

The Rectrix

A seasonal newsletter of the Missouri River Bird Observatory

Volume 6 No. 2 - April 2016



rectrix [rek-triks] noun. (pl. -trices) any of the larger feathers in a bird's tail, used for steering in flight.



Letter from MRBO's Seasonal Educator

Dear MRBO members,

My name is Heather Desorcie, and I am so pleased to be joining the MRBO team this season. I graduated from Canisius College in Buffalo, NY with a bachelor's degree in Animal Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation. I originally wanted to be a zookeeper, but my experiences in college have helped me discover my passion for birds and education. This is my first professional job, and I get to do what I love! I feel so lucky that I get to work outside with a pair of binoculars around my neck.

As a freshman I spent my first summer vacation working as an environmental educator at a wildlife refuge in western New York. I enjoyed that job so much that I did it again the next year and decided to pursue environmental education as a career. I always knew that I did not want to teach in a traditional classroom. At the wildlife refuge I would watch Tree Swallows and Great Blue Herons fly overhead while waiting for the busses to arrive in the morning. I saw something new each day, even though I always took the same path. I want to show people how wonderful nature is, rather than simply talking about it. Many of the students I worked with were from inner city schools and stepped off the bus looking uneasy and out of place. By the end of the day, each student had a favorite bird and left with the biggest smiles on their faces. It warms my heart when people get as excited about birds as I do.

In my free time I like to go birding (big surprise!). I also enjoy wildlife photography, hiking with my dog, and playing the saxophone. Since the east coast is my home, I am looking forward to seeing new species while in Missouri. I have already seen several life birds including Eastern Meadowlark, Great Horned Owl, Short-eared Owl, Wilson's Snipe, and Henslow's Sparrow!

I am excited to bring my skills to the Missouri River Bird Observatory, and continue learning myself. During my first month here I learned how to mist net and band birds. I even got to do field work, which was a completely new experience for me. I know I will have many more new experiences while working for MRBO. I also hope I can contribute to this wonderful organization during my time here.

I decided early on that I want to have a career that positively affects others. I want my lessons to have a lasting impact on the people I teach this season. If everyone I speak with leaves my programs with a greater appreciation for birds and their habitat, I will have succeeded at my job. I believe that respect for the natural world is a vital part of a child's education and the place to acquire that love is outside, which is why I always prefer leading experiential educational programs. Ultimately, I hope my work helps make the world a better place for animals. As Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

I look forward to meeting you during my time as the Missouri River Bird Observatory's seasonal educator.

Sincerely,

Heather Desorcie



Dana Ripper
Director

Ethan Duke
Assistant Director

Veronica Mecko
Project Coordinator

Seasonal Staff
Will Britton
Wetland Bird Surveyor

Heather Desorcie
Educator

Katie Leonard
Avian Field Technician

Araks Ohanyan
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Our Mission
To contribute to the conservation of Missouri's birds and their habitats through research, monitoring, education & outreach.

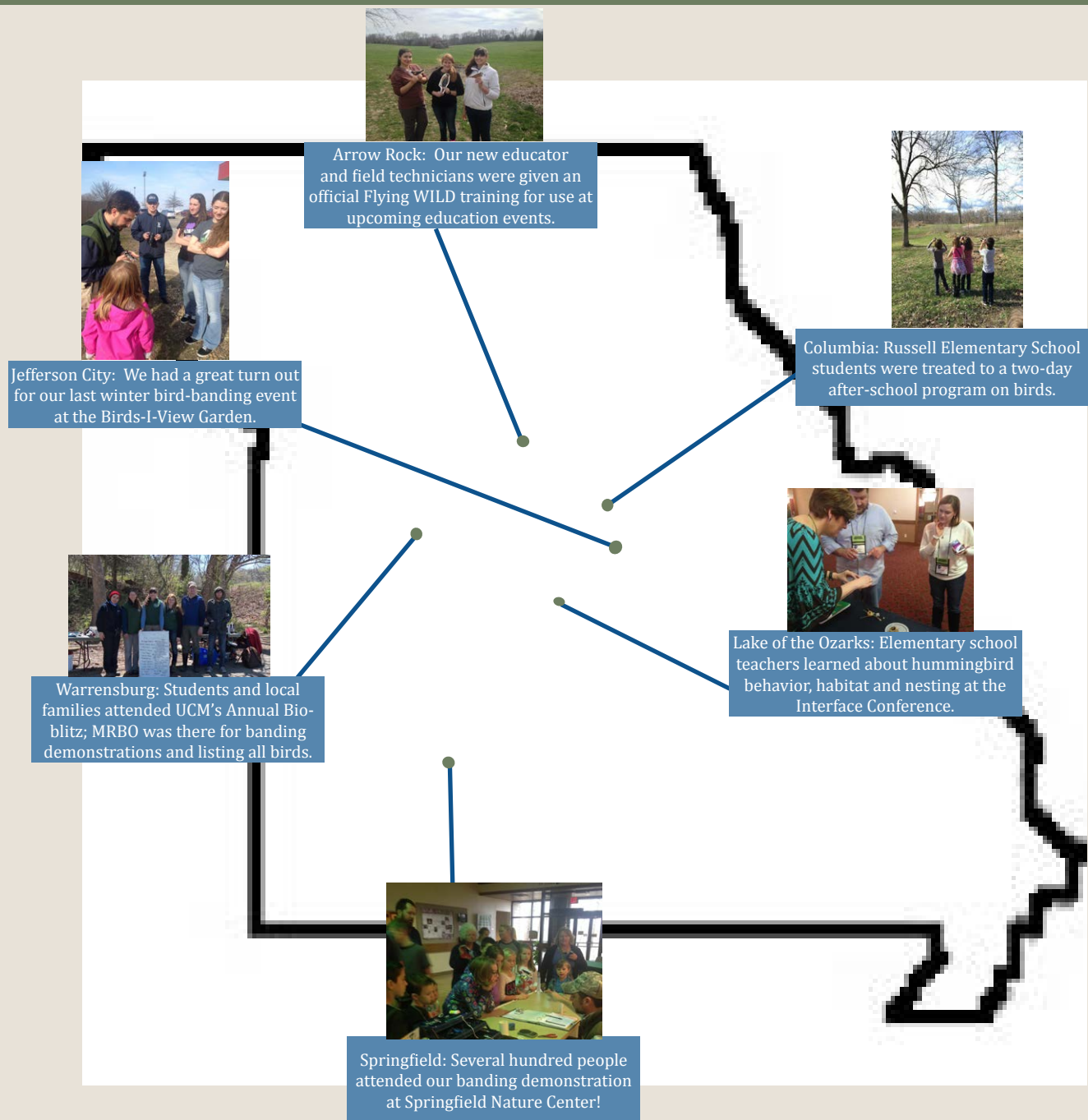
Below: some scenes from Heather's first MRBO education program with 2nd grade students.



