

THE BABLER BABBLE

Official Newsletter of Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park

Not All Birds Fly South

BY CLAIRE HUMES

You may have heard the saying that all birds fly south for the winter. This is true for some birds like swallows, hummingbirds, wrens and orioles, who migrate south to warmer climates. However, other birds like the Northern Cardinal, the Tufted Titmouse, American goldfinches, chickadees and woodpeckers, just to name a few, stay in Missouri year-round. There are even some birds that migrate to Missouri from the north for the winter, like the Fox Sparrow and the Cedar Waxwing.

Why do some birds leave and others stay? This depends a lot on what they eat. As the temperatures drop, food sources like insects decline. Therefore some insect-eating birds may turn to eating berries and fruits, while others will fly south to warmer climates to find more insects. For birds that eat nuts and seeds, they tend to stay in Missouri during the winter because their food source is more widely available even during this time.

Where do they find food, you may ask? The winter birds will eat seeds, nuts and berries or other fruit that they may find in wooded areas. When snow is on the ground, they will often flock to bird feeders and places where there is flowing water that isn't frozen.

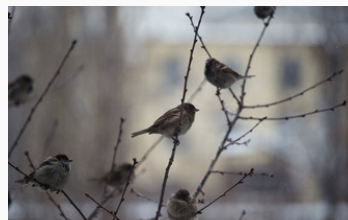
Where do they sleep? On cold nights, birds will sleep in groups in the trees, cracks of buildings, barns, nesting boxes, bushes and shrubs, or in densely vegetated areas of coniferous trees to keep warm.

How can I see them? If you set out bird feeders with birdseed like sunflower seeds, this gives them a place to find food when it snows. It also gives you the opportunity to see a lot of Missouri's winter birds.



Cedar waxwing with red berry in beak on tree.

Photo courtesy of Skyler Ewing via Pexels.com



Birds sitting in a tree in winter.

Photo courtesy of Alexey Demidov via Pexels.com

This Issue:

Not All Birds Fly South

PAGE 01

Park Info

PAGE 02

Special Events

PAGE 03

What's the Story ...

PAGE 04-05

Explorer Corner

PAGE 06

Backyard Birding

PAGE 07

Manager's Notes

PAGE 08

A Year in Review

PAGE 09



Generations of Missourians have passed through Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park's massive stone gateway for cookouts and family get-togethers or to spend time with friends. The park's camping facilities, Civilian Conservation Corps architecture, and hiking, bicycling and equestrian trails help all visitors find their place to get away from it all, just minutes from St. Louis.



Park Hours

APRIL-OCTOBER 7A.M.- 9P.M.
NOVEMBER-MARCH 7A.M.- 6P.M.

Visitor Center Hours

MARCH & NOVEMBER 9A.M.- 4P.M. SAT-SUN
APRIL-OCTOBER 9A.M.- 4:30P.M. WED-SUN
DECEMBER-FEBRUARY CLOSED

Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park
800 Guy Park Drive
Wildwood, MO 63005

T: 636-458-3813
F: 636-458-9105
E: BablerStatePark@dnr.mo.gov

Park Staff

PARK MANAGER: CHRIS FERREE

ASST. MANAGER: RICH LOVE

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MAINTENANCE: HOLLY MORRIS

MAINTENANCE: JASON LECLERE

RANGER: JONATHON THOMPSON





Special Events Schedule

ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

PLEASE CONTACT THE VISITOR CENTER AT 636-458-3813 FOR MORE INFORMATION OR CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE.

Nature's Decor

10 a.m.-Noon--Session 1

2 p.m.-4 p.m.--Session 2

Saturday, Dec. 9

Deck the halls with boughs of holly... The holidays are just around the corner, and we're in the mood to decorate! We'll use nature's resources to create wonderful winter wreaths. You provide the grapevine wreath – you choose the size and shape you want – and pliers, and we'll provide everything else for decorating. Meet at the visitor center.

This event is for ages 14 and older. Minors (under 18) must be accompanied by an adult.



Sign up for these events via the link below:

icampmo1.usedirect.com/MSPWeb/Activities/Search.aspx

First Day Hike

10 a.m.-Noon

Monday, Jan. 1

Join us for Babler's first hike of the year. We will be hiking the Dogwood Trail. This trail is a moderate 2-mile trail that meanders through drainage bottoms and dry woodlands. Meet at the Guy Park Trailhead located in the valley of the park off of Guy Park Drive.



