

A person wearing a blue shirt, dark pants, and a straw hat is sitting on rocks by a river, fishing. A blue tackle box is on the rocks next to them. The river flows over rocks, creating white water. The background is lush green foliage.

Spring CONSERVATION

HUNTING, FISHING & OUTDOORS GUIDE

April 6, 2022 | Pages 1B-16B
A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE

OSAGE COUNTY
Unterrified Democrat

SINCE 1866

MDC sets 2022 elk, bear seasons with permit applications in May

BY JOE JEREK

Mo. Dept. of Conservation

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) will offer five permits to hunt bull elk in Missouri this fall with at least one permit designated for qualifying area landowners and the remaining permits for the general public. MDC will also offer 400 permits for the taking of a maximum of 40 black bears during the second Missouri black-bear hunting season this fall. At least 10 percent of black bear permits will be allocated to qualifying area landowners. Only Missouri residents who will be at least 11 years of age by the first day of the hunt for which they are applying are eligible to apply for elk and bear permits during the application period of May 1-31. All permits will be assigned through a random drawing.

The Missouri Conservation Commission gave final approval to both elk and bear recommendations from MDC during its March 25 open meeting in Jefferson City.

ELK HUNTING

For elk hunting, MDC has designated a nine-day archery portion running Oct. 15-23 and a nine-day firearms portion running Dec. 10-18. The five permits will be for bull elk and will be valid for both portions.

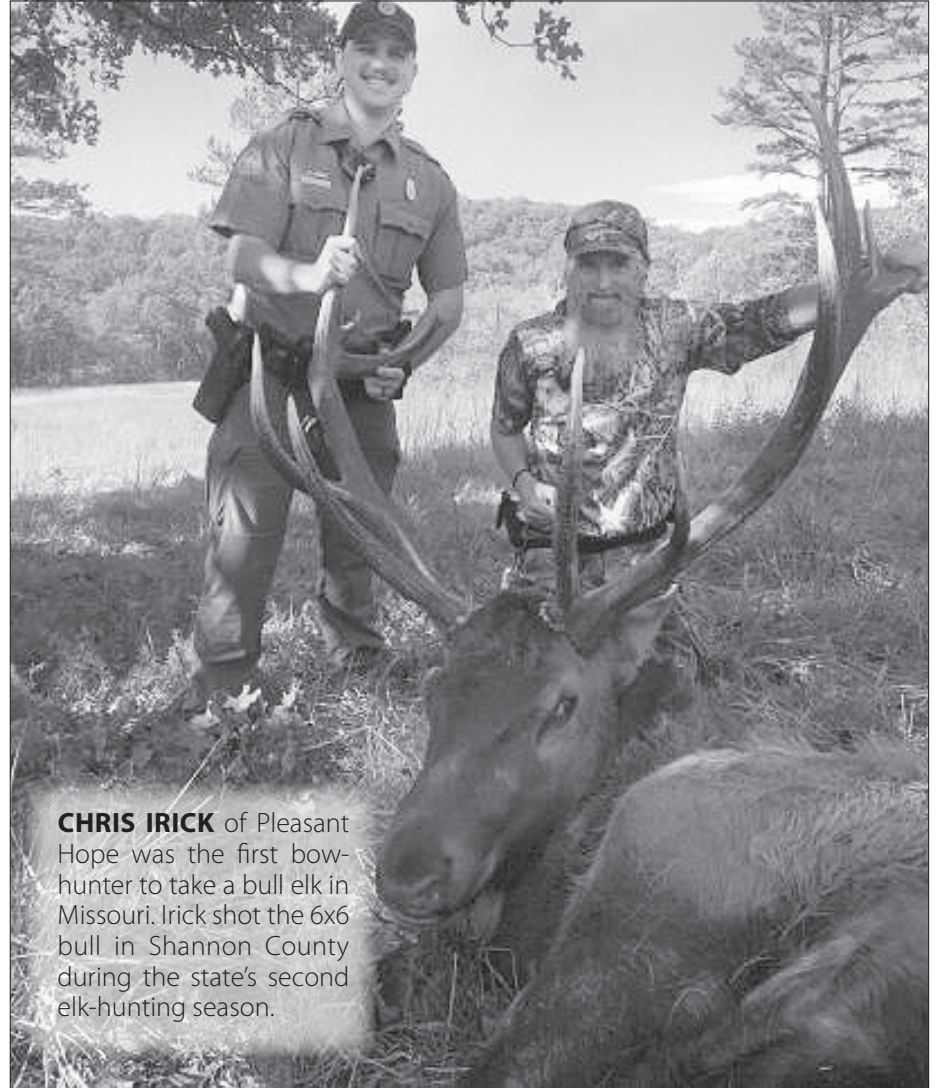
MDC will require a \$10 application fee for elk-permit applicants. Those selected will then be eligible to buy a permit at a cost of \$50. All elk-hunting permits, including those allocated to approved area landowners, can be used in Carter, Reynolds, and Shannon counties, except the refuge portion of Peck Ranch Conservation Area.

