



Missouri River Bird Observatory

Annual Report FY2016

1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016





FY2016 was MRBO's best year to date, marked by growth in our conservation work and the formation of new partnerships. Thanks to the Friends of Arrow Rock and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, in March 2016 MRBO officially established an office and education center! The organization is now has a home located in Arrow Rock, in a restored ca. 1900's farmhouse.



Permanent Staff

Dana Ripper
Director

Ethan Duke
Assistant Director

Veronica Mecko
Project Coordinator

Board Members

Gene Gardner, Chairman
MDC, Retired
Jefferson City, Missouri

Lynn Hodgens, Secretary
District Attorney's Office,
Chautauqua County, New York
Lakewood, New York

Diane Benedetti, Fundraising Chair
Chez Trappeur Bistro
Arrow Rock, Missouri

Clay Miller
Stifel Financial
Kansas City, Missouri

Elizabeth Cook
NRCS, Retired
Jefferson City, Missouri

Michele Reinke
Missouri Valley College
Marshall, Missouri

Seth Gallagher
NFWF
Fort Collins, Colorado

Steven Byers
Byers Consulting
Nevada, Missouri

Whitney Kerr, Jr.
Cushman & Wakefield
Kansas City, Missouri

P.O. Box 16
Arrow Rock, Missouri
660.886.3888
www.mrbo.org



Below Right: MRBO's new office, a historic home in Arrow Rock.
Below Left: MRBO's priceless 2016 seasonal crew. ***Above:*** the view from the office, an area where many educational events will take place.



On the Prairies

Less than 1% of Missouri's original tallgrass prairie remains today. Prairie-obligate birds are undergoing the steepest declines of any guild in North America. MRBO tracks Missouri's prairie bird populations using a variety of methods. The goal is to help public and private land managers better understand the management practices that result in stable or increasing bird populations on their properties.

Surveys

MRBO staff continued our statewide prairie bird survey project, now in its fifth year. Surveys are conducted during the breeding season on more than 50 properties. All birds are recorded by sight and sound on iPads, allowing us to determine the density of each species on every property surveyed and to track changes in density between years.

Nest Monitoring

2016 was the first year of our new nest-monitoring project. MRBO staff found over 200 nests on just a portion of Taberville Prairie! This study aims to document the nesting success and amount of young produced by prairie birds in areas grazed by cattle compared with ungrazed acreage. This will help managers determine whether, or how much, grazing is good habitat management.

Banding

Spring migration banding at Mora and Bruns Tract prairies continued to display birds' microhabitat preferences during this crucial time of year.



In the Wetlands



Approximately 15% of Missouri's original marshes exist today. Critical acreage has been conserved and restored by Missouri's private landowners, often as part of the Wetland Reserve Easement Program. MRBO monitors bird populations on thousands of acres of private wetlands each year. In addition to collecting data on bird diversity and abundance, we are able to reach out to the landowners on whom many bird species depend.

Marsh Bird Surveys

MRBO staff surveyed 58 private wetland easements during spring migration and breeding season in 2016. Over 20,000 birds of 200 species were documented on 5,000 acres of marsh habitat. Several rare and state-endangered species were detected, including eight King Rail (photo below left).

Landowner Outreach

The most important part of the survey project is the opportunity to interact with each and every landowner personally, relating to them how important their property is for birds. Each landowner also received a detailed report of MRBO's findings. In June 2016, we worked with MDC staff to conduct a very successful landowner workshop in north central Missouri.



In the Forests

Bottomland Forests of the Bootheel

This type of wetland, bottomland forest, remains in only about 15% of its former distribution in Missouri. MDC Foresters are using new techniques to better manage our remaining bottomlands for maximum biodiversity and forest health.

2016 was the second year of MRBO's point-count surveys in the bottomlands of Missouri's bootheel. The surveys occur in forest stands of various ages and multiple management treatments. Our data will allow managers to track exactly how the bird community is responding to their management actions and the stage of forest growth.

St. Joe State Park

The quality and extent of Missouri's Ozark forests are a conservation success story in our state. Nonetheless, managers at the Missouri DNR are using sound management practices to further increase bird diversity and numbers in our State Parks.

