet your line. MDC's *Discover Nature—Fishing* program has everything your family needs to discover, or rediscover, the ease and joy of fishing.

*Discover Nature—Fishing* is MDC's newest angler education program aimed at giving families the basic skills they need to go fishing. The program is geared towards families with youth ages 7 to 15 who are looking to take advantage of Missouri's many angling opportunities, but don't quite know where to



## Discover Nature by Rediscovering Fishing

start. Don't worry mom or dad if you are not the most confident in your fishing skills either, parents and guardians are encouraged to enroll in the program with the kids.

Here is how it works. *Discover Nature—Fishing* is a four-lesson series which covers basic casting, knot tying, fishing tackle, proper fish handling, fish identification and conservation, fishing with lures, and Missouri's fishing regulations. Each two-hour lesson includes formal instruction,

engaging activities, and hands-on fishing led by a group of MDC fishing instructors. There is no need to rummage through the garage or basement to dust off the old tackle box. The Conservation Department provides all of the fishing poles, tackle, and bait required for the program. Participants need only bring personal items such as water, sunscreen,

and bug spray and a desire to learn about the essentials of angling.

Busy schedule? No problem. There will be plenty of opportunities to get involved. *Discover Nature—Fishing* lessons will be offered on Saturday mornings throughout the summer. Programs will be held at stocked fishing ponds in the Springfield, Branson, and Joplin areas. Participants are asked to attend Lesson One first, but after completion you can sign up for subsequent lessons at your family's convenience. Don't send the youngster alone though. Whether you are just coming to watch or you are enrolled in the class with your family, a parent or guardian must be present with the child during the lessons.

The *Discover Nature—Fishing* program is entirely free; however, registration is required and class sizes are limited to 20 participants. You can find out more information about the *Discover Nature—Fishing* program in southwest Missouri, including event dates and registration details, by visiting <mdc.mo.gov> or by calling MDC's Southwest Regional Office at 417-895-6880.

—Dave Woods, Fisheries Management Biologist



MDC fishing instructor teaches a beginning angler how to bait a hook.



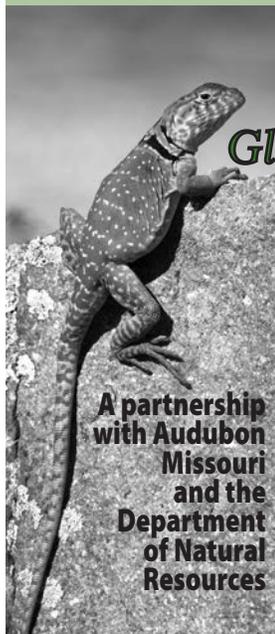
The Joplin Conservation Office, located in the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center, is your local connection to Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife. Stop by and purchase hunting and fishing permits, attend a nature program, go for a hike, enjoy a picnic, or access Shoal Creek. Within the 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.



**A partnership with Audubon Missouri and the Department of Natural Resources**

*May and June Events*

**Missouri Stream Team Introductory Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Workshop**

May 2 • Saturday • 8:30 AM–5 PM  
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)  
*Register online at <mostreamteam.org>. For more information, contact Susan Higgins, Department of Natural Resources at <Susan.Higgins@dnr.mo.gov>, 573-526-1002 or 800-781-1989 (voicemail). (ages 14 and up; ages 14–17 must be accompanied by an adult)*  
Here is your chance to learn how we all affect water quality. The workshop consists of six hours of classroom instruction and one to two hours on a stream to demonstrate sampling methods, get wet, and learn about aquatic life. The level of material presented is not designed for children; however, older youth accompanied by an adult are welcome. The only requirements for the workshop are that you have an interest in water quality and the ability to monitor a stream after attending the workshop. Attendees will qualify to receive monitoring equipment that includes a kick net, collecting vials, invertebrate photographs, forceps, and magnifiers.

**Plein Air Paint Out**

May 9 • Saturday • 9:30 AM–1 PM  
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)  
*No registration required (all ages)*  
The glades are blooming, trees are flowering, and there's no better time to be painting in Wildcat Park. Works created during this event will be on display in the center during the months of June and July. All skill levels welcome. Park visitors are welcome to stop and watch the artists at work—you may be inspired! *In case of inclement weather, pop-up tents will be available.*

**Kellogg Lake Kids' Fishing Day**

June 6 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON  
Kellogg Lake (Carthage)  
*No registration required (families, ages 15 and under may fish)*  
Join us for the 14<sup>th</sup> 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 will be available at registration. 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. Kids participating in education station activities earn 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!