The allowed hunting methods for each season portion will be the same as for deer hunting. The permits will allow for the harvest of one bull elk with at least one antler being six inches or greater in length.

For more information on elk and elk hunting in Missouri, visit mdc.mo.gov/elkhunting.

Apply for the elk-permit random

See **Elk**, Page 9B



CHRIS IRICK of Pleasant Hope was the first bowhunter to take a bull elk in Missouri. Irick shot the 6x6 bull in Shannon County during the state's second elk-hunting season.

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Elk from page 8B

drawing May 1-31 online at mdc.mo.gov/buypermits, through MDC's free MO Hunting app, through a permit vendor, or by calling 1-800-392-4115. Results of the elk-permit random drawing will be available online by July 1.

BEAR HUNTING

MDC will offer 400 permits for the taking of a maximum of 40 black bears during the second Missouri black-bear hunting season running Oct. 17-26. There is a fee of \$10 per applicant. Applicants must select one of three Black Bear Management Zones (BMZ). Those selected will then be eligible to buy a BMZ-specific permit at a cost of \$25.

MDC has established three Bear Management Zones (BMZ) in southern Missouri and will issue annual permit numbers and harvest quotas for each of the three BMZs. Each permit will be for a specific BMZ and may be used on public or private property within the BMZ. Once the specific harvest quotas are filled for each BMZ, the season for that BMZ will be closed.

Permit and harvest quotas for the upcoming Oct. 17-26 bear season will be:

- BMZ 1: Permit quota of 200 issued with a harvest quota of 20 bears.
- BMZ 2: Permit quota of 150 issued

with a harvest quota of 15 bears.

- BMZ 3: Permit quota of 50 issued with a harvest quota of 5 bears.

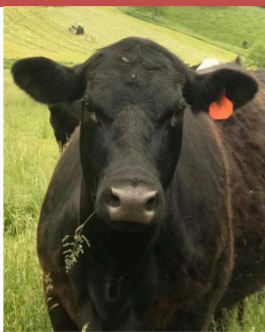
Hunting hours will be a half-hour before sunrise to a half-hour after sunset. Hunters must call MDC prior to hunting each day to determine the closure status of the BMZ for which they are permitted. Hunters will be allowed to use both archery and firearms equipment with allowable methods being the same as those for deer and elk, except the use of an atlatl. Baiting and the use of dogs will not be allowed WEDNESDAY,

The harvest limit will be one bear per permit. Only lone black bears may be taken. Hunters may not take bears that are known to be in the presence of others bears, including female black bears with cubs. Bears may not be disturbed, pushed, harassed, or taken from a den.

Learn more about black bears and bear hunting in Missouri at mdc.mo.gov/bearhunting.

Apply for the bear-permit random drawing May 1-31 online at mdc.mo.gov/buypermits, through MDC's free MO Hunting app, through a permit vendor, or by calling 1-800-392-4115. Results of the bear-permit random drawing will be available online by July 1.

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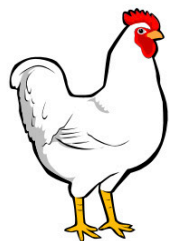
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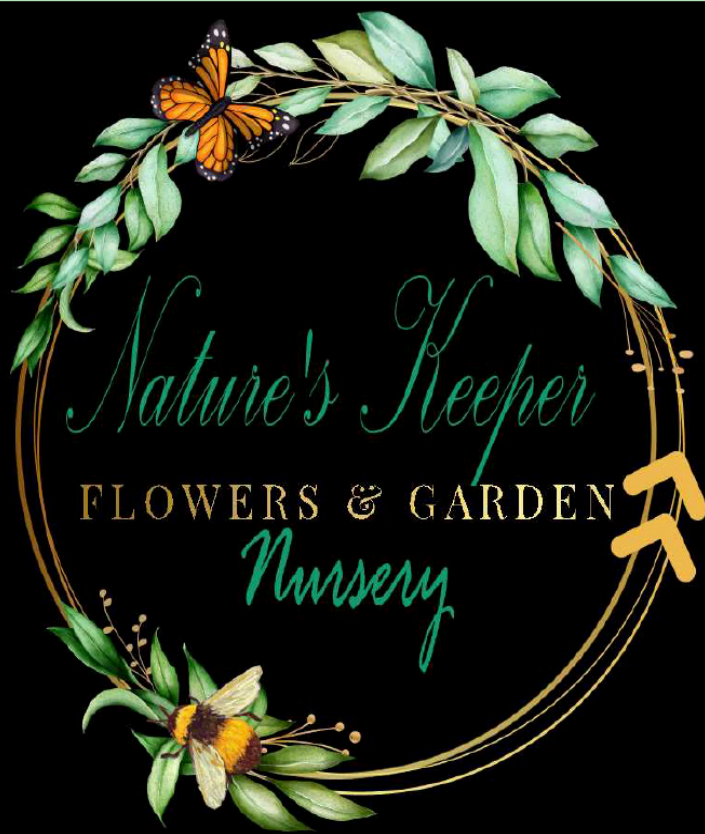
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Tips for first-time boat buyers

Boating is a rewarding hobby that can be great for people from all walks of life. Many people buy a boat because they already have a passion for fishing and want their own vessel to take out on the water. Others may buy a boat because they like the challenge posed by sailing, a demanding yet rewarding hobby.