Tweets for Sweets

10 a.m.-Noon

Saturday, Feb. 10

Join Babler in celebrating National Bird Feeding Month by creating treats for our migratory winter bird friends. We will be learning about different types of feeders, from pine cone suet feeders to recycled bird feeders. Meet at the Visitor Center.



Sign up using the link below:

icampmo1.usedirect.com/MSPWeb/Activities/Search.aspx



Check us out on Facebook at Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park .



Explorer Program

Giving visitors a new appreciation and respect for the natural world and the historic setting around them along with an interest in preserving them is the main goal of the Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites Explorer Program. The patches and stars earned are visible symbols of a person's commitment to preserving the living environment.

The program has three parts to complete to earn the patches:

1. Interpretive Study—complete two programs learning about an animal, building or history related to the park or historic site.
2. Interpretive Programs—complete four programs: guided tours, evening programs, hikes, etc.
3. Identification—identify 10 significant things to a park interpreter (objects, people or other living things), giving the proper name and its importance to the park or historic site.





What's the Story ...

BY CARLEY WRIGHT

Did you know that Dr. Edmund A Babler Memorial State Park has at least 7 cemeteries within its boundaries? In the 1800s, many families buried their dead on their homestead, instead of church graveyards. (The difference between them - a graveyard is found in the yard of a church, while a cemetery is independent of a house of worship.) Once those former homesteads became part of the park, the state became caretakers of these final resting places.

Glaser - Bothe Cemetery (1876-1932)

Near the park entrance lies the cemetery of the Glaser and Bothe families. First buried here is Joseph Glaser, followed by his son Johann in 1880.

The headstone texts are in German, which is usual for German immigrants in this era, with Hier Ruht in Gott (Here Rest in God) inscribed at the top. A wire fence and gate in disrepair surround the graves.

Gaehle Cemetery (1878-1926)

Some cemeteries have no headstones, for unknown reasons. Just up the hill from the Glaser - Bothe resting place is this Gaehle cemetery, located in the past few years by park staff, and has yet to be verified by modern techniques such as ground penetrating radar (GPR). It's believed that there are at least two people here, possibly four.

Bates Cemetery (1872-1902)

Located in an area of the park not currently accessible to the public, the Bates cemetery has headstones for five people, with two more possibly buried here. The area was surrounded by a possibly hand tied fence, with the borders slightly raised from over a century of tree litter decaying up against the wires.

Coleman - Tyler Cemetery (1849-1950)

Our largest and most accessible cemetery is across from the Stables on the north end of the park. The Coleman and Tyler families came here from Virginia, and part of each plantation was in the current park. The Tyler home stood on the hill just west of the parking lot at the stable, and this is the primary burying ground for their family. (The Coleman cemetery is on private land west of Wild Horse Creek Road.) There are at least 28 graves here, the earliest from 1849.

Persons enslaved by these families would not have been buried in this cemetery, and it is theorized there may be a separate location for these persons.

Continued on page 5.

Thank you for your support by continuously voting to renew the 1/10 of 1% Parks, Soils & Water Sales Tax.

It is through this constitutional tax, in which half of the funding generated is earmarked for the Division of Missouri State Parks. This provides about three-fourths of the division's budget for the operation and development of state parks. All additional funding comes from revenues generated in the state park system and some federal funds.



We do off-site programs!

Contact Dustin Hillis, senior park specialist, at Babler State Park to schedule your program(s). These can be for schools, assisted living facilities, fairs, etc.

E: Dustin.Hillis@dnr.mo.gov
T: 636-324-7064



What's the Story ... [Continued]

Kelpe Cemetery (1864-1923)

The area that currently encompasses the Outdoor Education Center used to be the Kelpe homestead, and their family cemetery can be found off an old trail/road. Instead of headstones, a row of cedar trees marks the final resting places of six members of the family, including twins Edwin and Edward.

Puellmann Cemetery (1923-1930)

The second most accessible cemetery, Puellmann cemetery is steps from the paved trail between the equestrian lot and the campground. Officially there are two people resting here, Minnie and Charles Puellmann. It's believed that one of their daughters died in the 1890s, and she may also be buried here. The area is surrounded by a wire fence, very similar to the one around the Glaser - Bothe cemetery.

Kroenung Cemetery (1874-1907)

Southeast of the campground, and on the very edge of park property is the Kroenung Cemetery. Three headstones are here - mother, father and son. According to a newspaper of the time, the son's wife is also here, but no evidence of a stone exists. Unfortunately the stones were victims of 'good intentions,' someone 'repaired' and reset them, not in accordance with proper procedures.