Front cover: American Bittern

Back cover: Swamp Sparrow

Recent Education & Outreach Highlights



Upcoming Events

May 7th in Arrow Rock: the annual Garden Market and Vintage Bazaar. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.. MRBO will provide a presentation on “The Earth-friendly Backyard: Native Landscaping for Wildlife and Beauty”. A native plant vendor, Gaylena’s Garden, will be at the Market and MRBO will provide free native plant seedlings at our office at 39250 Highway 41.

May 14th in Weston Bend: the sixth annual Wings Over Weston festival. Join bird lovers from all over Missouri at this family-friendly event all about birds and migration.

May 21st in Lexington: Join us for the Battle of Lexington State Historic Site’s Kids to Parks Day! MRBO will be providing bird walks and other activities in complement to the variety of nature and history programs provided by the SHS.

June 4th and 5th at Linden’s Prairie, Mount Vernon: the Missouri Prairie Foundation’s Bio-blightz. All are welcome at this free event for families and nature enthusiasts where local experts will lead surveys of all life on the prairie.

Check in at mrbo.org for more upcoming events, or call us at 660.837.3888 to schedule your own custom program!

Meet MRBO's Seasonal Staff

You just met Heather on page 2, now meet the rest of our Spring and Summer 2016 staff! While each of them has duties on specific projects, their skills are so varied that they will all get the chance to work on all of MRBO's projects! See page 10 for a rundown of the field work for this year.



Araks Ohanyan was born in Armenia and raised in southern California. Thanks to her nature-loving mom, she has been interested in animals all her life. It wasn't until high school, however, that volunteering at the Los Angeles Zoo helped her realize that she wanted to be a field biologist. She has been living in Philadelphia for the past 5 years, and she received her B.S. degree in Biology from Drexel University last year. As an undergraduate, she studied abroad in Equatorial Guinea for 3 months, where she learned field methods in tropical ecology and completed a small study on local squirrel species. Her undergraduate career also included a 3-month stint on the island of Maui studying the endangered Akekeke, and 6 months in Mexico participating in a Scarlet Macaw reintroduction project. Shortly after graduating, she spent the summer on a small remote island off the coast of Maine studying seabirds with Project Puffin. She joined MRBO with a desire to gain banding and bird ID experience, and to contribute to avian conservation work. In the coming years, she hopes to obtain her Master's degree and keep doing what she loves!



Left: Araks and Katie during banding training. Right: Araks, Katie and Heather during Flying WILD training.



Katie Leonard was born and raised in Missouri, and she graduated from Southeast Missouri State University in May of 2013 with a degree in Organismal, Ecological, and Evolutionary Biology. She has always been interested in nature and biology, but she found what she wanted to be in life after taking a course in animal behavior: an ornithologist. Since graduation, Katie has gained experience working in southern Florida researching Snowy Plovers with Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, as well as studying other birds and organisms on Sanibel Island as an intern with J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR. In the summer of 2015, she worked with the University of Nebraska-Omaha studying Henslow's Sparrows, one of MRBO's target species. After spending an amazing winter in Australia researching the evolution of brood parasites and their hosts over time, Katie was excited to work with the birds in her home state as an Avian Field Technician with Missouri River Bird Observatory. She enjoys doing temporary field work around the country, but one day hopes to find a permanent position doing what she loves—researching avian species through conducting fieldwork.