According to Grow Boating, a marine industry organization that aims to generate awareness and interest in boating, retail sales of new boats, marine engines and marine accessories in the United States totaled \$20.1 billion in 2017. That marked a 9.5 percent increase from the year prior, highlighting the growing popularity of boating. In fact, Grow Boating notes that 141.6 million Americans went boating in 2016.

The fun of boating compels many people to buy their own boats. For first-timers, buying a boat can be both exciting and confusing. Prospective buyers must decide on everything from the type of vessel they want to the size of the boat to where to store it when they're not out on the water. Such decisions can make the

process of buying a boat somewhat intimidating. However, the following tips might facilitate the process of buying a boat for the first time.

- **Assess your skills.** An honest assessment of your skills will help you determine if the time is right to buy a boat. There's no shame in waiting to buy a boat until you become more comfortable navigating it. Boating schools can be great resources for novices, teaching them the ins and outs of boating. The United States Coast Guard notes that boating safety courses are offered throughout the country for all types of recreational boaters.

- **Ask around.** Boaters tend to be passionate about boating, and many are willing to offer advice to novices about boats that may suit their needs. Local marinas can be great resources for first-time boat buyers. Visit a local marina and seek advice from current boat owners. Some may share their own travails and triumphs from their first boat-buying experience, and those stories can serve as a guide as you begin your own journey to boat ownership.

- **Be patient.** Boats are significant investments, so it serves prospective owners well to be patient and exercise due diligence before making a purchase. Do your homework on the type of boat that best suits your needs, skill level and budget.

- **Do your homework in regard to fees.** The cost of owning a boat is more than just the sticker price and the cost of fuel. Much like you would before buying an automobile, get a quote on boating insurance before making a purchase, being as specific as possible in regard to the boat's make, model and age when asking for an estimate. In addition, get quotes on docking and mooring fees. When buying a boat, people envision taking their boats out as much as possible. That's only possible for boat owners who fully grasp the full cost of boat ownership and how to finance all of the ancillary expenses of owning a boat.

The decision to buy a boat requires careful consideration of a host of factors to ensure boaters find the right boat and get the most of their time on the water.



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MDC Encourages Drivers to Look Out for Turtles

JEFFERSON CITY—The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is urging drivers to keep a cautious eye on the road this spring and give turtles a brake! Many species of Missouri's turtles become more active during the spring as they emerge from their burrows and cross the roads in search of food and a mate.

Common species crossing the roads include the three-toed box turtle, ornate box turtle, and even snapping turtles.

These reptiles are often hit by cars during the warmer months, but are at special risk in the spring as they emerge from burrows during

warm and wet conditions, which can lead them to cross roadways. Unfortunately, thousands of box turtles are killed every year by vehicles.

Young males make up most of the travelers, sometimes wandering as many as six miles searching for territories and mates. Females are also crossing the roads in search of nesting areas.

Turtles are cold-blooded and depend on external sources of heat to determine their body temperature. This explains why many see them on warm asphalt

during cool, spring days.

Vehicles are one of the leading factors in box turtle declines, and MDC urges motorists to be cautious and slow down when they see a turtle in the road. If stopping to help a turtle make it safely across, check

for traffic and move the turtle in the direction it is traveling.

MDC also encourages the public to leave turtles in the wild. Keeping a wild animal as a pet can lead to a slow death, no matter how good the intentions. Leave turtles

in the wild, follow the speed limit, and keep your eyes on the road.

For more information on Missouri's native turtles, visit MDC's online Field Guide at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/43A>.



MDC congratulates Jim Dain of Pittsfield, Ill., on becoming the second state record holder of 2022 after snagging this 140-pound, 10-ounce paddlefish at the Lake of the Ozarks March 18. **PHOTO COURTESY OF MDC**

Illinois Man Now Holds Missouri Paddlefish State Record

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) congratulates Jim Dain of Pittsfield, Ill., for snagging a monster 140-pound, 10-ounce paddlefish March 18 at the Lake of the Ozarks. The latest record breaks the previous record of 140-pounds, 9-ounces set in 2015 on Table Rock Lake.

Dain said he was on a fishing trip with his family and almost didn't get the boat out that day because the weather kept changing.

"The forecast was calling for storms, and then it changed to no rain, so we went out, but it just kept getting colder," Dain recalled. "We weren't having much luck, but decided to fish for another hour so we took another turn. And that's when the drag on the reel started. It felt like a tree was on the line!"