**You Can Canoe**

June 8 • Monday • 6–7:30 PM  
Kellogg Lake (Carthage)  
*Registration required (ages 8 and up; ages 8–17 must be accompanied by an adult)*  
Learn the basics of canoeing—from planning and safety tips to paddling techniques. Gain experience and confidence so you can discover the beautiful creeks and rivers in southwest Missouri. Dress for a water activity (creek shoes and clothes to get wet) and bring sunscreen. Canoes, paddles, and life vests will be provided.

**Glade Day Events**

**Native Plant Sale**

May 23 • Saturday • 8 AM–2 PM  
*No registration required (all ages)*  
Purchase beautiful and beneficial native plants for all areas of your landscape from the Missouri Wildflower Nursery. You can be guaranteed to get the plants you want by placing your order with the nursery at least a week in advance and they will deliver it to the center on May 23. Go to <mwildflowers.net> to view their catalog and place any pre-orders. Join us for this fun and educational event designed to help you discover the beauty and value of native plants.

**Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)**

**Naturescaping Workshop**

May 23 • Saturday • 9:30–11:30 AM  
*Registration required (ages 12 and up; ages 12–17 must be accompanied by an adult)*  
Adding native plantings such as a rain garden to your yard will help create valuable habitat for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife, as well as help reduce flooding and sediment and other pollutants harmful to local streams. Learn why and how to include native plantings in your landscape, how to install a rain garden, what plants to select, and how they benefit wildlife. Handouts will be available.

**Glade Day**

May 23 • Saturday • 12 NOON–2 PM  
*No registration required (all ages)*  
Come explore the unique chert glade ecosystem found in Wildcat Park. Discover the ingredients it takes to make a glade while attending "Recipe for a Glade," a 30-minute program presented indoors at 12 noon. Then venture outside for a walk along Silver Creek Chert Glade and visit discovery stations located beside the trail featuring glade animals, plants, and glade management techniques. Mascot, Cherty the Collared Lizard, will also be present to meet all of the children! You won't want to miss out on this "Glade-tastic" day!

# Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

4897 N. Farm Road 61, Ash Grove, MO 65604 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/288](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/288)



## May and June Events

### Archery Shooting Basics

May 2 • 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 10 • 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.

### Missouri Black Powder Society Shoot

May 29–31 • Friday–Sunday

9 AM–4:30 PM

Registration required (all ages)

Join the members of the Missouri Black Powder Society for a fun-filled event and learn how to load and fire a muzzleloading shotgun. This is the spring State Shotgun Shoot so there will be lots of different firearms and equipment on display and being used in the competition. For more information about this event contact Larry Sunby at [missouriblackpowdersociety@yahoo.com](mailto:missouriblackpowdersociety@yahoo.com).

### .22 Rifle Shooting Basics

May 30 • 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 Basics

June 4 • Thursday • 6–10 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. You will not need a firearm or ammunition at this classroom-only session, but you may bring your own or use ours for the shooting portion at a later date. If you have not previously participated in our Handgun Basics program, you may participate in this program.

### .22 Rifle Shooting Basics

June 6 • 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.

### Shotgun Shooting Basics

June 13 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (all ages)

Join us to discover the joys of shotgun shooting. We will discuss shotgun nomenclature, stance, dominant eye, mounting, moving the shotgun, and much more. You may use our shotguns or plan to use your own. Please make sure your shotgun is completely unloaded before arriving.

### Day at the Range And Outdoor Adventure Fair

June 20 • 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](http://SouthwestMissouriDayattheRange.com).

### Free Shooting Day

June 21 • 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.

### Holiday Closings

May 8 • Truman Day

May 25 • Memorial Day



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](mailto: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.

# Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/287](http://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 those on the waiting list.

## May Events

### Conservation TEEN Club Wildlife And Photography Hike

May 2 • Saturday • 10 AM–3 PM

Registration begins April 15 (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



We are inviting everyone—families and individuals of all ages—to participate in *Your Big Year* to identify and learn more about Missouri birds. Look for this symbol for bird-related programs.