Meet MRBO's Seasonal Staff



Will Britton was born in Houston, TX and raised in Arkansas. He has been in love with the natural world since he can remember, and he furthered that with a Biology degree, which he completed in December of 2014, from his hometown school Harding University. While he was originally planning to pursue marine ecology, an ornithology course during his senior year changed all that. Now donning binoculars instead of a snorkel mask, Will is eagerly learning new skills for the study of birds. Last fall he spent 5 weeks in Punta Gorda, Belize counting raptors with Belize Raptor Research Institute. The diverse birds of Belize and the hawk-watch there made for an incredible experience that inspired Will to pursue seasonal field work whole-heartedly. He is excited to encounter Missouri's elusive and secretive marsh birds and is very thankful to MRBO for this great opportunity. His future goals include becoming a well-rounded technician with bird study skills that run the gamut and perhaps persuing a Masters degree in avian ecology.

Erik Ost was born in Maryland and raised in Northern Virginia. He graduated with a B.S. in Organismal Biology from Christopher Newport University in 2015. Growing up hiking and traveling to National Parks he developed a connection with nature and wildlife. During an Ornithology course in college, he found a passion for birding and avian conservation. His love of wildlife and commitment to conservation brought him to MRBO. Before joining the MRBO team he worked for AmeriCorps, held odd jobs, and explored Peru. Erik plans to move to South America to pursue a career in conservation biology.



Erik,
Andrew and
Will during
wetland
survey
training.

Andrew Vo wants to live in a world filled with next-level technologies, phones that come standard with animal voice-to-text translation and a magic spray that will offer unlimited dog hair protection and the occasional food item.

As a field technician, he's been commended on his successful team management and data analysis skills. At his last field position in South Africa, he led an important role in the habituation of wild baboons, where the new team now collects data for a baboon sociality project. Andrew is currently searching for a graduate program where he can study computer engineering in concert with animal behavior. Although his experience is mainly in marketing and design, Andrew plans to take this excellent opportunity from MRBO to learn more about birds and how they are such an important indicator for a healthy environment. For the next few months, Andrew will be learning from the knowledgeable team at MRBO in his position as surveyor and nest-monitoring technician. He will also be using audio recording equipment to study the vocalizations of Missouri's rare marsh-dwelling species.

When he's not out taking photos with his old film camera, you can find him diving into foreign films, trying to learn a new language, and optimistically searching for some good waves in Wilmington, North Carolina.



Interview with a Missouri Master Naturalist



by Veronica Mecko, MRBO Project Coordinator

Marge Lumpe is a member of the Hi Lonesome Chapter of Missouri Master Naturalists who lives with her husband Ron just outside of Cole Camp. An avid and knowledgeable birder, Marge did some grassland bird surveys as a volunteer for MRBO in 2013 and 2014. Last May I learned that she also organized a local Bird-a-Thon and I was intrigued by how involved she was in local birding activities. I wanted to learn more about how she got interested in birding and the different types of birding projects she has been involved with. Recently she was gracious enough to grant me a formal interview in her home.

Marge explained that when she was young her mother and sister were influences on her, but she didn't take to birds right away. "Mother loved them but I just wasn't paying attention. The memory was there but I didn't act on it until later." When they were adults, her sister would point out birds as they were driving along but Marge wasn't seeing them. In a competitive way Marge realized, "She's seeing things that I'm not seeing, and that was a little goad to start paying attention to the outdoors."

In her early 40s, Marge realized that she wasn't getting outside enough. "I was not hooked up with any group and I wanted to get outside more but I wasn't going to go on my own." She lived in San Antonio, TX at that time where there were two Audubon Society Chapters. She decided to go to the meeting that was closer to where she lived, which was Bear Audubon Society. "So I joined them and it was such a gift. The main person who got me hooked up with learning things about the natural world was Susan Rust who was in charge of outings at that time. I started going on outings and if you ever start looking at birds you just can't quit. They're kind of an obsession."

Marge did Bird-a-Thons every year in San Antonio beginning in 1985. The Bird-a-Thons are annual fundraisers through the National Audubon Society. She was also one of the founding members of Mitchell Lake Wetlands Society, an organization dedicated to turning an old sewage treatment plant into a wildlife refuge.

When Marge and Ron moved to Cole Camp in 2007 she wondered what she would do for birding since her environmentally-minded friends were back in Texas. Ron learned before they left Texas that there was going to be an Audubon Society office in Cole Camp, a joint effort between National Audubon and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to focus on bringing back Greater Prairie Chickens to the area. Marge thought, "Oh there's hope. There'll be some conservation-minded people there." As it turned out, the Audubon Society office was only in Cole Camp for three years. But Korey Wolf, a biologist working jointly for MDC and Audubon, was encouraging local people to start a Master Naturalist Chapter. "The MDC got the word out to surrounding communities and we had about 26 people in the first class. It was the largest rural chapter formed in Missouri. I signed up to be treasurer and I said I'd be treasurer as long as they'd keep me. I'm still the treasurer. That was in 2008 and then we decided to have a Christmas Bird Count in this area and 2009 was the practice year." Marge organized the Christmas Bird Counts until this past winter. "We get such a good turnout, and the people who don't bird cook."

Marge continued to do Bird-a-Thons after moving to Missouri but until 2013 she still raised money for the Mitchell Lake group. Since 2014 the Bird-a-Thon money has gone for educational resources for the Hi-Lonesome Master Naturalist Chapter. At the most recent Master Naturalist conference, several members became certified in Flying WILD, a program focused on bringing environmental learning opportunities to middle school-aged students through bird-centric activities. Future Bird-a-Thon funds will go to purchasing supplies to use with Boys and Girls Club events in conjunction with Flying WILD learning. Some of the funds have also been used to buy supplies to build birdhouses for the Prairie Day celebration in October.