Dain said it took at least 20-minutes before they ultimately got the fish in the boat. After getting back to the boat ramp, Steven Henson of Bonne Terre, who happens to hold the Missouri state record for river carpsucker, was

in the area and mentioned Dain should get in touch with MDC.

"He was at the boat ramp and happened to hold a state record," said Dain. "He's looking at the fish and says to me, 'Boy, I think you should get that checked out because it could be a state record.'"

Dain contacted MDC Camden County Agent Tyler Brown, who advised him to go to Tom's Slaughterhouse in Montreal to use a certified scale that could handle weight more than 100-pounds. His paddlefish is the second state record fish caught in 2022.

"We got 16 one-gallon bags of meat out of this catch," laughed Dain. "We've fried it, grilled it and made paddlefish tacos the other night. We'll be having paddlefish for a while!"

Missouri state record fish are recognized in two categories: pole-and-line and alternative methods. Alternative methods include: trotline, throwline, limb line, bank line, jug line, gig, bow, crossbow, underwater spearfishing, snagging, snaring, grabbing, or atlatl.



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Get a nature boost from MDC during Missouri Outdoors Month

BY JILL PRITCHARD
Mo. Dept. of Conservation

Missouri is blessed to have a variety of stunning landscapes to explore. From forests and woodlands to waterfalls and wetlands – there’s something for everyone. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) encourages you to get outside and explore all the state has to offer during the month of April.

TURKEY HUNTING

Missouri’s spring turkey season kicks off April 18 and runs through May 8. Wild turkey is one of the most popular gamebirds and can be found statewide.

Get your turkey hunting permit online at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/43N>. Find more turkey hunting information from MDC’s 2022 Spring Turkey Hunting Regulations booklet at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/43x>.

FISHING

Test your snagging skills during Missouri’s paddlefish season through April 30. Popular paddlefish snagging waters include the Lake of the Ozarks, Harry S. Truman Reservoir, and Table Rock Lake. Find more information and weekly paddlefish reports at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/43f>.

Maybe a smaller species is more your speed? Crappie is another popular prospect in the spring season and makes for great table fare following a successful fishing trip. In spring when crappie are spawning in the shallows, anyone can cast a minnow and bobber toward the bank and catch plenty of fish.

See **Outdoors Month**, Page 6B

GET OUT and discover everything Missouri has to offer during Missouri Outdoors Month in April.

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Outdoors Month from page 7B

Learn more about crappie fishing in Missouri at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/4JA>.

BIRDING

Birding is popular because it's easy to get started, and it offers increasingly greater rewards the more you learn. Spring is a great time to enjoy migrating songbirds across the state, and you can see many in your own backyard from nesting bluebirds and incoming purple martins, to brown thrashers and ruby-throated

hummingbirds.

Learn how to identify birds and best places to watch them in Missouri at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zvs>.

WILD MUSHROOMS

The start of spring is a long-awaited time for another type of hunting—for wild mushrooms! Mushroom hunting is a great way to get outside in search of these tasty edibles, but identification is key! Whether you're out looking for the coveted morels

or the savory chanterelles this season, keep MDC's Guide to Missouri's Edible and Poisonous Mushrooms handy. Find the free publication at MDC offices and nature centers, or online at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/43Y>.

For more ideas on how to discover nature in April, visit <https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature>.

To see MDC events offered in your area, visit mdc.mo.gov/events.

To find a Place to Go in Missouri for a nature boost, visit <https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places>.

Find Things to Do in Missouri at <https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/activities>.

Get help identifying native plants and animals with MDC's online Field Guide at <https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide>.



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How to make camping more comfortable

The call of the wild can be irresistible. Camping enthusiasts often insist there's nothing better than sleeping beneath a star-filled sky, and anyone who's experienced a night under the stars would likely find it hard to argue that point.

Comfort and camping are not exactly synonymous. In fact, many people look forward to roughing it in the wild and intentionally eschew comfort in an effort to create what they feel is a more authentic camping experience. But those who want the best of both worlds can try various strategies to combine camping and comfort.

- Focus on a good night's rest. A good night's rest can be elusive for novice and experienced campers alike. Thankfully, campers can explore various options to make their nights out in the wild more conducive to sleep. The outdoor recreation experts at REI note that there are three types of sleeping pads: self-inflating, air and closed-cell foam. REI recommends air pads or closed-cell pads for backpackers, as these are lightweight options that won't make backpacking more difficult. Self-inflating pads work

See **Camping**, Page 10B



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Outdoor activities that are perfect for seniors

The great outdoors beckons people of all ages. Fresh air can be hard to resist and the benefits of spending time outdoors are so numerous that it behooves anyone, including seniors, to answer the call of nature.