St. Joe State Park staff asked MRBO to help track bird response to their management actions on a 1,100-acre unit of the Park. We used point counts to document every bird seen and heard during the peak breeding season. These data will help the St. Joe managers determine which actions, such as prescribed fire or tree thinning, will result in the highest density of bird use.



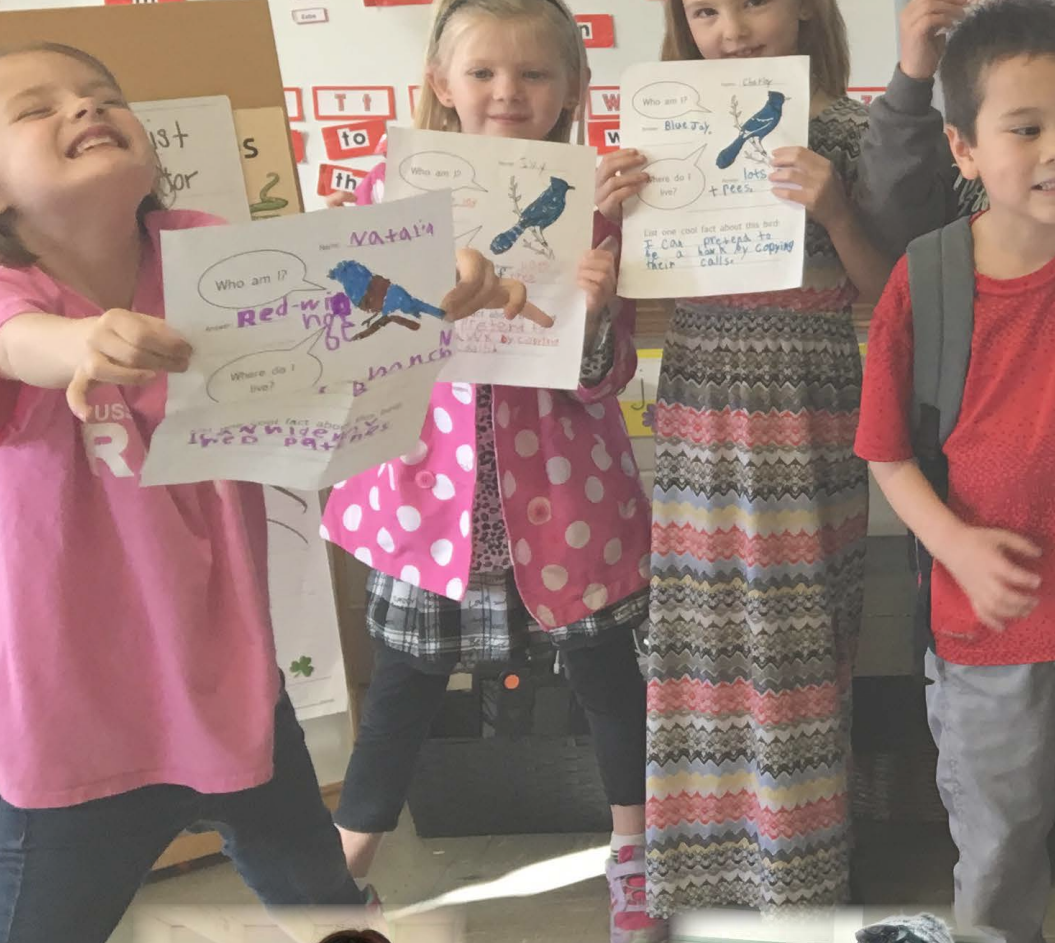
Educating and Promoting Stewardship



All of the scientific data and habitat management in the world will not save Missouri's birds if people do not care about them. This is why MRBO places a great emphasis on our education work. Also, a connection with nature and spending time outdoors simply makes people's lives better.

K-12 Education

MRBO conducted 53 education events that reached 4,000 young Missourians across the state during FY2016. This achievement was possible because of our outstanding seasonal educators, Heather Desorcie (below left) and Emily Wilmoth (below right). Events included guided nature hikes, bird-banding demonstrations, and inquiry-based outdoor activities.



