

Fall 2010

September 2010



# The Fledgling



The Missouri Bluebird Society is an Affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society

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## REMINDER!

Steve Garr's conference program "**Bluebirding for Everyone**" will be at 6 pm on 9/24/10 and there is **NO FEE** to attend this portion of the Conference!

## MOBS

PO BOX 105830

Jefferson City, MO 65110

[www.missouribluebird.org](http://www.missouribluebird.org)

## Building Habitat.....A Letter from the President:

This issue of "The Fledgling" has great insight from our featured Bluebird Conference speaker Jim Rathert, but I also want to make sure you do not overlook our other two speakers and what they have to offer. I have always been intrigued about nest box requirements for different species of birds.

Steve Smith will have a display of nest boxes for a variety of birds in fact he will cover the cavity requirements for almost all of our cavity nesters. Not all birds use cavities but many of our favorite backyard birds do. From our smallest cavity nesters the chickadees to our largest the owls, Steve will have examples of nest boxes that he has used. I believe the nest box is the most important addition that can allow us to change a lifeless property into a productive habitat for birds.

Our other speaker, former MOBS president Jack Dodson, also has experience with a variety of cavity nesters and has mentioned to me that his goal is to have all regional cavity nesters nest on his property. Jack's presentation will be "Growing Mealworms - a supplemental food for Bluebirds". He has some wonderful video on feeding and growing mealworms and with his variety of cavity nesters he feeds more than just bluebirds.

And of course we can not forget all the bluebirders you will meet from Missouri and beyond. We usually have bluebirders from four or five Midwestern states with expertise on different situations and habitats. Each one is eager to share their experiences to help new bluebirders. I know I always learn something new and different even though I have been helping bluebirds for over 30 years.

See you soon,

*Steve Garr* , MOBS President

## Missouri Bluebird Society 2009 / 2010 Officers & Board of Directors

**President....Steve Garr**    [steve@birds-i-view.biz](mailto:steve@birds-i-view.biz)    573-638-2473

**Vice- President..Janelle Schulte**    [jf101spots@aol.com](mailto:jf101spots@aol.com)    573-295-6820

**Secretary & Fledgling Editor...Regina Garr**    [regina@birds-i-view.biz](mailto:regina@birds-i-view.biz)    573-638-2473

**Treasurer...Tammy Simmons**    [blizzard@socket.net](mailto:blizzard@socket.net)    **Board Member....Jim Rathert**    [birdfoto@mchsi.com](mailto:birdfoto@mchsi.com)

**Board Member & MOBS Webmaster ..Jack Dodson**    [jackdodson@missouribluebird.org](mailto:jackdodson@missouribluebird.org)

**Board Member....Julian Distler**    [maryanndistler@aol.com](mailto:maryanndistler@aol.com)    573-635-2030

## An "Interview" with Conference Keynote Speaker Jim Rathert

By Regina Garr, Fledgling Editor



Above: TONS of rock are unloaded at Memorial Park in Jefferson City to begin construction of the Wild Bird Garden "Bubbler". This bird-magnet was conceived and designed by Jim Rathert and is the site of one of the Conference Filed Trips!



Above: Members of the River Bluffs Audubon society and other local volunteers provided the "manpower" that made this bird garden a reality!



Above : What began as thick , over-grown brush and a pile of rock is beginning to take shape!

**FLEDGLING:** Many of the MOBS members do not realize that you designed and donated the beautiful MOBS Logo to the organization. When and where did you take the photograph of the bluebird in the logo? What else can you tell us about some of the choices you made for the logo? (editor note: Jim has generously donated a foam coaster sporting the MOBS logo to be included in each of the Bluebird Information Packets given to all attendees at the Conference this year!!)

**JIM:** *"The photo of male bluebird was taken a couple of months after I retired in 2006 at Branson. It was at the beginning of the courtship when the male was presenting nesting material to entice the female to the nest cavity. I like the photo because it touches on the importance of successful nesting programs to ensure a healthy population. The addition of the Missouri map makes it a fitting logo".*

**FLEDGLING:** This issue of the Fledgling contains some images of the Memorial Park Wild Bird Garden in Jefferson City, which is the site of one of our afternoon field trips for the Bluebird Conference in September. The images show the garden in various stages of completion. What can you tell us about why you chose this location to develop this project? What are the "bird-friendly" elements of this garden? Personally, what are your favorite aspects of this garden?

**JIM:** *"There are many appealing elements of the bird garden. The location is in a highly accessible part of Jeff City and within a 40 min drive from Columbia. The garden itself is within 4 acre mature forest in Memorial Park surrounded by an older well established neighborhood with lots of old trees. The "Bubbler", or water feature, is the best part of the project because it provides consistent water for bathing and drinking. Water gurgles from the top of a nearly two ton limestone boulder and flows a short distance into the forest. Along the short trail and surrounding the boulder are planted native shrubs and perennials that are both attractive and beneficial to wildlife."*

**FLEDGLING:** Our next field trip destination is the Runge Conservation Nature Center and I know you have been visiting and photographing at this location for years. What types of wildlife have you photographed at Runge and do you have any favorite subjects there? What can we look forward to seeing at this nature center at the end of September?