According to researchers with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, human beings benefit both physically and psychologically from spending time in nature. Such experiences can reduce stress and help lower heart rates, potentially decreasing individuals' risk for cardiovascular disease. In addition, the Forest Service notes that spending time outside in green spaces has been linked to a lower risk of depression.

Seniors who are retired or even aging empty nesters who are still in the workforce can make great use of their free time by venturing into the great outdoors. The following are a handful of senior-friendly outdoor activities that provide a great reason to get off the couch and take in all that Mother Nature has to offer.

- **Hiking:** Hiking provides a great workout and an ideal opportunity to spend time in an idyllic setting. The U.S. National Park Service notes that hiking helps individuals build stronger muscles and bones, improves their sense of balance,

has a positive effect on heart health, and can decrease the risk of certain respiratory problems. Hiking is an especially attractive outdoor activity for seniors, as many parks feature trails with varying degrees of difficulty, ensuring there's a trail for seniors whether they're seasoned or novice hikers.

- **Water aerobics:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that water-based exercises can be especially helpful individuals with chronic diseases, a category many seniors fall into. The CDC notes that one study published in the journal *Arthritis & Rheumatology* found that improves the use of joints affected by arthritis without worsening symptoms. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also notes that swimming can lead to improved health for people with diabetes and heart disease. Seniors can reap these benefits by going for a dip in their own backyard pools or a local body of water, such as a lake or ocean. Many swim clubs also offer discounted memberships to seniors, making these another great and affordable way to reap the benefits of swimming.

- **Fishing:** Of course not all outdoor activities need to make seniors huff and puff. Fishing provides a great reason to get outdoors, and many individuals devoted



to fishing report feeling less stressed after a day spent casting for their favorite fish. Individuals who consume what they catch also can benefit by improving their diets, as the American Heart Association notes that consuming certain types of fish has been linked to a lower risk for heart disease and obesity.

- **Volunteering:** Local environmental groups often sponsor cleanups at parks and waterfront attractions like beaches and lakes. Volunteering with such organizations is a great way to get outside and

give back, and working with like-minded individuals can be a great way for seniors to meet new people. In addition, a national study sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service in 2019 found that 88 percent of Senior Corps volunteers who initially reported a lack of companionship reported a decrease in feelings of isolation after volunteering.

The opportunities for seniors to enjoy the great outdoors are endless. Taking advantage of such chances can benefit seniors in myriad ways.

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Kyle Jorgensen

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Camping from page 8B

better for car camping, as these are heavier but also thicker and wider than the alternatives, providing more comfort and support. Bring along a pillow from home or an inflatable camp pillow for added comfort.

- Invest in a good cooler. It's easy to take food and beverages for granted when planning a camping trip. However, when camping for a weekend or longer, a good cooler can ensure food and beverages stay cold without forcing campers to make routine ice runs. Lightweight coolers with thick walls and sufficient insulation won't prove a chore to lug to and from the campsite and they will be highly effective at keeping meat, fish and beverages cold during your trip.

- Increase your body heat before going to bed. Nighttime temperatures can dip even when camping in summertime. Few people find it easy to fall asleep when they're cold, but a few simple tricks can ensure you're warm and comfortable when it's time to call it a night.

REI recommends wearing long underwear overnight and putting on a fresh pair of clean, dry socks before going to bed. In addition, eating a light meal or snack before bed will start the digestion process, which can warm your internal body temperature and make it easier to sleep comfortably.

- Spice things up. Food cooked over an open flame is undeniably delicious, but it's easy for campers to forget that such meals are made even better with spices. But foods made around the campfire need not be bland. Spice bottles are portable and don't take up much space. Salt and pepper are must-haves, but it's easy for campers to tote along additional favorite spices to make mealtime that much more palatable.

Camping and comfort may not go hand in hand. But there are many ways for campers to enjoy a comfortable night in the great outdoors.

MDC invites you to celebrate native trees through Arbor Days in April

BY JOE JEREK
Mo. Dept. of Conservation

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) invited people to celebrate the value of Missouri trees and forests during Arbor Days in April by planting native trees and practicing proper tree care. Missouri Arbor Day is Friday, April 1. Missouri has been observing the state's official Arbor Day on the first Friday in April since 1886 when the General Assembly declared that day be set aside for the appreciation and planting of trees. National Arbor Day is recognized on the last Friday of April, which is April 29 for 2022.

Get information on backyard tree care – including types of trees for urban and other landscapes, selecting the right tree for the right place, planting tips, watering and pruning info, and more – at mdc.mo.gov/trees-plants/tree-care.

The MDC George O. White State Forest Nursery near Licking offers a variety of low-cost native tree and shrub seedlings for reforestation, windbreaks, erosion control, and wildlife food and cover. Orders are accepted to April 15. For more information, visit mdc.mo.gov/seedlings.

Communities around the state also hold local Arbor Day activities. For more information on Arbor Day and Missouri's Tree City USA communities, visit the Arbor Day Foundation at arborday.org/.