## May Events

### Primitive Skills Series Flint Knapping Demonstration

May 3 • 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.

### Birds Passing Through Warbler Walk

May 5 • Tuesday • 8:30–11 AM

Registration begins April 15 (ages 8–adult)

Here's an opportunity to see migrating warblers. Many species of warblers don't stay long, so learn to identify these passing birds with Naturalist Bo Brown. Program will consist of thirty minutes indoors followed by a guided trail hike. Bring field guides and binoculars if you have them.

### Badge Bonanza

May 5 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM

Registration begins April 15 (ages 5–adult)

Attention all scouting and youth organizations! Here's a program to help you earn nature badges. The focus will be Missouri plants. Topics include tree identification, leaf rubbings, poisonous plants, seeds, and more. Activities are also open to the public.

### Hiking Club

May 9 • Saturday • 8:15 AM–5 PM

Registration begins May 1 (Ages 18–adult)

See the spectacular scenery that Ha Ha Tonka State Park has to offer. Volunteer Naturalist Carmen Hallock leads this five-mile hike. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Hike is rated as moderate to difficult.**

### Intermediate Nature Photography

May 9 • Saturday • 9 AM–12 NOON

Registration begins May 1 (ages 15–adult)

Attention aspiring nature photographers! Volunteer Naturalist and photographer Art (A.D.) Daniels is offering this workshop to share his routines of nature photography. Time will be spent both in the classroom and the field learning about this fascinating subject. Bring your camera, lenses, and tripod if you have them. Participants should have a working knowledge of their camera for this intermediate level course.

### Summer Hummers

May 9 • Saturday • 3–4:30 PM

Registration begins May 1 (all ages)

Hummingbirds have returned to the Ozarks! Join bird bander Sarah Driver as she talks about hummingbirds and attempts to capture and band some.

### Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

May 13 • 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.

### Babes In The Woods

May 22 • Friday • 10–11 AM

May 23 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

Registration begins May 1 (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!

### Our Nesting Birds

May 27 • Wednesday • 9–11 AM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 7–adult)

Late spring and early summer are busy times for nesting birds. Volunteer Naturalist Myra Scroggs will help find common nesting birds, as well as some that are not so easy to spot, during this indoor and outdoor program.

### Conservation Kids' Club Water Cycle Boogie

May 28 • Thursday • 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 7–12)

Where does water go after a rain? How long does it take for one raindrop to make it from the clouds to your cup? Join us as we explore the wet and wonderful world of water.

## Temporary Exhibits

May

### Reflections of the Ozarks

Nature Photography by *Shiloh J. Smith*

<[shilohj.zenfolio.com](mailto:shilohj.zenfolio.com)>

June

### Southwest Missouri Wildlife

Nature Photography by *Dennis Wescott*

May **Little Acorns** programs are listed on page 5.

# Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/287](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/287)

## June Events

### National Trails Day

June 6 • Saturday • 9 AM–4 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Spend a couple of hours hiking and testing your nature knowledge to celebrate *National Trails Day!* Trek our trails and answer nature-related questions along the way. Stop by the nature center anytime to pick up your question sheet and then return to check your answers, claim your prize, and learn about different conservation areas around Springfield.

### Primitive Skills Series

#### Fire And Flintstone

June 7 • Sunday • 1–3 PM

Registration begins May 15 (ages 12–adult)

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.

### Conservation TEEN Club

#### Overnight Camping Trip

June 10–11 • Wednesday, 3 PM–Thursday, 1 PM

Registration begins June 2 (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. 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.

### Babes In The Woods

June 12 • Friday • 10–11 AM

June 13 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

Registration begins June 2 (ages 0–2)



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

### Hiking Club

June 13 • Saturday • 8:15 AM–12 NOON

Registration begins June 2 (ages 18–adult)

Hike at Bois D'Arc Conservation Area with Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring water and snacks and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Hike is three miles and rated moderate in difficulty.**

### Medicinal And Edible Plants Of The Ozarks

June 16 • Tuesday • 5–6:15 PM or 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins June 2 (ages 15–adult)

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.

