

Prairie State Park's

Tallgrass Tribune

Winter 2016

Missouri State Parks

Prairie State Park's Mission Statement

To preserve and interpret the largest remaining example of original tallgrass prairie in Missouri. The park further provides healthy outdoor recreation for all visitors. The park is dedicated to sustaining a large tallgrass prairie in its native form for future generations to learn from and enjoy.

The Northern Harrier

By Rebecca Knox

You are visiting Prairie State Park and you see it...a slender-bodied, medium-sized raptor with long, broad wings and a long, rounded tail. A distinctive, white band located just above the tail and the wings are held in a V-shape as it flies...sweeping, soaring, swooping close to the ground, weaving its way back and forth over the prairie landscape. What is it? It is the Northern harrier hawk.

If you could see the bird up close, you would find that the harrier has a flat, disk-shaped face, much like that of an owl's, and a small, sharply hooked beak. It is believed that the disk-shaped face helps the harrier to better hear and hone-in on its prey in the vegetation.

Several species of harriers can be found throughout Europe and Asia, but North America has only one, the Northern harrier. In North America, the Northern harrier can be found from arctic tundra and prairie grasslands to farm fields and marshes. While the harrier can be seen year-round to our north and west, at Prairie State Park harriers are generally more numerous in the winter than they are in the summer, however, they have been known to nest in the park in the past. Sexual dimorphism is apparent with harriers. The males are gray and white with black wingtips; the females are larger and brown.

The Northern harrier's diet is varied and consists of small mammals (voles, rats, small rabbits), other birds (songbirds, flickers, doves, small ducks), and large insects (especially grasshoppers), snakes, lizards, toads, and frogs, and they may feed on carrion, especially in the winter.

To learn more about the Northern harrier and other raptors, click the link and you can view or download the Missouri Department of Conservation's booklet, Missouri's Raptors by Carol Davit.

http://mdc.mo.gov/sites/default/files/resources/2011/09/moraptors_2011.pdf

Prairie State Park Welcomes New Employee

Mathew Miller, son of former Natural Resource Steward Brian Miller, returns to his roots on the prairie as parks maintenance worker.

Miller previously worked at Shawnee Trails Conservation Area for the Missouri Department of Conservation, and most recently, at Coose trailer in Lockwood, Mo. He brings experience in welding, fence building, working with tractors and prairie restoration.

Matthew and Abbie had their first child Angus this past year. Welcome Matthew back to the park.



~Mystery item ~
Chinese Praying mantis

Jerry Decker correctly identified this as an egg mass from a praying mantis. Specifically, it is the Chinese mantis. They have a prominent green stripe down their side and grow to be 5” long where our native Carolina mantis is about 2.5” long. Females are larger than males. The females are known to eat the male during mating about 25 percent of the time!



Photo by Dana Hoisington

Chinese mantis were accidentally brought in to the Northeastern US in 1896 and have spread since. They prey upon many insects and the occasional hummingbird. They also prey upon Monarch butterflies.



Adult mantis photos from MDC



Carolina mantis egg case
(picture from Missouri Botanical Gardens)

The Carolina mantis feeds on small insects like flies, bees, beetles, and many others. They depend on their stealth and camouflage. Insects are even known to land on them their camouflage is so great!



Which hawk is this, and when is it found here?



Photo by Dana Hoisington

Send your answer to prairie.state.park@dnr.mo.gov and the person with the first correct answer will be listed in the next newsletter.

Calendar of Events

~Activities will meet at the nature center ~

Jan. 23, 10 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Nature Bingo

Come and play this fun, interactive game and learn about Missouri animals and plants. Prizes will be awarded!

Feb. 6, 1 p.m.

Bison Hike

It may be winter, but the bison are ready for it. A wooly fur coat keeps them nice and warm. Be prepared for two-mile hike. The winter winds can be very fierce so dress for the weather.

March 5, 10 a.m.

Bison Hike

Spring is coming soon and the bison are ready for it. Join us as we go out and see these majestic animals on their native habitat. Dress for the weather ! Spring winds can really sting. Be prepared for a two-mile hike.

March 18, 9:30 a.m. -noon

***Laura's Prairie- HS**

Little House on the Prairie is our inspiration for this year's homeschool programs. Learn about life on the prairie from a different perspective. One copy of *Little House on the Prairie* will be given to each family.

March 19, 9:30-11 a.m.

***Laura's Prairie – Public program**

Similar to home school program, but for the general public.

April 2, 10 a.m.

Bison Hike

Spring is officially here! Join us as we go out and see these majestic animals on their native habitat. Dress for the weather ! Spring winds can really sting. Be prepared for a two-mile hike.

April 15, 9:30 a.m. -noon

***The Osage HS**

Learn about the Osage impact on this area and how Laura interacted with them. Make a parfleche!

April 16, 9:30-11 a.m.

***The Osage – Public program**

Similar to home school program, but for the general public.

May 7, 10 a.m.

Bison Hike

There should be baby bison to view now! Come join us as we learn about bison , prairies, wildflowers and more. Be prepared for a two-mile hike. Dress for the weather. May can be warm or cool. Insect repellent, snacks and water are recommended. Wear close toed shoes. Don't forget your cameras!