Missouri forests cover about one-third of the state and provide outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, natural beauty, and watersheds for stream and rivers. Spending time in Missouri forests

can provide a natural health benefit, too. Exposure to nature contributes to physical well-being, reducing blood pressure and heart rate, relieving stress, and boosting energy levels. Get more information at mdc.mo.gov/trees-plants/forest-care.



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OUTDOORS IN THE OZARKS

An owl before dawn

There is no more efficient predator than a great horned owl. Silent and deadly, he can eat whatever he wants, up to and including a roosting wild turkey. Their flight is completely silent, and they occasionally break the neck of roosting turkeys in the darkness before the dawn. But that does not happen often if there are plenty of rabbits and small ground mammals to feed upon.

Did you know that one of a great horned owl's regular prey is skunks? For some reason, the scent of a skunk is something that doesn't bother an owl. When the moon was bright, I watched rabbits playing around my place, in the pre-mating season antics which include games like jumping over each other and kicking their heels up as if they had never heard of a great horned owl.

Certainly the semi-civilized atmosphere around my home, and the presence of my Labradors, eliminated the threat of foxes and coyotes, which stay down in the woods behind the pond. So this became a sort of haven for cottontails, especially with all the brush piles I have here on Lightnin' Ridge.

Of course, I would probably opt for not having one house mouse or Norway rat in the whole Ozarks, but I like the idea of some ground mammals like the woodrat and harvest mice and white-foot mice. And I'd lot rather have cottontails and quail than hardly anything I can think of. My one covey seems to not expand much. If I could do it, if God gave me the power of eliminating some of his creation, I would get rid of only a few things beside the house mouse, and that would be ticks, brown-recluse spiders, starlings, copperheads and rattlesnakes, carp, gar, armadillos and maybe cormorants.

But even though I would do it, I would feel guilty about it. It seems selfish to try to create a perfect world up here on my ridge-top when so many people have to live in suburbs and can't do a thing about it. I sincerely suspect that the thing that would make this old world work better is the elimination of about half the people who are overcrowding it, and what worries me about that is, what if I am one of the half which should be eliminated?

My grandfather, who always lived out in the woods or on the river somewhere, sawed the top out of medium sized trees up about twenty feet from the ground, to create a flat landing place for the great horned owl, and then would set a steel trap there, and bait it with a wood rat or small squirrel. He was paid a small bounty

at the county courthouse for the feet of owls, but he also saw no good in them, and believed in maintaining them only in strong enough numbers so that they survived along the river miles from where he kept a few chickens.

Grandpa liked to eat eggs and the owls liked to eat chickens, and he was much more inclined to believe in the survival of things he liked to eat, like rabbits, quail and ducks, than things he didn't eat. There were so fewer men back then than there are today. Grandpa wasn't so far removed from a time when a man's greatest concern wasn't so much economic and gas prices, but what he was going to eat and perhaps what might be about to eat him. Who could believe we would ever make a great and drastic impact on

the land, and perhaps endanger our own existence in time?

When I was 15 years old, Grandpa and I floated a particular Ozark river in a wooden johnboat he built, and caught some nice fish from it. Today that stream is completely and totally dry. If I mention it on occasion when I speak to a live audience somewhere it quickly comes to me they would rather I didn't. So more often, I talk about the funny stories that came from the old men in the pool hall back in that time.

I figured out long ago that even if you know something, it isn't always wise to try to explain it to anyone. That's true of things like the spreading of billions of gallons of chemicals, all over the Ozarks. Nothing will stop it, and what is going to come from it is going to come from it, and that's that.

Maybe God himself knows this, and is just watching and waiting, ready to reclaim, rebirth and regrow the perfect earth he created, sometime in the future. I guess it follows then, that the best thing to do is the best we can, to try to get our grandkids someplace where there are songbirds still singing and the water still has some crawdads and kingfishers and

there are more trees than there are stumps. But, not many of the grandkids in the world today care about those things. They are more interested I new boxes! The latest computers and smart phones. To each his own I guess. More kids today will choose drugs than old fashioned things like clean water and forests.

If you wonder how any of this has anything to do with that owl, I can't explain it. I just thought about some of those things while I was listening to him one night, mice and rabbits and water. It was awfully quiet and peaceful up here on Lightnin' Ridge, with the moon so bright it was casting shadows on my lawn as it sunk toward the west well before dawn. And it was so still. That old owl is likely sitting in a hollow tree somewhere right now, getting some sleep, and maybe a little bit hungry because there aren't enough mice and rabbits around my place. Some of that may be his own darn fault. But at least he has no steel traps to contend with now.

Read what I write and see what I photograph each week on www.larry-dablemontoutdoors.blogspot.com. E-mail me at lightninridge47@gmail.com or write to me at Box 22, Bolivar, Mo. 65613



by **LARRY DABLEMONT**

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MDC approves expansion of furbearer hunting, trapping seasons

BY JILL PRITCHARD

Mo. Dept. of Conservation

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Conservation Commission gave final approval to the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) at its March 25 open meeting on regulation changes that will extend current furbearer hunting and trapping seasons for abundant furbearer species. The extension comes in response to stakeholder requests to provide additional opportunity for the taking of multiple furbearer species.