Recently, we discovered a lead on a potential eighth cemetery in the park. There is evidence that there could be another Tyler cemetery, or it could be the enslaved persons burial ground. Further research by park staff and the Cultural Resources Program of Missouri State Parks is necessary to determine who, if indeed anyone, lies here.



Volunteers in Parks

VIPs provide invaluable assistance to Missouri State Parks on a wide variety of tasks and projects around the state. Volunteers assist people in visitor centers and contact stations. They help catalog historic items and documents, and they serve as natural history interpreters and tour guides. Some VIPs perform maintenance or light construction tasks, or help with constructing or renovating trails. There is almost no limit to the types of work that volunteers can perform. The main requirement is a willingness to serve.

Contact the park for more information at
636-324-7064.

Or signup at the following:
mostateparks.com/page/57872/volunteer-parks-program





Explorer Corner

Can you find a black-capped Chickadee in your backyard? Listen carefully, black-caps tend to sound like they are saying "See-beee" or "Cheezzzz-burger!" while the Carolina chickadee sounds like they are saying "See-bee, see-bay."



The Naturalist Journal

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The Christmas Bird Count will be held Dec. 14 to Jan. 5 and occurs every season. Frank Chapman and 26 other conservationists initiated the Christmas Bird Count as a way of promoting conservation by counting, rather than hunting, birds on Christmas Day 1900. Some counts have been running yearly since then. Now a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 120 years of community science involvement, it is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the U.S., Canada and many countries in the Western Hemisphere go out over a 24-hour period on one calendar day to count birds. (and mammals) as possible.

To learn more about the Christmas Bird Count, use the link provided.

audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count



Black-capped Chickadee

What time of day did you see this bird?

What different colours do you see on the bird?

Where in the park did you see this bird?

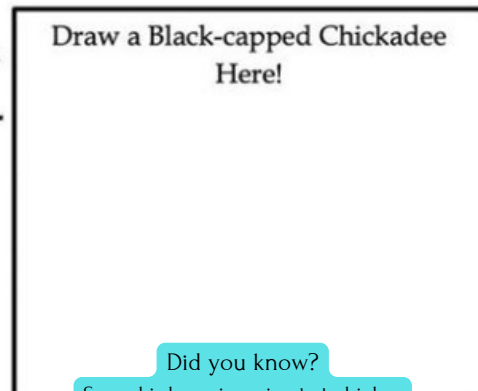
What was this bird doing when you spotted it?

HOW DOES IT FLY? 

Straight or wavy?



Draw a Black-capped Chickadee Here!



Did you know?

Peanut butter is a very nourishing food for birds, especially in winter when the production of fat is important to their survival. The winter birds myth that it will stick in their throats simply isn't true.

Did you know?

Some bird species migrate to higher elevations in the spring and down to lower elevations in the winter. Examples include rosy finches and ptarmigans in the West.



Backyard Birding: Winter Edition

BY ALDER FORRESTER

Leaves drop, temperatures plummet, and sunlight weakens; winter in Missouri can at times become a little dreary and monotonous. Why not infuse a little color into your day while you help your local ecosystem? While a great deal of the birds we see in Missouri are either part-timers or passers-through there still yet a number of birds that stay with us all year round. With a simple setup and a handful of ingredients you can attract Missouri's beautiful winter resident birds to your own yard. And even if you don't have the space for your own bird feeder you can always come enjoy the birds of Babler.

Just like our faithful MLB team, the Northern Cardinal stays in the St. Louis area. Rather than migrate, they have adapted some clever ways to tough out the chilly weather. They fluff out their feathers, to trap warm air for insulation, and also to look pretty dang cute. Just like us, they generate heat by shivering. If all else fails they can even drop their body temperature a few degrees to expend less energy staying warm. To give them and many other birds the energy they need, we can provide a constant supply of fatty, nutrient-rich, high-energy food. There are so many commercially available mixes branded to attract cardinals or to provide winter energy but here are a few ingredients to look for: black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, cracked corn, peanuts, walnuts, mealworms and suet. There are tons of other options for cardinals to eat, but the foods listed above are among their favorites. These provide the fats, sugars, vitamins and minerals that keep birds healthy throughout the winter.

Do we get points for presentation? While cardinals love all sorts of feeders, some feeders can attract a wider array of birds than others. Platform feeders, like those found at Babler's Visitor's Center, are also loved by red-bellied woodpeckers, mourning doves, American crows, dark-eyed juncos, American robins and Carolina wrens. Just to name a few. Any flat surface that you can spread your seed mix on will do, especially if its suspended to prevent poaching by unwanted critters. And the accessory options are endless! You can get squirrel baffles, heated bird baths, nesting materials or an overhang to offer protection against the elements Add any or all of these thoughtful features and the birds will be sure to return again and again, bringing appreciative friends along too.