May 13, 9:30 a.m. -noon

***Prairie Pollinators –HS**

Without pollinators, we would have much less food available. Learn the important roll that bees, wasps, beetles, butterflies and moths play in the ecosystem. Learn what you can do to help out the Monarch butterfly. Milkweed seeds or plants will be available to take home.

May 13, 9:30 -11 a.m.

***Prairie Pollinators – Public program**

Similar to home school program, but for the general public.

HS denotes home school program.

***Registration is required.**

Please call 417-843-6711 to register.

Prairie State Park - The year in review

- Two new staff members joined us in 2015: Katy Holmer, Natural Resource Steward, and Matheson (Matthew) Miller, Park Maintenance Worker.
- Bison hike attendance was up 40 percent. A total of 246 people attended our guided bison hikes. That is 70 more than last year.
- First Day Hikes continue to be popular with an average of 32 people. A big "Thank you!" to the hardy souls braving the cold to get in touch with nature and enjoy some exercise.
- National Bison Day celebration had nearly 80 come celebrate the impending making of the bison as our national mammal. They enjoyed a bison hike and bison oriented crafts and games, and sampled bison chili.
- Bison Stampede 5K Trail Run had about 30 participants experience the prairie; many were first time visitors to the park.
- A prescribed burn was conducted on Hunkah Prairie, which includes Path of the Earth People Trail, and the Rice property off of NN.
- Four new colonies of the state endangered Mead's milkweed were found during our Mead's milkweed survey in early June. If you would like to be a part of this annual survey, drop us a line or call the park. We can always use extra eyes to help locate them.

Hey Kids!

Winter is now here and with it, new birds that you won't find here during the summer months. Come out and see if you can spot some. To get you primed for that, see how many you can find in the word search below.

Name: _____

Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Word Search Maker

Winter residents

J L X R U V N O C L A F E I R I A R P N
J O B P R E P E E R C N W O R B C I L I
H A R R I S S P A R R O W U M U H S H H
O B N O R T H E R N S H R I K E Y A I Q
B Q C U T W L Z J N Z N C A X E J S I A
F W H I T E C R O W N E D S P A R R O W
H Q S R Y Z I U R G S Z G E L Q L K Y Q
D R L W O D E R A E T R O H S I C X T M
L Q G X Q H C N I F E L P R U P Z I X Z
G O C N N T O D A R K E Y E D J U N C O
D K W A H D E G G E L H G U O R E A L Q
C D D U S Y E Q H I O N Z Q I H H C J N
Y L W O D E R A E G N O L B Y M D B K Z
W O R R A P S E E R T N A C I R E M A G
W O R R A P S D E T A O R H T E T I H W
W P D R I B K C A L B S R E W E R B O D
L W T J A G T D R J D G T R X J O K O E
A E S X W G O E E H W O T D E T T O P S
J V A B H K S B J N N V W B T L Y T A W
R N B L G A F B A L D E A G L E F Q Q Y

BALDEAGLE

NORTHERNSHRIKE

SPOTTEDTOWHEE

AMERICANTREESPARROW

HARRISSPARROW

PURPLEFINCH

DARKEYEDJUNCO

BROWNCREEPER

SHORTEAREDOWL

ROUGHLEGGEDHAWK

PRAIRIEFALCON

WHITECROWNEDSPARROW

WHITETHROATEDSPARROW

BREWERSBLACKBIRD

LONGEAREDOWL

Spring Homeschool Programs 2016

Laura's Prairie March 18, 9:30 a.m. – Noon

This year's focus will be on *Little House on the Prairie*. The book will be a theme throughout the year that our programs. One copy will be given to each family.

The Osage April 15, 9:30 a.m. – Noon

The primary tribe of Native Americans in this area were the Osage. Learn how they lived and how Laura interacted with them

Pollinators May 13, 9:30 a.m. – Noon

With summer just around the corner, that means flowers. Flowers would not be what they are without pollinators. The class will look at bees and butterflies as well as wasps, flies and beetles. The class will focus on the plight of the Monarch butterfly and learn what can be done to help them. Milkweed seed packets/plants will be provided.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

Complete the form for **each program** (copy as needed). Please register **every person** that will attend. **Each family must pre-register for each program with a \$4 deposit (per family)**. The money will be returned upon your participation in the program. Unclaimed funds will become a donation to the park. You may mail in your registration anytime after you receive this notice. You must **pay by cash or check for each session separately** (i.e., three checks for three programs). Checks will be held until the date of the program. **Make checks payable to State of Missouri/DNR**. No telephone or email registrations will be taken.

PROGRAM REGISTRATION deadline is March 1, 2016!

After that date, call to see if there are openings for the programs. You are enrolled **unless your deposit is returned to you**. **If you cannot attend a program, please notify the park**; supplies are purchased for nearly every program. In case of inclement weather, call 417-843-6711 to check status of the programs. In most cases, we cannot reschedule the program. Your fee for that program will become a donation.

PROGRAM (Circle correct one) Laura Osage Pollinators
CHECK _____ CASH _____ NUMBER ATTENDING _____

PARENT'S NAMES _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

CHILDREN'S NAMES and AGES _____



Check out our Facebook page for photos, interactive posts, information on upcoming programs and events.

Give us a "like".

<https://www.facebook.com/PrairieStatePark>

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