Furbearers are mammal species that have traditionally been trapped or hunted for their fur, such as coyotes, raccoons, and skunks. Many furbearers are also considered small game species, for which there are small game hunting seasons.

According to MDC, many furbearer populations have experienced long-term population increases, allowing



PHOTO COURTESY OF Missouri DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

THE MISSOURI Conservation Commission gave final approval to MDC to expand hunting and trapping seasons for furbearers, such as coyotes (pictured), in an effort to provide additional harvest opportunity. The new regulations become effective June 30.

for additional harvest opportunity.

Furbearers play important ecological roles, and trapping and hunting are critical wildlife management tools.

MDC strives to provide the opportunity to harvest these species, while considering pelt-primeness during the fur harvest season, desire for opportunity outside of the

traditional fur harvest season, the potential for conflict with other hunting seasons, and landowner opportunity.

MDC's Furbearer Program staff reviewed furbearer har-

vest seasons and developed a framework that provides for additional opportunity for harvest in response to stakeholder requests. Based on this review and stakeholder input, the following changes were approved:

- Extending the hunting season and trapping season for bobcat, raccoon, opossum, and striped skunk from Nov. 15 to the last day of February, and extending the trapping season for coyote from Nov. 15 to the last day of February.
- Extending the trapping season for mink, muskrat, and river otter from Nov. 15 to the last day of February.
- Establishing an early hunting and trapping season for raccoon, opossum, and striped skunk to run Aug. 1 – Oct. 15.
- Extending the trapping season on private land for coyote, raccoon, opossum, and striped skunk to March 1 – April 14.

The regulation changes become effective June 30.

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Outdoor activities benefit kids

Modern amenities and indoor comforts have made life easier in many ways, but they've also helped to fashion a generation of people who spend much of their time inside. A 2018 report from the international research firm YouGov found that around 90 percent of study respondents from North America and Europe spend close to 22 hours inside every day. Children may get a little more time outdoors than adults, particularly if they participate in outdoor sports.

There are distinct advantages to engaging in more outdoor activities. Here's a look at some of them.

- **Improved mood and reduced risk of depression:** The YouGov report notes that around 15 percent of the world's population is affected by different levels of seasonal affective disorder, which is believed to be a direct result of lack of daylight.

- **Lower risk of obesity:** Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg from the American Academy of Pediatrics says outdoor play can help reduce obesity in today's youth.

- **Improved vitamin D levels:** Vitamin D has been dubbed the "sunshine vitamin" because sunlight hitting the skin prompts the liver and kidneys to create vitamin D in the body. A deficiency in vitamin D

can lead to depression and heart failure and may compromise the immune system.

- **Lower stress levels:** Students of all ages are faced with stressful situations that come at them from every angle. The arrival of the global pandemic has been an added stressor that continues to affect children and adults. According to research by the University of Essex, outdoor exercise offers mental health benefits that exceed those gleaned from indoor exercise. A 2017 study of Japanese students found those who spent time in the forest for two nights returned home with lower levels of cortisol, a hormone used as a marker of stress, than students who remained in the city.

- **Better focus:** A dose of nature may help children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder improve their concentration levels. A 2008 study from researchers at the University of Illinois found that children with ADHD demonstrated greater attention performance following a 20-minute walk in a park as compared to a residential neighborhood or downtown area.

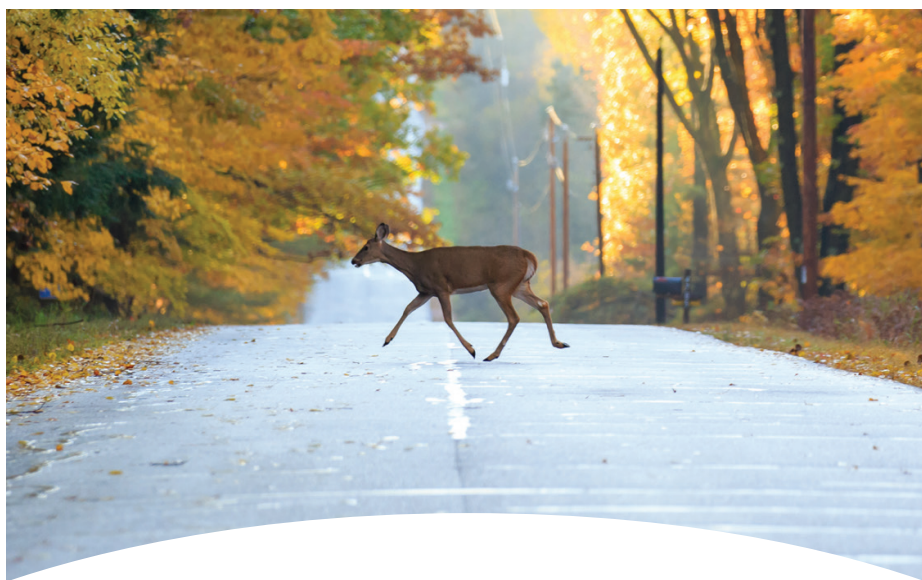
Getting outside and engaging in any activity has a variety of benefits for children and adults.