Another accomplishment of the Master Naturalist chapter that Marge initiated was to work to get a Chimney Swift tower put up in Cole Camp after the chimney that the birds used had to be capped. Marge became aware of the Chimney Swift population just two months before the chimney was capped. "I went to city hall and told them, 'You've got to take the cap off!'" The city deemed the chimney too structurally unsound to do this, but Marge, along with other members of the Chapter, brought a book on Chimney Swift towers to a city council meeting and discussed several ideas. In a happy ending, the city agreed to put up a new tower and the Chapter raised money to pay for it. "Chimney Swifts use the tower and now there are Chimney Swifts that are going into another chimney nearby. And I think it raised awareness in the community."

Marge recalls several most memorable experiences of birding over the years. "The first one that hooked me, when I was about 28, was a Lesser Goldfinch that sat outside my window in San Antonio. It was just a beautiful thing." Other memories are watching a Painted Bunting bathe at a puddle on the golf course with a friend and stopping at a "birdy" looking place during a Christmas Bird Count where there was a pool underneath a huge tree where she observed cardinals, bluebirds and goldfinches in the dawn light. "It was just breathtaking to see all those colors together. There are just some things that stick with you forever." One year, a group with the Bird-a-Thon in Texas got to go birding with well-known author and birding guru Kenn Kauffman. They went birding in the hill country and at Mitchell Lake. More recently Marge went to Costa Rica last July and observed the Resplendent Quetzals.

Marge Lumpe, Hi-Lonesome Chapter

In 1992, Marge and Ron used to go out and watch the Prairie Chickens at Hi Lonesome Conservation Area and adjacent private lands; none remain in the area today. Earlier this April Marge accompanied a group of Master Naturalists to Salina, Kansas to capture female Greater Prairie Chickens for reintroduction in Illinois. “What an experience. You get up in the middle of the night and go out there. You sit in the blind and zip open the window and wait for the chickens to come. We had 14 to 15 males and they were booming and cackling and carrying on. The first day there were six hens that we brought in. Being that close to the Prairie Chicken was very memorable.”

When asked about her dreams and hopes for the natural world, Marge recalled the big project at Mitchell Lake in Texas. “The most interesting thing is all the shorebirds that come to Mitchell Lake where there are wetlands. The city wanted to clean up the wetlands because it smelled terribly. The state ordered them to clean it up. Fortunately, they brought in some experts who said, ‘Leave it alone. It will save you a ton of money and eventually if you stop putting sewage into it, it will naturally be all right.’ They left it alone and it took 25 years. National Audubon Society adopted it as a refuge. That whole experience is probably some of my nicest feelings about pursuing conservation efforts. It takes so long to get things done. But you just hang in there.”

Marge also hopes that the efforts in Missouri will bring back the Prairie Chickens to the Cole Camp area. “I think that information is seeping out to farmers and cattle raisers that maybe fescue isn’t the best thing. That’s a dream: that people become aware enough to appreciate the birds and that the habitat is shrinking so much. My dream, which is a huge dream, is that politicians would become aware, would stop denying climate change for one, and be aware of the beauty of our natural world and how important it is to people’s everyday lives to be able to enjoy nature, particularly birds.”

Marge doesn’t feel that she is an inspiration to other birders, she just enjoys birding. “I am just following my bliss and this is what I want to do and if you want to come, I love it. I think it’s really easy to engage people in birding. Everybody birds at some level. I feel very lucky to have come here and been able to continue doing birding things. It’s really turned out to be a much happier hobby for me than I’ve ever imagined. Because people think of me when they see birds. They tell me, ‘I saw this bird and I thought about you.’ I can’t think of anything better than that.”



Marge with Indian Paintbrush on the prairie that surrounds her home.



Marge (fourth from right) with other members of the Hi-Lonesome Chapter of the Master Naturalists at a recent climate change seminar held by MRBO and River Bluffs Audubon Society.

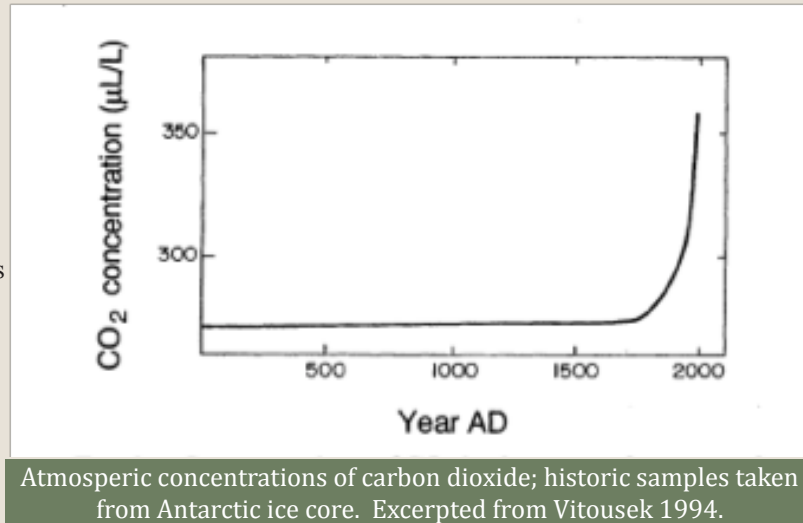
Marge is organizing a Bird-a-Thon for 2016 that will be on May 15. To pledge, email bird-watcher@msn.com. Pledges can be made as flat pledges such as \$10 or you can pledge per species, such as \$0.25 per species. This year Ernesto Carman, bird guide from Costa Rica, will attend the Bird-a-Thon and will give a public talk on May 16 at the MDC auditorium in Jefferson City. The topic of his talk is “Cerulean Warblers.” All proceeds from the Bird-a-Thon go to the Hi Lonesome Chapter of Master Naturalists for educational events. See their Facebook page for more information.