**JIM:** *"The Runge Nature Center opened in 1993 and seems to get better every year. Sixty years ago the property was a working farm on the outskirts of Jeff City. Overgrazing by hogs and cattle took a serious toll on the native plant community but M.D.C. has been working to restore the natural character through burning, replanting and selective cutting. It was in one of those managed areas where the first painted bunting showed up four years ago. A good selection of small birds visit the feeding station behind the center along with frequent wild turkeys and deer. Red and Gray foxes and an occasional bobcat may be seen. Small fish less pond are great for viewing amphibians and dragonflies. During the last of September we can look forward to the fall color of sumac and fall blooming prairie plants as well as migrating songbirds."*

.....Rathert interview continued on page 7

Rathert interview continued from page 2

**FLEDGLING:** How does photographing Bluebirds differ from photographing other birds--or does it?

**JIM:** *" All birds are most easily photographed when the photographer can anticipate their patterns of behavior or activity. Most often this happens around a nest, feeding area or water source. During the nesting season when adults are feeding the young is a prime time to photograph bluebirds. During cold winter days a heated bird bath is a terrific location. As with all wildlife photography a certain amount of luck and a lot of persistence are required."*

**FLEDGLING:** We are all looking forward to your program at the Bluebird Conference! Can you give us some hints as to what you will be sharing with us?

**JIM:** *"My program will be a retrospective of my 40 years of nature photography. I'll touch a bit on the changes in the technology of photography but mostly on how I do what I do--the techniques."*

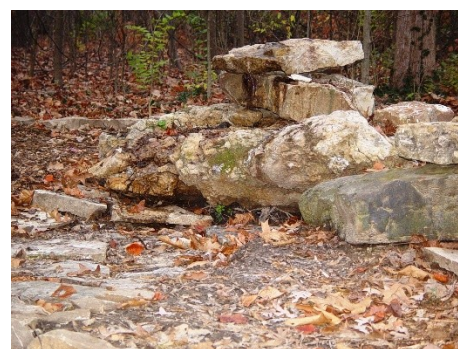
**FLEDGLING:** This past year I attended a wonderful program you presented about "colorful birds". I have to ask the question you were asked that day, and I am sure you are asked at nearly every program: Do you have a favorite bird??!

**JIM:** *"I have several but my favorite is the painted bunting. Until about 20 years ago I had never seen one in Missouri although I had seen them in South Carolina and Oklahoma. I searched unsuccessfully for them in the "known hot-spots" in SW Missouri but to no avail. Then I got a tip from a friend about feeder at a summer lake home on Bull Shoals Lake where a pair came to feed. The home owner graciously allowed me set up my photo blind--and I was hooked. In recent years they have expanded their nesting range and I can now enjoy them just 2 miles from my home in Jeff City.*

*Other contenders for my list of favorites are greater road-runner, black-necked stilts, greater prairie-chickens and great egrets. All of these will be included in my program."*



Above: Jim prepares the Rocks at the Memorial Park Wild Bird Garden in Jefferson City to "bubble" with water--thus the name: "The Bubbler"!



Above: The Bubbler in the Fall of the year ( great for attracting migrating birds)



Above: The Bubbler in Winter...still bubbling!

Below: MOBS President, Steve Garr enjoys a seat on one of the benches in front of the Bubbler. Steve has his binoculars handy to watch birds drawn to the Wild Bird Garden. both benches in the garden are made from recycled plastic.

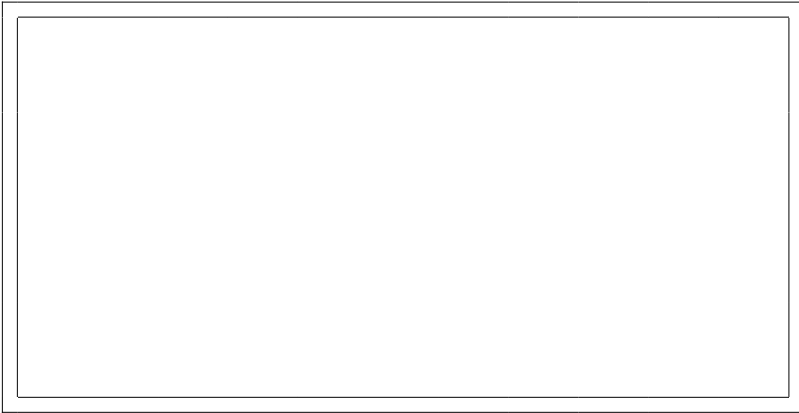


**More Bluebird Conference  
Details are available on the  
MOBS website :**

**[www.missouribluebird.org](http://www.missouribluebird.org)**

**If you still need more info, try:**

**[www.birds-i-view.biz](http://www.birds-i-view.biz)**



**The Fledgling**  
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The Missouri Bluebird Society  
P.O. BOX 105830  
Jefferson City, MO 65110

## The Fledgling 2010 FALL Issue

- **An INTERVIEW with Bluebird Conference Keynote Speaker, Jim Rathert!** (Jim talks photography, field trip highlights, and more!)
- **2010 Nest Box Summary Reports**
- **2010 Bluebird Conference Brochure** with Registration Form and Speaker details
- **Photos of the Memorial Park Wild Bird Garden & "Bubbler"**

Eastern Bluebird Photo by MOBS Treasurer,  
Tammy Simmons

