

## Volunteer to Help MDC with Breeding Bird Survey

Calling all birders and other bird-lovers in Missouri! The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) needs volunteers to assist with the 2017 North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) May 27 – July 7. The BBS is a long-term, large-scale, international bird monitoring program that started in 1966. The purpose of the BBS is to track the status and trends of North American bird populations.

**There are six route areas in Missouri that need volunteers: Barnard, Doe Run, Hayti, House Springs, Lucerne, and Rueter.**

**For more information or to volunteer, contact MDC Resource Scientist Janet Haslerig by email at [Janet.Haslerig@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Janet.Haslerig@mdc.mo.gov) or call 573-522-4115, ext. 3198.**

"Bird populations are subjected to numerous, widespread threats including habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, land-use changes, and chemical contaminants," said Haslerig. "If significant declines are detected through BBS data, their causes can then be identified and appropriate actions taken to reverse them before populations reach critically low levels."

Each year during mostly June -- the height of the bird-breeding season for most of the U.S. -- BBS volunteers collect bird-population data along roadside survey routes. Each survey route is 24.5 miles long with stops at half-mile intervals. At each stop, volunteers conduct three-minute point counts where they record data on the bird species and numbers they see or hear within a quarter-mile radius. Surveys must start one-half hour before sunrise and take about five hours to complete. Volunteers need only conduct their survey route once during the May 27 – July 7 survey period.

Haslerig said volunteers need access to suitable transportation, good hearing and eyesight, and must be able to identify all birds in the area. All new BBS volunteers must successfully complete an on-line training program before their data can be used.

She also stressed that knowing bird songs is extremely important. "Most birds counted on these surveys are singing males," said Haslerig.

Haslerig hopes surveyors will commit to multiple years of collecting data on the same route. "It helps with the consistency in data collection," she said. "And volunteers also get familiar with the routes and have better ideas what birds they will encounter. And it's fun!"

For more information on birds of Missouri, visit the MDC online Field Guide at [nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/search](http://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/search).