

First Flight

Volume 1: June 2022



This is our inaugural newsletter for the Missouri Young Birders Club, and I am honored to jumpstart this project! While we are starting fairly late in the year, this will be a quarterly newsletter (you should expect a newsletter every March, June, September, and December), similar to the Missouri Birding Society's *The Bluebird*. If you submit anything nature-related to the newsletter's editor, it's almost assured that you'll see your submission in that issue. If you have any questions, be sure to email me or Paige Witek (the state coordinator) in the contacts listed in the last page. Without further ado, enjoy!

Did you Know?

By Kyla James



As shown in the picture, hummingbirds sometimes sleep upside down. Let them sleep when they do this because they will pop themselves back up easily!

The Latest Bird News, Reporting from Eastern KS/Western MO

By Maya Zimmerschied

Recently, I spotted several birds in Eastern Kansas/Western Missouri, near the Kansas City metro area. Before these sightings, I saw golden brown goslings (Canada Geese). Over Memorial Day weekend, I saw a multitude of birds. A few of these species were: the Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, Western Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Meadowlark (the Kansas state bird), Eastern Bluebirds (the Missouri state bird), Eastern Kingbirds, and a great quantity of Purple Martins in mowed areas.

In this habitat, there was a lake area with a prairie -- tall, flat grassland. As this is favorable habitat for a plethora of the bird species listed above, these birds were rather plentiful. In and around western Missouri, I saw two or three juvenile Eastern Bluebirds accompanied by a juvenile American Robin. In the country, I also saw a couple of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

Eastern Kansas and western Missouri are wonderful places to bird. Happy birding!

Book Review:

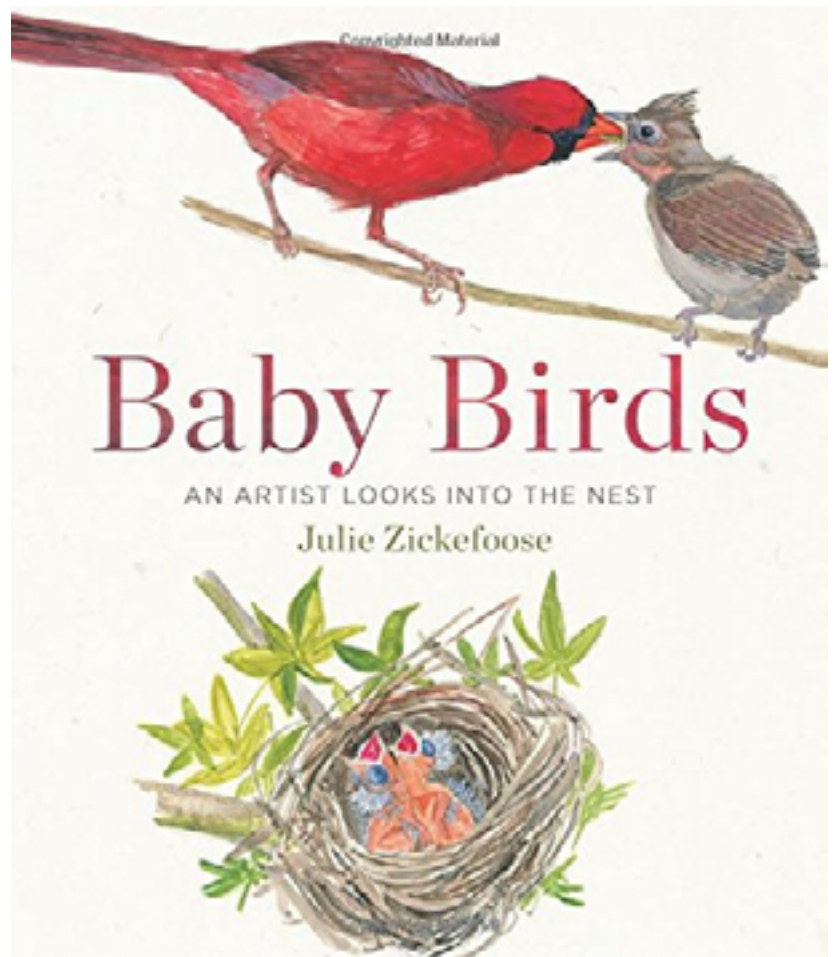
Baby Birds: An Artist Looks into the Nest by Julie Zickefoose

By Sara Scheil

Have you ever discovered a bird nest with eggs or young birds? It was a thrill, wasn't it? The author of this book, Julie Zickefoose, lets you visit the nest each day with her watercolor masterpieces of the baby birds of 17 different species of birds.

This oversized book is a delight to read and more so to see all the illustrations.

Baby birds have such a race to become a bird because staying too long in the nest makes them very vulnerable to predators. So each day, the changes are enormous from naked and dinosaur-like blobs of guts to downy feathers and then on to pin feathers. Some birds fledge quickly in about 12 days to awkwardly perching and calling for food from the parents. Ms. Zickefoose captures it all.



Ms. Zickefoose gathered all her artwork and journal notes for 13 years before creating this book. She is an artist and a wildlife rehabilitator which has made her the perfect delicate handler of the birds and the rapid sketcher needed to return the birds to their nests quickly each day after their session with her.

I guarantee you will learn much about birds from this book from the author's notes but you will be amazed at the illustrations. By reading this book, you will feel you have been allowed to look into the private family life of baby birds.



Julie Zickefoose with a fledgling Blue Jay as companion.

Farewell Paige

By Levi Mattingly

Paige Witek has led the MYBC since the spring of 2018, when the program was first founded. Having been the person to lead this wonderful club for the better part of four years, nurturing it from its infancy and watching it prosper, branching off into four different chapters with members across the state (and some even outside of Missouri!), it's easy to see that she has a great wealth of pride for it. Her leadership and ideas have kept many a young birder or naturalist around, and many more have found themselves inspired to pursue their interests further.

Whenever I've found myself gravitating away from birding, I'll go to a monthly meeting and have a rejuvenating spark of passion and wonder, which could only have come from Paige's ability to entertain and educate all of us attendees. I'm sure many of us will be glad to hear the following said by Paige, "I plan to still have a role as an adult volunteer with the club. I may only be able to join in on the virtual meetings since I will be far away, but everyone is always welcome to reach out to me if they have any questions or anything else. If anyone is in Wisconsin, let's go birding together!

"We always wanted the club to be by young birders, for young birders. I merely want to act as a mentor." Indeed, she was a great one.



The three current chapters: (above, left) Kansas City, (above, right) St. Louis, (below left) MYBC Central. A fourth, from Springfield, is underway.

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