### Tree Pest Clinic

June 17 • 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.

### Insects–Nature's Heroes

June 19 • Friday • 9 AM–12 NOON

No registration required (all ages)

Explore the super powers of some common insects as we team with the Springfield-Greene County Library during their summer reading program, *Every Hero Has A Story*. Bring your entire family and have fun enjoying indoor/outdoor activities, stories, crafts, and more as you discover the heroic work of the insect world. Drop by anytime and plan on spending at least an hour. The Mobile Library will be present during the program so bring your library card.

### Conservation Kids' Club

#### Lions And Tigers And Bears, Oh My!

June 25 • Thursday • 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins June 2 (ages 7–12)

While ant **lions**, **tiger** beetles, and woolly **bears** are real, they are nothing to fear. In fact, there's little to fear in the great outdoors, but there are a few things to avoid. Learn all about poison ivy, ticks, chiggers, and other outdoor hazards during this indoor program and outdoor hike. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

Please limit to one per month.

## Little Acorns

Programs are 45 minutes in length.

## May Events

### Bigmouth Bullfrogs

May 22 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

May 23 • Saturday • 11 AM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 3–6)

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

### Valuable Vultures

May 29 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

May 30 • Saturday • 11 AM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 3–6)

 Vultures are often associated with grim situations, but they actually provide a great service to nature. Come learn about these big birds and how valuable they are!

## June Events

### Let's Go Camping

June 5 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

June 6 • Saturday • 11 AM

Registration begins May 15 (ages 3–6)

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.

### Who's Awake When You're Asleep?

June 10 • Wednesday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

Registration begins June 2 (ages 3–6)

Come dressed in your pajamas and join Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan as she dispels any "jitters" children might have about nighttime "critters." Kids will learn about some creatures of the night and discover that nighttime can be neat!

### Otter Chaos

June 20 • Saturday • 11 AM

June 26 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

Registration begins June 2 (ages 3–6)

Join us as we take a peek into the very busy lives of river otters. We'll learn about what they eat and where they live.

Ms. Ladybug is on vacation this month



# Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center

483 Hatchery Road, Branson, MO 65616 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/290](http://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](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/5603).

## Family Fishing Fair

Saturday • June 6 • 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 to fish 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.

## Fishing For Sunfish

There is no better way to introduce someone to fishing than by catching sunfish. In addition to being plentiful in most ponds, lakes, and streams, they also give a good tug on the end of your line. Sunfish can be caught most of the year and are very tasty.

There are several types of sunfish in southwest Missouri. These include green sunfish, longear sunfish, bluegill, and redear sunfish. While not technically correct, some people occasionally call them "perch" or "bream." Unlike a bass, which is more of a long narrow shape, most sunfish are short and round. The largest sunfish caught in our state was a three-pound bluegill caught in a farm pond in Columbia.

It does not take much fishing gear to catch sunfish. Using a basic fishing pole with 6- to 8-pound test line, size 8 hook, one sinker, and a bobber is about all you need. The best bait for sunfish is earthworms and crickets. For detailed instructions on how to set up a pole, bait a hook, and what aquatic habitat to look for, visit [mdc.mo.gov/node/6218](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/6218) or look for *Discover Nature—Fishing* programs in your area at [mdc.mo.gov/node/27175](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/27175).

You will quickly find that catching sunfish can be rewarding and fun for both beginners as well as experienced anglers. So if the trout or bass are not biting, try to catch the best kept secret of the fishing world—sunfish.

—John Miller, Interpretive Center Manager



Bluegill fishing at Table Rock Lake

## May and June Events

### Outdoor Photography

May 16 • Saturday • 9–11 AM

*Registration required (families, all ages)*

Here is your chance to learn how to take better photos in nature. Local photographers will share tips on how to take and create breathtaking photos of natural items. Each participant will take photos to share and discuss how to make possible improvements. Don't forget to bring your digital camera.

### Discovery Hike

June 19 • Friday • 7–9 PM

*Registration required (families, all ages)*

This late-afternoon hike will feature a scavenger hunt to locate a variety of natural objects. In addition to the hike on a low impact half-mile trail, we will also investigate some of the invertebrates that live in and along Lake Taneycomo. Bring bug spray and a desire to look for critters as the sun begins to set.