A Conversation on Climate Change

By MRBO Educator Heather Desorcie

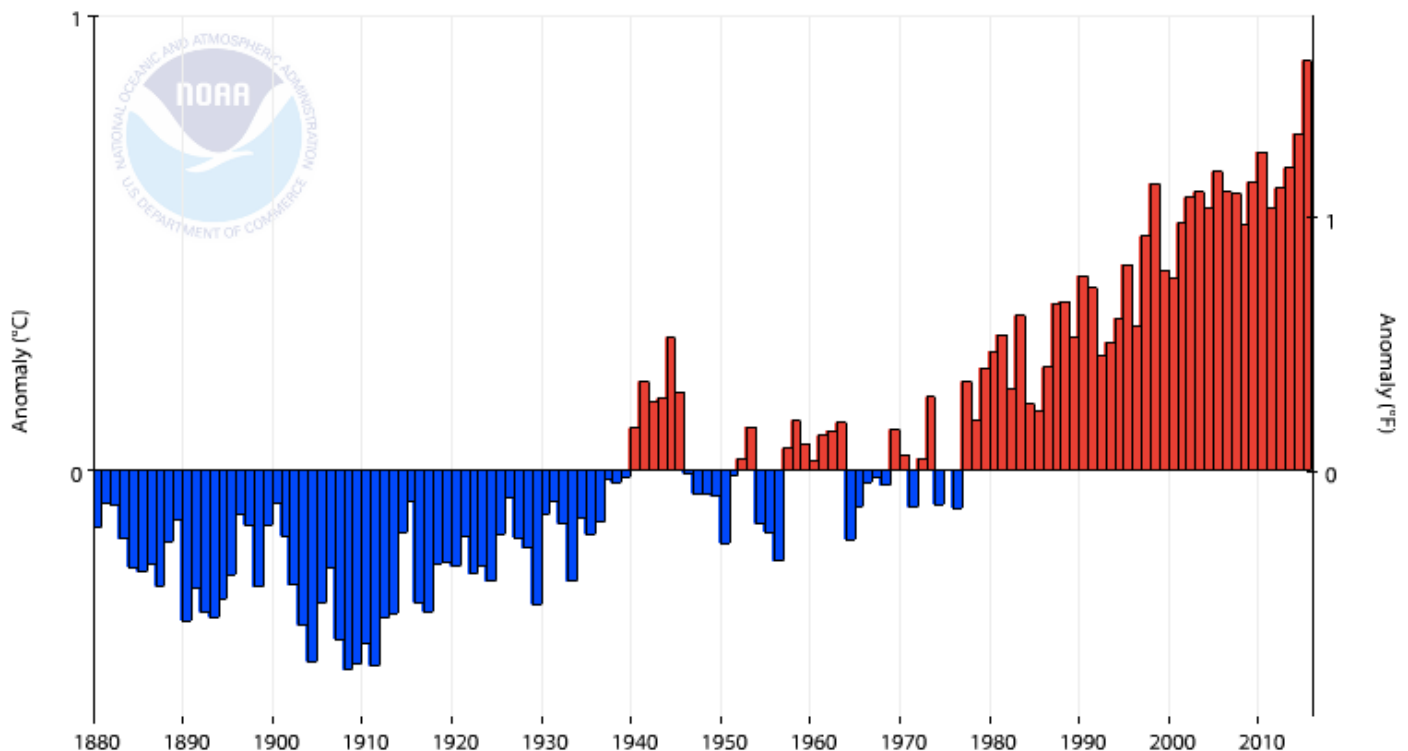
We are currently living in the Anthropocene Epoch, which is an era of time characterized by humans having a significant impact on the Earth. Geologically speaking, humans have changed the face of the planet in the blink of an eye. Our population has boomed and our technology has advanced at lightening speeds. This massive, sudden change has led up to the crisis we now face: global warming.

It is a well-established fact in the scientific community that carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels are rising, which is the culprit of global warming. CO_2 levels have been well documented since 1957 (Vitousek 1994). The problem scientists faced was discovering whether rising CO_2 levels was a natural phenomenon or caused by human activity. This question could not be answered without comparing modern data to data taken thousands of years before 1957. Amazingly, we have this data. By drilling deep into Arctic ice caps, scientists can extract and analyze gasses from ancient air bubbles. Findings show that CO_2 levels were constant for a long period of time until suddenly spiking in the 19th century, which is consistent with the Industrial Revolution and the burning of fossil fuels.