Male cardinal sitting in a tree (pictured above).
Photo courtesy of DaPuglet via Flickr.

Pictured right, is one of the bird feeders located behind the visitor center here at Babler. Created and installed as an Eagle Scout project.



Scout Projects

Park staff have compiled a list of potential scout projects for the park. These projects include a variety of skill and time requirements, from a few hours to a full day, ongoing, group and individual projects. Scout projects are available now.

Contact the Visitor Center for more information!

636-458-3813



Thank you to our
Park Rangers.





Manager's Notes

BY CHRIS FERREE

As long as summer seemed to linger this year, fall has abruptly ended and the parks woods have shed most of their leaves, and we stand at the cusp of winter. It's hard to believe 2024 is right around the corner.

It has been another busy year at the park. With so many large projects occurring, it is easy to forget the time and effort that goes into the day-to-day operation. The bulk of that work is shouldered by the amazing staff and volunteers the park has. One is never truly caught up with things that are on the to-do list for the park but every day we work toward that goal.

Some of the smaller projects we hope to accomplish in the near future are: facelift of the bathrooms on the campground basic loop, replacing boards on picnic tables parkwide, signage improvements and user features set around the new equestrian parking lot and trailhead.

Part of campground will temporarily remain closed due to the anticipated improvement project construction. We are excited about this upgrade to full hookup service. Work also continues on infrastructure improvements to our drinking water system and Lodge renovations.

Park crews will also be accomplishing natural resource work this winter with such things as invasive species removal, prescribed burn plot prep work. We also are planning on rerouting part of the equestrian trail by the stables to provide a better user experience.

Nature may slow down a bit in the winter but never truly stops and if you sit long enough that flock of turkeys may cross your path, and it's usually not too hard to spot a deer. The park is a great place to unwind a bit even if the weather is not ideal. I have been known to eat my lunch sitting in my car looking out across the park. I hope you all get to enjoy some outside time as well this holiday season.

River Hills Gift Shop

Start your adventures inside our store. We have beverages, collapsible dog bowls, snacks, hiking sticks, apparel, plush toys, Frisbees, kids wristbands, souvenirs, insect spray and so much more!





A Year in Review

New Maintenance Workers

In 2023, we hired two new full-time maintenance workers: Holly Morris and Jason LeClere. They will help complete our team of 7 full-time staff here at Babler. We want to give them a warm welcome to the Babler Family.



Holly comes to us with a foundation of skills and experience from her work with St Louis AmeriCorps Stewardship and Emergency Response Teams, and as a seasonal worker previously at Babler State Park. Holly holds a Bachelor of Science in Education with majors in Biology and Spanish and a minor in Mathematics from the University of Alabama



Jason comes to us with a foundation of skills and experience from his previous work in welding, grounds maintenance, work with Special School District of Saint Louis, and as a seasonal worker at Castlewood State Park. Jason holds a master's degree in Physical Education from the University of Huston Texas.

Paved Trail Remodel

We started the project of repaving and repairing the Paved Bicycle Trail. This project was a long overdue and a highly anticipated one. This project is still ongoing, and we will keep you updated on when it will be completed.



New Equestrian Parking Lot

Due to the repaving process of the Paved Bicycle Trail, it was decided to permanently move the Equestrian Trailhead to the old pool parking lot. This move allows equestrian users to access a larger parking lot and ample space for their trailers.

Campground Upgrades

Starting this November, sections of the campground will be closed for remodeling. We will be reangling and extending sites, adding 50-amp service, adding water and adding sewer to (current numbering) sites 1-33. Please be aware that the current numbering will be going away after the completion of this project and the campsites will receive a new numbering system.

Leave No Trace

The 7 Principles of Leave No Trace provide an easily understood framework of minimum impact practices for anyone visiting the outdoors. The Principles can be applied anywhere — from remote wilderness areas, to local parks and even in your backyard. Each Principle covers a specific topic and provides detailed information to empower you to minimize your impacts.

1. Plan Ahead
2. Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Others

For more information about Leave No Trace please visit:

[Int.org/](https://www.lnt.org/)





First Day Hike

10 a.m.-Noon

Monday, Jan. 1, 2024

Join us for Babler's first hike of the year. We will be hiking the Dogwood Trail. This trail is a moderate 2-mile trail that meanders through drainage bottoms and dry woodlands. Meet at the Guy Park Trailhead located in the valley of the park off of Guy Park Drive.