# Southwest Regional Office

2630 N. Mayfair Avenue, Springfield, MO 65803 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/257](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/257)

## Reservoir Crappie Fishing

Some aspects of the state's outdoor world change as spring turns into summer, but one fact remains constant—Missouri anglers love to fish for crappie. Black bass may get much of the fishing publicity in Missouri, but angler surveys for a number of years have shown that crappie are among the most sought-after sport fish species in the state. Crappie enthusiasm takes a sharp rise in the spring, somewhere around early April, when these fish start to head for shallow waters to spawn and, for most anglers, it doesn't let up over summer. Part of the reason for crappie's appeal is their eagerness to take a lure. They're also great table fare.

Missouri is actually home to two types of crappie—white crappie (*Pomoxis annularis*) and black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*). Both can be found in reservoirs throughout the state, but white crappie tend to be more abundant in most areas. White crappie do not school, but instead congregate in loose aggregations around submerged trees, boat docks, and other suitable cover. They feed primarily on small fish, aquatic insects and microcrustaceans. The proportions of these food staples vary with locality, season, and the age of the crappie. Adults depend heavily on small fish. Small gizzard shad and threadfin shad are the staple food item for adult crappie in many reservoirs. Due to the upward slanting of their mouths, crappie concentrate on food items swimming at the same level or above them in depth. They will often follow behind a food item and slurp it into their mouths.

After the egg-laying season, through much of September, crappie tend to stay in brush located in 15–20 feet of water. To fish for them, concentrate on standing timber along creek channels and on brush piles out in the main lake. Vertical jigging works well when fishing in brush. During spring, you might find crappie grouped off the bank around brushy structure and suspended at about the same depth as other spawning fish. The Missouri Department of Conservation has placed brush piles and other fish habitat structures in many Missouri lakes. These often hold large concentrations of crappie. A comprehensive map of these structures can be found at [mdc.mo.gov/node/10182](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/10182).

In Missouri's large reservoirs, crappie can also be found around concrete bridge piers in summer. Vertically jig a minnow next to the pier, beginning at a depth of about 10 feet and slowly work deeper until you locate fish. If you're not successful in locating and catching fish after several attempts, move to another pier.

Anglers should remember that Table Rock, Bull Shoals, and Stockton Lakes have a 10-inch minimum length limit while Lake of the Ozarks and Pomme de Terre and Truman Lakes have a 9-inch minimum limit. The reason the length limits vary is because studies have shown the crappie in these respective reservoirs have different growth rates. The daily limit is 15 at all of the above-mentioned reservoirs.

Information on crappie and other sport fish can also be found at [mdc.mo.gov/node/89](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/89).

— 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 6 and 7

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.

### Kids' Fishing Day

May 2 • Saturday • 6:30 AM–8:15 PM

**Bennett Spring Hatchery and State Park (Lebanon, MO)**

Call 417-532-4418 for details

### Kids' Fishing Day

June 5 • Friday • 9 AM–12 NOON and 1–3 PM

**Neosho National Fish Hatchery (Neosho, MO)**

Call 417-451-0554 for details

### Family Fishing Fair

June 6 • Saturday • 9 AM–2 PM

**Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery (Branson, MO)**

See page 6 for details

### Kids' Fishing Day

May 16 • Saturday • 6:30 AM–8:15 PM

**Roaring River State Park (Cassville, MO)**

Call 417-847-2430 for details

### Kellogg Lake Kids' Fishing Day

June 6 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON

**Kellogg Lake (Carthage, MO)**

See page 2 for details

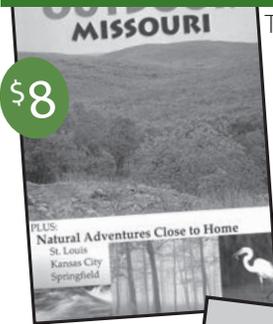
### Kids' Fishing Day

August 15 • Saturday • 7 AM–8 PM

**Roaring River State Park (Cassville, MO)**

Call 417-847-2430 for details

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## Nature Connections Newsletter

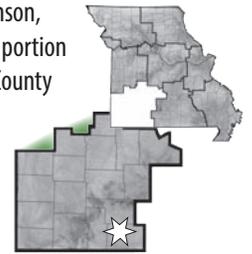
To begin receiving the newsletter by mail, call any of the offices listed in the newsletter and leave your name and address.

