Spring 2015
March 2015

The Fledgling

The official Newsletter of the Missouri Bluebird Society

The Missouri Bluebird Society is an Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

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MOBS
PO BOX 105830
Jefferson City, MO 65110
www.missouribluebird.org

Letter from the President:

Dear MOBS Members,

Well , in a matter of a few weeks we watched Bluebirds in our area go from collecting in large groups at bird baths and feeders, (like this picture taken on my deck at home) to bluebirds being quite territorial and claiming nest boxes (like the one in the image below). I am looking forward to this year's conference in Springfield where everyone can share last year's nesting results along with their stories from this past winter. I for one had a good nesting season and a fantastic winter with the most Bluebirds I have ever had at one time. With the lack of natural food and the long stretch of below freezing temperatures, I had 10 to 20 Bluebirds frequent my deck every day for fresh water and snacks during February.

Photo by Steve Garr

*The conference is such a good time to talk with others about their trails and share achievements. One thing I always enjoy at the conference-besides meeting old friends again- is the outreach that Bluebirds have in Missouri. Missouri has such an accomplished history of Bluebird conservation and we are benefiting from the years of dedication of garden clubs and individuals. The Bluebirds we see every day are a result of their dedication to conservation and what we do **now** on our Bluebird Trails is a part of the future for Bluebirds. As we continue to care for bluebird boxes in our yards and on our trails, we are continuing the tradition of Bluebirds in Missouri. Thank you for your continued dedication to helping Bluebirds.*

Steve Garr, MOBS President

Missouri Bluebird Society 2014 / 2015 Officers & Board of Directors

President….Steve Garr steve@birds-i-view.biz 573-638-2473

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2015 Missouri Bluebird Conference!

Join us in the Beautiful Ozarks

July 10th—12th, 2015

The Watershed Center Springfield, MO

Tentative Schedule

Friday, July 10th

6:00 pm….Social time + pick up Packets and Name Badges

6:30 pm—8:30 pm…. "Bluebird Banquet" (Dinner and brief program honoring Missouri's rich Bluebird Heritage!)

Saturday, July 11th

7:15 am…..Bird Walk at the W**atershed Center**
8:30 am……Pick up Name Badges & Packets
9:00 am…..Welcome and elections
9:45 am….. Presentation by Jessica Blomenkamp, MSU Biology major and GLADE program graduate.
10:55 am….Snack Break/Silent Auction bidding!
11:10 am….."Resurgence of the Eastern Bluebird" by MOBS VP, Larry Dobson
12:30 pm…..**Lunch!** (catered to Watershed Center) *Also, Silent Auction Bidding*
2:00 pm…."Birds of the Ozarks" by members of the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society
3:00 pm…. Snack Break/Final Silent Auction Bidding
3:40 pm…... Auction /Raffle Closes! Pick up and pay for your treasures!
6:00 pm…..Saturday evening Social and Dinner (location TBA)

Sunday, July 12th

Morning Field Trip … time and location TBA

Lodging options will be listed in the upcoming "Conference Brochure". The Brochure will contain a Conference Registration Form plus more details on the Field Trips and Conference Speakers!

Painted Bunting

Photos by Jim Rathert

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Birds of the Ozarks!

Greater Roadrunner

Eastern Bluebird

A note from the Conference Chairs:

We are so pleased that the 2015 Conference will take us from a special emphasis on ***Missouri's Bluebird History on Friday evening, right into the FUTURE of Bluebirds in Missouri on Saturday Morning*** *with our lead presentation by Jessica Blomenkamp! Jessica is a third year Missouri State Biology major who established and monitors nest box trails at four different Elementary Schools in the Logan/Rogersville school district. She is a graduate of the GLADE program (read more about that on page 6 of this issue) and a grant from GLADE provided the means for her to initiate her nest box trail project at the schools. Jessica also organized an "Education Day" at each of the schools to teach the students about the nest boxes and cavity nesters. She is sure to be an inspiration to all of us!* ***Steve & Regina Garr, Conference Chairs***

It is not too soon to begin planning for the 2015 MOBS Auction/Raffle! What can you donate? Go ahead and contact our AMAZING Auction/Raffle chairs, Larry and Mary Dobson with your plans. Email: lldobson@aol.com or call 816-331-2888.