Because our society is so dependent on fossil fuels, wildlife biologists must be prepared for the unknown. There is no way to be sure how species will be impacted by rising temperatures. Some believe that species may actually benefit from global warming, as areas with high temperatures and levels of precipitation, such as tropical rainforests, also contain the highest biodiversity in the world (Sheikh et al. 2008). Some also theorize that birds may be positively impacted because they will not have as far to migrate. Unfortunately these theories demonstrate a very

Global Land and Ocean Temperature Anomalies, January-December



Temperature deviations from the 20th century average, clearly displaying the warming trend that is now occurring around the globe.

linear way of thinking. The natural world is a complex web, and when one aspect of the environment is changed a domino effect may occur in its wake. Some may ask, “won’t animals simply adapt to the new climate?”. Because we have no way to predict the rate at which the environment will change, it is possible that animals will not be able to adapt fast enough to survive. There have been periods of climate change in the past that have not caused mass extinctions, but we do not know the extent to which humans are accelerating global warming (Sheikh et al. 2008).

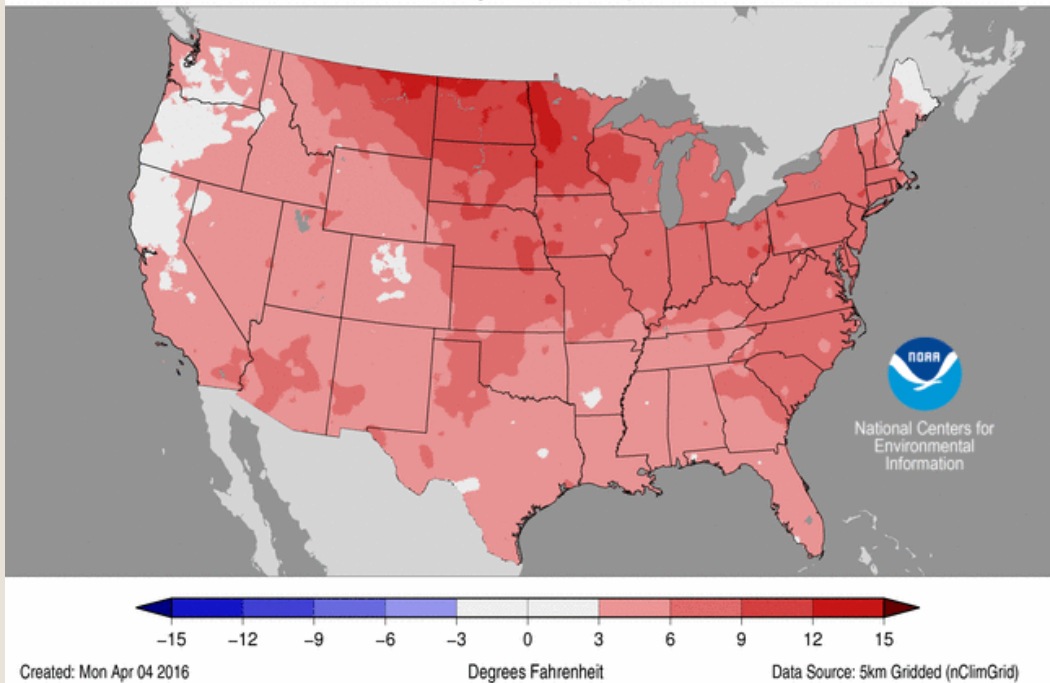
The first behavioral response we would expect birds to have to global warming would be a change in location, both in latitude and elevation. As

Climate Change: How will birds be affected?

Mean Temperature Departures from Average

March 2016

Average Period: 20th Century



Average temperature deviations from the 20th century average, documented for March 2016.

temperatures increase, birds may be moving north and to higher elevations. Studies show evidence of this already happening. One study found that out of 24 western species of birds, 14 shifted their ranges north, while only 4 traveled south, 5 moved west, and one species traveled radially (Hughes 2000). This particular study hypothesized that range shifts were due to increased precipitation, which is often a result of global warming. Range shifts may seem harmless, but what if there are not places for these species to go? In the Anthropocene, the Earth's surface is covered by pavement and buildings. Conserving what is left of our natural habitats is of the utmost importance during this uncertain time if we want to give wildlife any chance of survival.

As temperatures rise, it is also likely that the phenology of species will change. The life cycles of animals are closely tied with temperature and precipitation (Hughes 2000). This ultimately affects other species in the ecosystem and results could be catastrophic. For example, if plants bloom earlier due to higher temperatures but pollinators do not hatch until later due to longer periods of sunlight, both species may suffer (Sheikh

et al. 2008). Two populations of checkerspot butterflies have already gone extinct because of this scenario. Plants that the butterfly larvae would typically eat died early due to changes in precipitation and the butterflies followed suit (Sheikh et al. 2008). As you can see, rising temperatures have unexpected consequences that even the best ecologists cannot prepare for.

The National Audubon Society has compiled data from citizen scientists in North America to understand the climate preferences of 588 species of birds. By using future climate estimates, the National Audubon Society has mapped the predicted range shifts of birds and calculated how much habitat would be intact. 53% of birds species studied have been identified as “at risk from global warming” and are expected to lose 50% of their habitat by 2080. Some of the bird species on the “at risk” list that MRBO studies include the Hooded Warbler, Mississippi Kite, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler, King Rail, Yellow Rail, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Northern Harrier, Sedge Wren, Bobolink, Bell's Vireo, and Henslow Sparrow.