To begin receiving the newsletter electronically by e-mail, go online to <mdc.mo.gov/govdelivery>, enter your email and subscribe to "News, Events and Newsletters - Southwest Region."

### Conservation Showcase:

## The Lewis Family, Dean, Anna Mae and David D. Lewis Memorial Conservation Area

**LOCATION:** This conservation area is located about 3 miles northeast of Branson, adjacent to the Village of Merriam Woods. Bull Creek runs through the south portion of the area. To get to the parking lot, start at the Missouri 465/US 65/Taney County Route F intersection on the north side of Branson. Take Taney County Route F east 3.4 miles, then US 160 southeast 0.25 mile, then Missouri 176 south 0.67 mile to the parking lot located on west side of Missouri 176. The area is about 2.6 miles upstream from where Bull Creek enters Lake Taneycomo.



This beautiful area is made up of rolling hills and ridgetops as well as a bottomland along Bull Creek. It has a wide variety of wildlife habitats including open post oak savannas, glades, woodlands, and upland and bottomland fields.

**HISTORY:** This area is fairly new to the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) having been generously donated in 2012 by the late David D. Lewis. It was his wish to leave the property to MDC as a memorial to his family and to provide a place for the public to enjoy activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and nature viewing.

**FISHING:** Bull Creek passes through or is adjacent to this area for a distance of about 0.5 mile. It provides bank fishing opportunities to catch bass, goggle-eye (rock bass), bluegill, and suckers. During the winter and early spring months, it may be possible to catch rainbow trout that travel up Bull Creek from Lake Taneycomo. Motor boat access upstream from Lake Taneycomo is limited due to the shallow depth of Bull Creek in that area. However, canoes and inflatable boats should be able to navigate the creek except during low-water periods in the creek. Fishing, in general, is considered fair.

**HUNTING:** This conservation area is open to statewide regulations for hunting except firearms discharging single projectiles are prohibited. Deer hunting is limited to archery only. Turkey, as well as other game birds and small game, may be hunted using a shotgun during the designated seasons. The area has fair populations of deer, turkey, rabbits, and squirrels.

**HIKING:** There is a 1.65 mile hiking trail/woods road beginning at the parking lot and ending at Bull Creek. This trail is for hiking only. Horses, ATVs, and mountain bikes are prohibited. It is marked by metal posts with hiker symbol signs attached. The trail is considered to be of moderate difficulty with some rocky sections that may make walking more challenging. It initially travels west from the parking lot and crosses a small, wet-weather stream and then turns southwest and follows the main ridgetop to the creek. With the exception of a few steep sections, the trail gradually descends to the creek beginning at an elevation of about 960 feet at the parking lot and ending at around 700 feet at Bull Creek. This is not a loop trail, so to return to the parking lot located along Missouri 176, you must travel the same route back. The total length of a hike to Bull Creek and back will be about 3.3 miles. Hikers might also enjoy looking for a few Geocache sites located along the trail.

**NATURE VIEWING AND PHOTOGRAPHY:** Because of the variety of habitats on this area, there are many plants and animals that you can observe and photograph along the trail. Animals that you might see are deer, turkey, rabbits, squirrels, bald eagles, and vultures to name a few. You may wish to photograph wildflowers along the trail during the growing season. When you arrive at Bull Creek, you will find a pristine, high-quality Ozark stream. Except in times of high water flow, the creek is fairly clear and much of the time you can easily see the rock bottom. You might also see fish such as suckers and goggle-eye. The stream bank and riparian zone along Bull Creek is thick with giant cane. Giant cane makes excellent habitat for the state endangered bird, Swainson's warbler. Bottomland areas that support cane are also good habitat for other birds such as hooded warblers, Louisiana waterthrushes, Carolina wrens, wood ducks, and great blue herons. The stream bank is also vegetated with trees such as American sycamore, black walnut, and flowering dogwood.

For more information about the Lewis Family, Dean, Anna Mae and David D. Lewis Memorial Conservation Area, visit the website at <mdc.mo.gov/a201302>.

—Greg Cassell, Resource Forester