2015 Missouri Bluebird Conference *continued from page 2*

Check out this year's venue: "The Watershed Center"

(Descriptions and Info below taken from the Watershed Committee website)

The Watershed Committee of the Ozarks created the Watershed Center at Valley Water Mill Park. This 100-acre parcel is of great geologic and historic interest. It contains a prominent fault zone where streams sink into underground channels. It was the site of a grist mill before the Civil War. And it contains a wide variety of natural and man-made features, **including a seventeen-acre lake, wetlands, spring-fed stream, caves, sinkholes, glades and forests.**

To take advantage of these natural features, a 2 1/2 mile walking trail loops around the entire site, connecting the five major outdoor classrooms or "learning stations," at the spring, wetland, lake, forest and stream. These offer excellent opportunities to get kids and adults outside for some exciting, hands-on learning about our precious water resources.

Ozark streams are the most biologically diverse freshwater streams in the country. We love them for recreation, and rely on them for our drinking water! So let us help you and your group learn about our little Ozark Stream, the South Dry Sac, at the Watershed Center.

At the Watershed Center, we strive to provide age appropriate**, place-based**, **education** about our water resources. Casual visitors can learn about the site through interpretive signage and kiosks located around the park.

Be sure to check out the Website for the Watershed Center (www.thewatershedcommittee.org/thewatershedcenter) and especially the **Interpreter's Guide to the Watershed Center** found on the pull-down menu.

"Team Baffle" from the Missouri Bluebird Society cranked out 15 predator baffles **for the MOBS Nest Box Grant Program** on Sunday, January 4th, in less than two hours!
Many thanks to all who volunteered to assemble these baffles- we had a great time, and our native cavity nesters will reap the benefits.
Steve Garr
MOBS, president

Baffle –Builders : (Front Row left to Right) Janelle Schulte, Linda Patton, Chuck Wright.
(Back row , left to Right) Jim Schulte, David Patton, Tom Halfen, Regina Garr, Steve Garr.

Next Baffle-building Workshop?

Well….email or call Steve Garr if you are interested in helping out and we'll plan another workshop! Contact Steve at: 573-638-2473 or steve@birds-i-view.biz

The following individuals are New MOBS members OR have renewed their membership since our last issue.

We WELCOME our new members and THANK renewing members for their continued support.

Frank Austenfeld, Bernie Bahr, Larry and Sharon Bedford, Joan Bowen, William and Marilyn Brachler, Susan Burk, Luella Bursewicz, Pete and Ginny Culver, Mike and Mary Delacy, Ron and Valerie Dent, Jan and Joe Forneris, Rene Gadino, Vera Gladden, tom Halfen, Robert Hawkins, Lois Kimrey, Mary Kladiva, Lynn McClamroch, Bill Mees, Lowell Miller, Michael O'Keefe, Leland and Elva Osten, Vincent and Jane Perna, Jim Prenger, Dana Ripper and Ethan Duke, Jim Rourke, Greg and Laura Samuel, Stan Scott, Charlie Smith, Steve and Ann Smith, Richard Stratman, Deborah Thompson, Ron Thoreson, Mary Turner, Mary and Hal Williamson, Derry Wolford, Barbara Yates.

New Life Members: David and Linda Patton , Jefferson City, MO
Steve and Regina Garr , Jefferson City, MO

Recent Supporter Memberships: Charles and Sheryl Wright, Holt's Summit, MO
Tom McRoberts, Marshall, MO Leslie Limberg, Wentzville, MO

Recent Donor Memberships: Ken and Ann Littlefield, Jefferson City, MO

MOBS sincerely appreciates ALL of our members!