The loss of a single species such as a flower may seem unimportant, but insects depend on that flower, and birds depend on those insects, and a multitude of species from predators to plants depend on birds; you can see how the situation can get out of hand extremely fast. Most importantly, every species has intrinsic value in and of itself, and all extinctions are a devastating loss.

If humans have the power to destroy, we also have the power to restore. Understanding the sheer size of the human population and living sustainably is the first step. Small changes in your home can help reduce your carbon footprint. Get involved in your community and back policy makers who value the natural world. I highly recommend the documentary *Cool It* by Bjorn Lomborg for more information about long-term solutions to global warming. The technology that scientists around the world are currently working on to reverse global warming is inspiring. The task may seem daunting, but staying positive is important. As long as we have people who care about wildlife, we have hope.

Literature Cited

Hughes, Lesley. *Biological Consequences of Global Warming: Is the Signal Already Apparent?* Trends in Ecology & Evolution 15.2 (2000): 56-61.

Sheikh, Pervaze A. et al. *Global Climate Change and Wildlife*. Congressional Research Service (2008): Order Code RS22597.

Vitousek, Peter M. “Beyond Global Warming: Ecology and Global Change.” *Ecology* 75.7 (1994): 1861-876.

For a wealth of climate information, including searchable archives from which we made the maps and graph above, visit the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/global/2016>

The MRBO staff, just like other ornithologists and bird-watchers from Missouri and around the world, have already documented range shifts and earlier migration times of many bird species. These include Bobolink, Henslow's Sparrow, Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Wildlife biologists in other disciplines have observed northward movement in a variety of reptile and mammal species.

2016 Field Projects

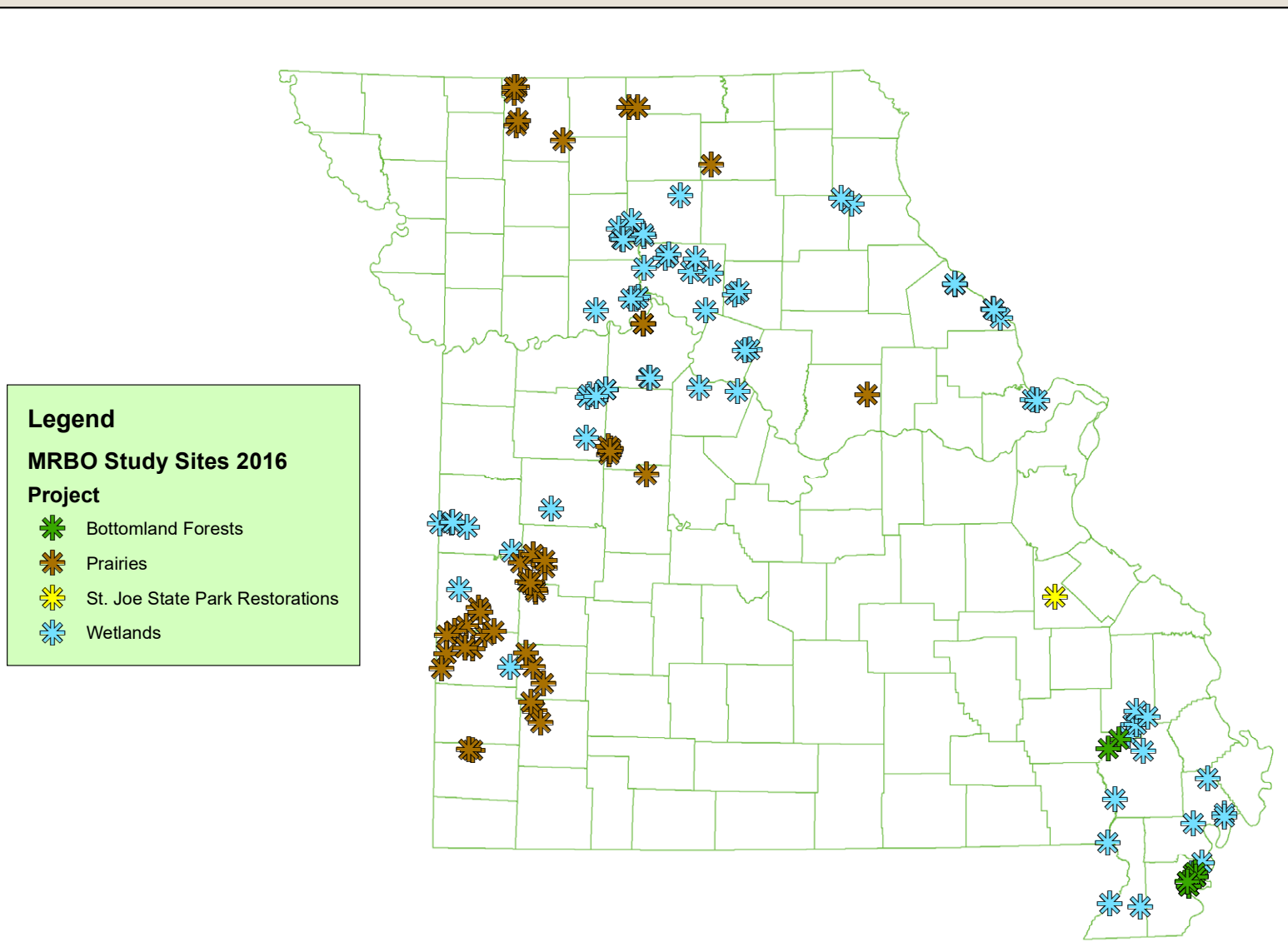
The field season has just commenced, and it is a busy one this year! If you read “Meet the Staff” on pages 4 and 5, you may be wondering why MRBO has such a large seasonal crew. We are happy to report the continuation of all our projects from previous years, as well as an exciting new project.