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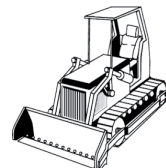
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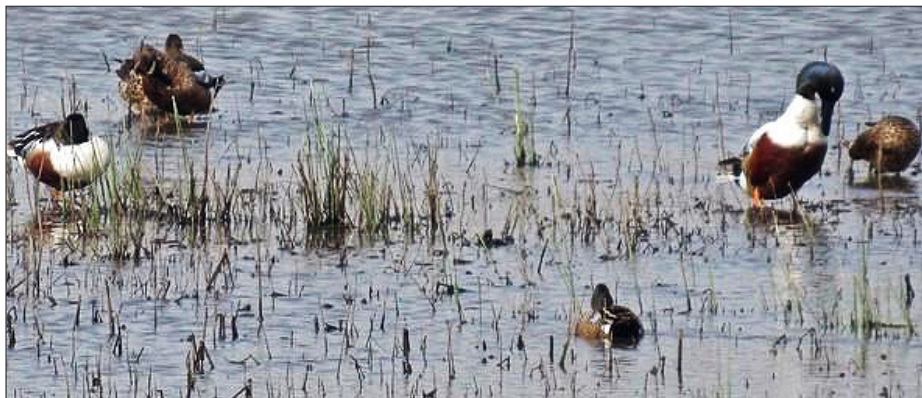


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MDC says spring migration offers good waterfowl viewing opportunities

BY BILL GRAHAM
Mo. Dept. of Conservation

KANSAS CITY – The spring waterfowl migration is underway, and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) says visiting wetlands can provide good birding and photography opportunities. Ducks, geese, and shorebirds begin moving north toward nesting grounds as weather warms and ice melts in wetlands, lakes, and rivers. Service roads and paths in MDC conservation areas provide viewing and hiking opportunities. Some wetlands also have blinds available for viewing and

photography.

“The Bob Brown and Nodaway Valley conservations areas will both have good viewing opportunities,” said Craig Crisler, MDC wildlife management biologist. “Also, the waterfowl refuges on both areas are now open to the public.”

MDC’s Bob Brown Conservation Area is in the Missouri River bottoms near Oregon, Mo., north of St. Joseph in Holt County. The Nodaway Valley Conservation Area borders the Nodaway River in Holt County. Both areas have managed

See **Waterfowl**, Page 15B

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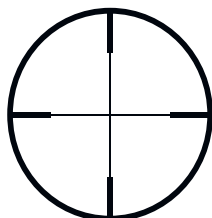
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Waterfowl from page 14B

wetlands and various other habitats.

"In spring, we do slow drawdowns of pools to concentrate invertebrates along the water's edge instead of draining pools quickly," Crisler said. "One reason we do this is to provide easily accessible food for migrating ducks, geese, shorebirds, and other wading birds. Most managers try to have this occurring in some part of the area from ice out to early June to be there for the entire group of migrating species."

Spring migration of wetland-oriented birds varies by species and can be influenced by weather patterns. The bird species using a wetland can vary from week to week. MDC and private wetlands provide important resting and feeding spots for migrants as they prepare for nesting season.

"There is a lot of opportunity for the public to see a little bit of everything at Four Rivers Conservation Area," said Shane Allen, MDC wildlife management biologist and area manager. "We are currently dewatering slowly in select pools, and I have seen a good amount of shorebird and diverse waterfowl use. Pool 6 is currently being completely dewatered for a management objective with several acres of exposed mud flats."

The August A. Busch, Jr., Wetlands at Four Rivers is south of Kansas City in Vernon and Bates counties.

A major wetland renovation project is underway at MDC's Schell-Osage Conservation Area in Vernon and St. Clair counties. But some wetland pools may be usable for shorebirds and waterfowl. Plus, Atkinson Lake is nearby.

"What we try to do is provide useful habitat," said John Henry, MDC wildlife management biologist and area manager. "Waterfowl use wetlands as loafing and foraging areas on their migrations both north and south. In the spring we begin drawdowns on our wetland pools to promote natural moist soil vegetation for the rest of the growing season. This drawdown also provides shallow water habitat for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl."

MDC's Cooley Lake Conservation Area in Clay County and the Little Platte Marsh Conservation Area in Platte County are close to Kansas City. Both have wetlands frequented by wetland birds.

For more information and maps about all MDC wetlands and public conservation areas, visit <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z9o>.



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