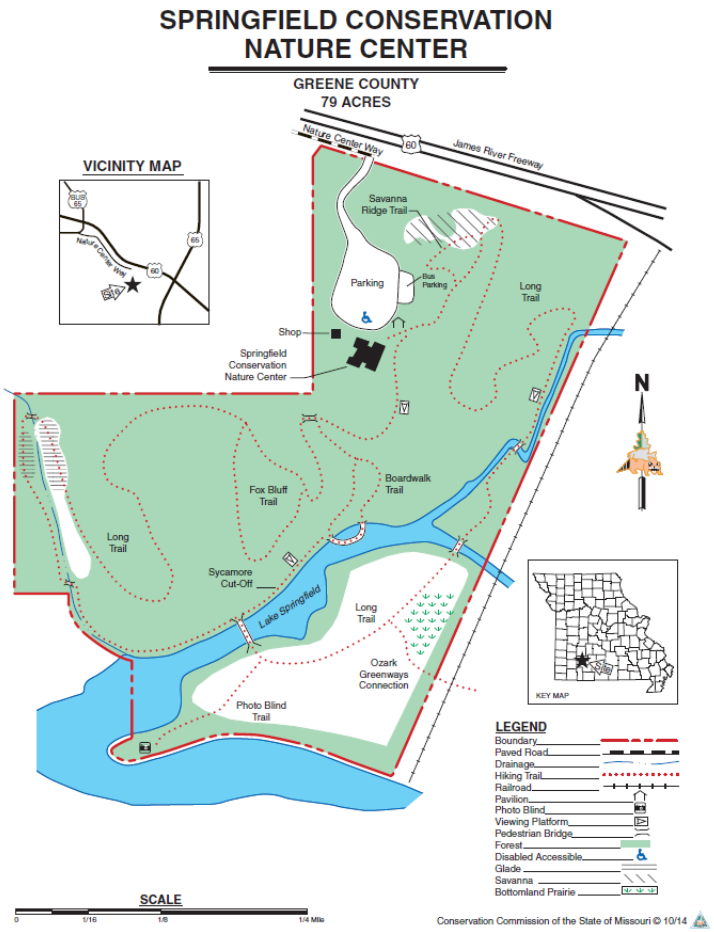
Missouri Bluebird Conference

July 10th—12th , 2015

Things to do in Springfield, Missouri!

The **Springfield Conservation Nature Center** boasts 178 different bird species on their Annotated Checklist of Birds! The property is 79 acres of a great variety of habitats. There is an indoor bird viewing area, three miles of trails, and of course a Nest Box Trail which is monitored weekly and reported to NestWatch.

Springfield Conservation Nature Center
4600 S. Chrisman Ave
Springfield, MO
417-888-4237



Rutledge-Wilson Farm
COMMUNITY PARK
Springfield-Greene County Park Board

3825 W. Farm Road 146 Springfield, MO 65802

The 207-acre farm park was created to provide educational, as well as various recreational resources for the community .

417-837-5949

Lake Springfield Park

5324 S. Kissick Ave.
Springfield, MO 65804
Phone: 417-891-1550

The **Greater Ozark Audubon** Trails, is a half-mile loop located at the East end of the park . **GOAS maintains a 34 Box Trail here!**

"GLADE" is a project of the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society and Missouri State University to train the next generation of Conservation leaders. You will learn much more about this special program at the 2015 Missouri Bluebird Conference...don't miss it! In the meantime, check out their website :

www.greenleadershipacademy.org

The mission of the Green Leadership Academy for Diverse Ecosystems (GLADE):

1. **To care for Ozarks ecosystems.**
2. **To restore habitat for threatened and endangered bird species of Missouri.**
2. **To inspire and develop a future generation of community conservation leaders.**
3. **To enhance the quality of life in the Ozarks through conservation action and environmental education.**

PS… a GLADE graduate, Jessica Blomenkamp, will be one of our 2015 Bluebird Conference speakers, detailing her Nest Box Trail project with four local elementary schools. Read more about Jessica on page 2 of this newsletter and watch for more details about her program in the upcoming 2015 Conference Brochure!

For your Calendar:

April 10th & 11th…..Bluebird Across Nebraska Annual meeting. As always, terrific speakers and programs from an organization that has been an inspiration to many Bluebird Societies – including MOBS! Get the details at: www.bbne.org or call Sandy at 4012-334-8691 .

Catch a Wildflower Walk this Spring: (Call the Nature centers to register)
Springfield Conservation Nature Center on April 15th
Cape Girardeau Conservation nature Center on April 29th & May 13th

July 10th—12th ...Missouri Bluebird Conference! (see pages 2 & 3)

Is it time to Renew your MOBS Membership? Memberships expire on December 31st of the year of expiration.
Check your mailing label to see if you need to renew.
Please mail your renewal form, along with your check or money order (payable to **MOBS**) to:
Missouri Bluebird Society/ P.O. Box 105830/ Jefferson City, MO 65110

Name:_____ Phone:_____

Address:_____ city/state_____Zip_____

County:_____ **Email:**_____

Membership Levels:

____Individual one year membership $9.00
____Individual two year membership $16.00
____*Family one year membership $15.00
____ *Family two year membership $28.00
*For individuals residing at the same address

____DONOR (Annual) $50.00
____SUPPORTER (Annual) $100.00

_____***Family LIFE Membership $175.00**

How many nest boxes do you monitor?_____
How long have you been a Bluebirder?_____

MOBS Members part of group awarded special recognition by Audubon International

Remember the fantastic field trip we took during the 2013 Missouri Bluebird Conference to the Nest Box trail at the Loch Lloyd Country Club? It was obvious that this team of nest box monitors was doing a spectacular job of raising cavity-nesters AND spreading the conservation word. Our nest box trails are not "islands" to themselves. Being on the same conservation-minded team with those folks our trails come in contact with benefits people and birds alike. **Well done Loch Lloyd Trail Monitors and congratulations!**

Below: Jo Carol Johnson (far right) leads a group of MOBS 2013 attendees on a tour of nest boxes on the Loch Lloyd Country Club Golf course.