Grassland Survey Project (2012 – present): transect surveys will continue this year on 40 Conservation Areas managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), one grassland that represents a new acquisition of the Missouri Prairie Foundation, and five private properties that are associated with the National Audubon Society’s Conservation Ranching Program. We will also conduct nest-searching and monitoring for focal bird species on Taberville Prairie in conjunction with a long-term MDC study investigating the effects of prescribed fire and grazing.

Wetland Survey Project (2012, 2014-present): all-species transect surveys will continue along with audio broadcasts to elicit responses from secretive marshbirds. This year’s wetland surveys will take place on almost 60 private Wetland Reserve Easements located in the Bootheel and Osage, Grand, Missouri, Blackwater and Mississippi watersheds. The properties are representative of the high-quality marsh habitat that is maintained by Missouri’s private landowners and hunting clubs.

Bottomland Forest Survey Project (2015-present): all-species point counts, with focus on a suite of obligate target species, will take place for the second year in the bottomland forests of the Bootheel. This year’s study sites include mature forest stands at Mingo National Wildlife Refuge and early-successional stands at Black Island Conservation Area. The bird-survey protocol is aligned with an integrated program devised by the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture, which combines monitoring for bird response with forest management practices implemented by MDC and Fish and Wildlife Service Foresters.

Ozark Forest and Glade Survey Project (new this year!): We at MRBO are excited to have formed a new partnership with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at St. Joe State Park. DNR biologists are implementing extensive restoration activities in a variety of habitats at the Park, and MRBO will measure bird response. We have 80 point-count stations established in St. Joe’s upland hardwood, short-leaf pine and glade habitats and will sample pre- and post-restoration stands. The point counts will document all birds, while analysis will focus on obligate species for each habitat type, such as Pine Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher and Eastern Wood-Pewee.



Announcing MRBO's new office in Arrow Rock!



This year, MRBO experienced a monumental event as an organization – it now has an office and headquarters in Arrow Rock! Thanks to a fortunate partnership with the Friends of Arrow Rock (FAR) and the Arrow Rock State Historic Site (Missouri Department of Natural Resources), MRBO has a long-term lease on a historical home that has provided us with office and meeting space, rooming for temporary staff, and a place to invite groups for educational events. The home – known as the Lawless House for the original owners– is located just across Highway 41 from the State Historic Site Visitors' Center. It sits directly adjacent to approximately 40 acres of grassland which the DNR is restoring to native prairie.

The Lawless House was constructed in 1903 in the Queen Anne style and was home to D and Martha Lawless and their eleven daughters and one son. The Lawless family owned a large amount of land surrounding what is now the Village of Arrow Rock, and in fact donated several tracts of land to the Village. Much of what now

comprises the Arrow Rock State Historic Site park was originally Lawless land. The style of the house itself, as a functional farmhouse, represents a departure from much of the architecture in Arrow Rock that tends more towards the plantation style. In 1946, the home and remaining property came into the hands of the Barger family. In 1991, the home and adjacent property were sold to the Arrow Rock State Historic Site. Thanks to an exceptionally generous donation by Gladys Thomas, granddaughter of D Lawless, the FAR conducted an extensive restoration of the home in 2000 and 2001.

MRBO has honored the historical and cultural context of the home and property in our redecoration of the interior as office and meeting space. The meeting area features an extensive collection of ornithological literature and artwork of Missouri's extinct bird species. The furniture, much of which was already present in the house, is circa 1880-1920. One of the outbuildings on the property, known affectionately as the Chicken Coop, will serve as an outstanding semi-outdoor classroom at which we can host school classes and small public groups for education events.



As the Lawless House is set up as an office and professional meeting venue and not as a public visitors' center, it will not have standard opening hours for unscheduled visits. However, we will be hosting a variety of events at the property throughout each year, focused on youth education and activities for families. Please contact us to schedule a visit or custom educational program!

Mailing address: P.O. Box 16, Arrow Rock MO 65320
Phone number: 660.837.3888

New & Renewing Members of MRBO

Bill Mees	Columbia
Bob & Pat Perry	Rolla
Burroughs Audubon Society	Greater Kansas City
Jerry Combs	Kennett
Jim & Gertrude Wiant	Saint Louis
Karen & Terry Stair	Lee's Summit
Kelee & Steve Heiffus	Arrow Rock
Marie & Yusuf Hasan	Kansas City
Pat Jones	Williamsburg
Patricia Wilson	Raytown
River Bluffs Audubon Society	Jefferson City
Steve & Regina Garr	Jefferson City
Tom & Tina Tucker	Kansas City
Virginia Emley	Kansas City