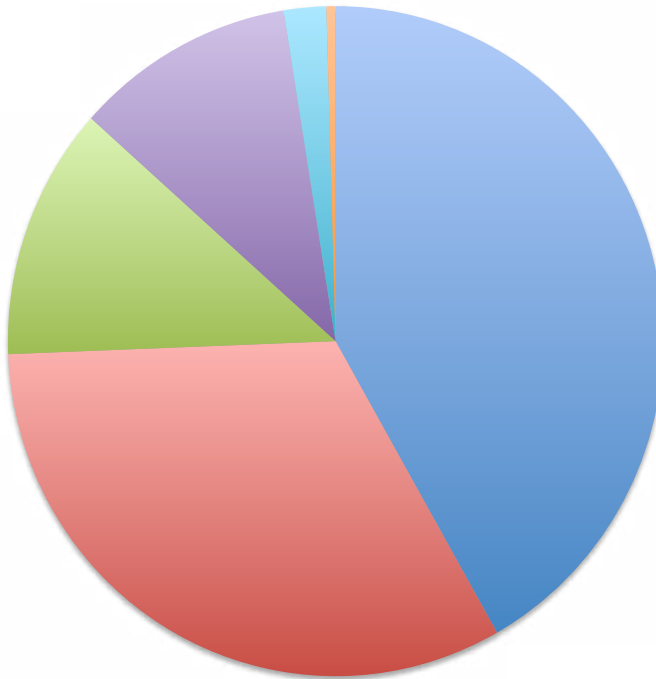
Adult Education

Each year MRBO conducts a variety of adult programs, many of which are focused on training educators or parents to get their students outdoors. We work with the MDC, the Missouri Master Naturalists and a wide variety of civic organizations and clubs to bring programs to adults throughout Missouri. MRBO conducted 16 programs specifically for adults during FY2016. Between adults-only and all-ages programs, 1,100 people over 18 were reached.



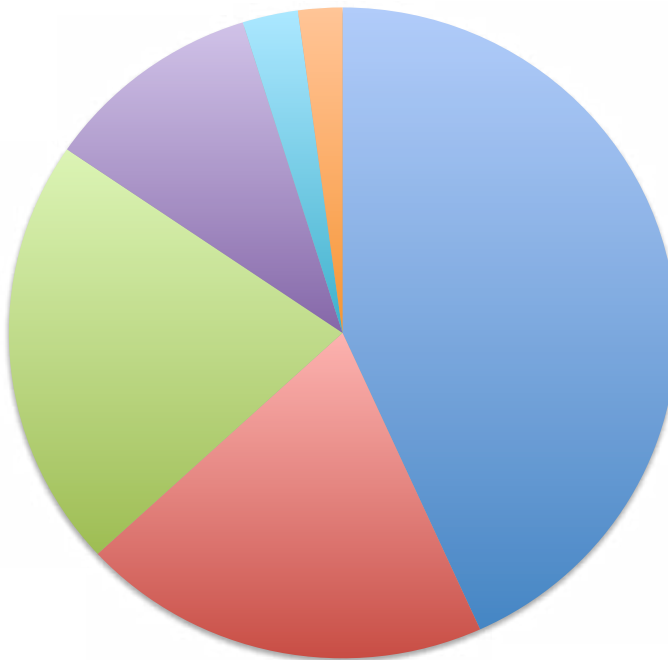
Financials

INCOME



- **Prairie Projects: \$68,486.39**
- **World of Dreams Fundraiser: \$53,375.77**
*To CD Investment: \$25,489.05
- **Wetlands Project: \$20,000.00**
- **Education Gifts and Grants: \$17,808.12**
- **Memberships: \$3,432.36**
- **Program Fees: \$736.38**

EXPENSES



- **Prairie Projects: \$63,480.72**
- **General and Program Operating: \$29,187.70**
- **Wetlands Project: \$31,448.05**
- **Education: \$15,606.32**
- **St. Joe Forest Surveys: \$3,956.02**
- **Bottomland Forest Surveys: \$3,141.76**

MRBO'S WORK WAS MADE POSSIBLE IN FY2016 BY:



River Bluffs Audubon Society



**Burroughs
Audubon
Society**



Audubon



**MISSOURI
CONSERVATION
DEPARTMENT**



**Members, sponsors &
Board of Directors**

Pat Jones



**MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**



The Missouri River Bird Observatory Mission: to contribute to the conservation of Missouri's birds & their habitats via research, monitoring & education.