Released by Doug Bechtel, Executive Director, Audubon International:

Loch Lloyd Country Club Recognized for Environmental Excellence

BELTON, MO – Loch Lloyd Country Club has retained its designation as a **"Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary"** through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, an Audubon International program. Keith Kohlasch Golf Course Superintendent, led the effort to maintain sanctuary status on this course and is being recognized for Environmental Stewardship by Audubon International. Loch Lloyd Country Club was designated as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in 2004 and is one of 901 courses in the world to currently be designated as such.

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, endorsed by the United States Golf Association, provides information and guidance to help golf courses preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, and protect natural resources. Golf courses from the United States, Africa, Australia, Canada, Central America, Europe, Mexico, and Southeast Asia have achieved certification in the program.

Loch Lloyd Country Club has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program. They are to be commended for preserving the natural heritage of the area by protecting the local watershed and providing a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property," said Doug Bechtel, Executive Director at Audubon International.

"To reach certification, a course must demonstrate that they are maintaining a high degree of environmental quality in a number of areas," explained Bechtel. These categories include: Environmental Planning, Wildlife & Habitat Management, Outreach and Education, Chemical Use Reduction and Safety, Water Conservation, and Water Quality Management. Courses go through a recertification process every two years.

Audubon International is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Troy, NY. In addition to golf courses, Audubon International also provides programs for businesses, schools, communities, and new developments with the purpose of delivering high-quality environmental education and facilitating the sustainable management of natural resources. For more information, call Audubon International at (518) 767-9051or visit www.audubonintenational.org.

Early Spring Nest Box Monitoring 2015

By Linda Pridgeon

News Flash! All is seldom as it seems and I'm reminded that I'm a mere person and not God. I control nothing.

After a harsh winter it's time to see what the birds are up to. Monitoring a trail, even a small one like mine takes dedication. I'm brought back to cold, hard reality when I think that it will be easy. Let me tell you what happened this week.

House Sparrow activity alerted me to clean out the box across the road before they got an unwanted nest started. As I reached in for the little nesting material I felt a soft furry creature and immediately pulled out my extension mirror to get a better look. It was a tiny bird but something was off about it and that nagged at me although I was sure it had to be a baby sparrow especially because the sparrows were so interested. But this was just the beginning.

The tiny bird I thought was a baby house sparrow was actually a tree swallow caught in the nest box and the attentive sparrows were only planning its death. When I returned to check on the baby in the nest box I got a dose of reality. Lifting out the body of the tiny headless bird I was painfully aware of my mistake. Yes, its head was pecked off by the house sparrow dealing its crushing blows. I am reminded that life and death hangs in the balance for our native birds. It's the sad part of a nest box monitor's life that most things are out of our control.

The winter has been harsh but a bluebird monitor needs to do nest checks and it's the first day of spring with a warm up in the air. Although it was too late in the day to do successful sparrow removal I vowed to return.

Earlier in the week I watched a lone tree swallow roosting each day at my martin house. This is too early for tree swallows but I had discovered the nest he built close by on my nest checks. Snow was on the ground and I couldn't imagine tree swallows arriving this early and yet here he was. I was delighted when I witnessed 2 more tree swallows arriving. If you know tree swallows you know there was a great celebration. The three of them dived and swooped around the skies and I was pretty happy to find them here so he would have company. I felt we would begin some tree swallow love soon. But we had another cold snap and I didn't see the swallows at all and decided they had found a warmer place to wait out the warm weather.

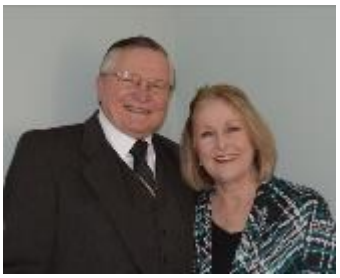
A few days later I was monitoring again, excited to see if the tree swallow had rebuilt the nest I had dismantled by mistake. As I approached I noticed a few feathers stuck here and there. Lifting one tiny feather holding it up to the sun I could see the blue-black tip and my heart sank. This could not end well and I wondered if it was the feather of a bluebird before opening the door to the nest box. Here he was, the beautiful tree swallow that wanted to be first this year lay dead with his head pecked off by a house sparrow, their calling card. The feathers told the tale of a terrible battle. In the end, the smaller beak of the tree swallow was no match for the crushing beak of the male house sparrow. He uses his beak like a sword jabbing and ripping the unfortunate bird caught inside the house. It was a dark day facing tragedy on the trail but I had to continue my inspection of each house.

What I found was house sparrow clutter in each house announcing their territory and if another bird entered it would pay the price. I could tell that this was a very aggressive male and no other bird would be safe to nest here. This was serious because this was evidence that this particular house sparrow killed just for the sport of killing.

I want to make it clear that birds like the tree swallow and the bluebird are strong opponents outside the nest box and can defeat the sparrow. But when cornered inside a nest box it has the advantage and is a most aggressive bird. He will kill any other bird and build its nest on the dead body. I have had the unfortunate experience of seeing this first hand.

Life for birds is tough but it shouldn't be this hard. Humans have brought so many species to the brink of extinction for a number of reasons. Introducing the house sparrow (weaver finch or old world finch) it is systematically displacing and destroying many of our cavity nesting native songbirds. House sparrows are non-native birds introduced and re-introduced in the late 1800's by well meaning people from Europe. But without natural predators to keep them in check they have swarmed across our land like locusts suffocating the native songbirds. Tree swallow numbers have been decreasing over a percentage each year since the 1970's. If that doesn't mean much to you think of it this way… It's been over 40 years since they have started banding the birds and the result is over 40 percent decline in their numbers.

House sparrows are always trouble because most people simply put up a birdhouse and say 'first come, first serve'. Or 'the strongest gets the house'. These are a couple of myths that circulate around hobby birders who don't want to be bothered by learning facts about backyard birds. You love seeing them and who wouldn't. Our native bird populations are decreasing dramatically because of a number of factors I don't plan to go into here. If you don't want to monitor the birdhouse you put up, please, please do not put up a birdhouse at all. You aren't doing a favor to the birds, only the house sparrow. ▪



Linda Pridgeon and her husband Joe are veteran bluebirders and nest box monitors from Frankford, Missouri. They are long-time MOBS supporters and members and are a wonderful asset to the Society.

Need help identifying nests in boxes or have questions about monitoring nest boxes? See our Educational material (under "MOBS Forms") on the MOBS website :

www.missouribluebird.org

Order great items from the Missouri Bluebird Society!

FYI: These items and more will also be available for purchase at the MOBS Booth at the Bluebird Conference.

Important ordering info: When ordering product from MOBS, please remember to enclose these completed order forms, and **include your NAME, shipping address, and phone number** with your order. ***Thank You !***

Our wonderful MOBS Logo mugs by Jim Rathert are dishwasher & microwave safe!

The MOBS Logo Mug

by Jim Rathert Photography

11 ounce white ceramic Mug with blue interior featuring the beautiful Logo of the Missouri Bluebird Society (designed by Jim Rathert).

_____Mugs @ $13.00 each= $_____

Shipping $6.00 (for up to 2 mugs)

Shipping $10.50 (for 3-4 mugs)

Shipping $_____

TOTAL$_____

****Please note your mugs will arrive via PRIORITY MAIL**

Please make checks out to :

"MOBS" or the "Missouri Bluebird Society"

(Checks or money orders only– PLEASE do not send cash) Mail to:

MOBS product sales
P.O. Box 105830
Jefferson City, MO 65110

Order your MOBS Nest Box Signs

(Order Form left)

Nest Box Signs are $3.50 each, or buy FIVE, get ONE FREE!

_____signs x $3.50 each = _____

_____5 Signs get ONE FREE = $17.50

____10 Signs get TWO FREE = $35.00

Shipping & Handling **+ $2.00**

TOTAL_____

Make Checks to the MO Bluebird Society
Mail to:
MOBS Nest Box Signs
P.O. BOX 105830
Jefferson City, Mo 65110

MOBS Window Decals
4 inch diameter circle

_____Decals x $1.00 each = _____

_____5 Decals get ONE FREE = $5.00

Shipping & Handling + $ 1.50

TOTAL_____

Make Checks to the MO Bluebird Society

Mail to:
MOBS Product sales
P.O. BOX 105830
Jefferson City, Mo 65110

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www.missouribluebird.org

2015 Missouri Bluebird Conference INFO!

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The Fledgling 2015 Spring issue!

- **The 2015 Missouri Bluebird Conference:**
  Join us in the Ozarks!!
  Details inside
- MOBS members receive accolades
- **Directing and Equipping young Conservationists** "Green Leader-ship Academy" (GLADE)
- Pics from MOBS "TEAM Baffle"!
- Upcoming Events

Photo by Shirley Scrivner

Barred Owl Pic (Right)....Remember this photo? MOBS member Shirley Scrivner took this and we printed it in the MOBS Fledgling....perhaps you also saw it in a recent issue of the Missouri Conservationist?! Congrats Shirley on having your photo chosen from among all the others for special recognition!