

MDC and partners host 40th annual Loess Bluffs Eagle Days

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), and partners will host the 40th annual Eagle Days at the Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 1-2. This free event offers participants a close-up look at eagles and an indoor presentation by Springfield's Dickerson Park Zoo staff. Visitors can also take the refuge driving tour and see waterfowl in the marshes or bald eagles perched in trees.

Extensive wetlands at Loess Bluffs attract large flocks of ducks and geese, often numbering in the thousands. Trumpeter swans are often spotted resting and feeding in the marshes. The wetlands are near Mound City in Holt County, north of St. Joseph. The refuge is a key stopover for southward migrating waterfowl and shore birds as winter arrives. Bald eagles follow the waterfowl flocks to feed upon ducks and geese.

Visitors can also hike on trails that begin at the visitor center and lead to high bluffs with remnant loess hill prairie. The visitor center also has displays such as birds common to the area. Photographers taking the driving tour will want to have their cameras handy to photograph wildlife seen along the way. Interpretive sites and spotting scopes will be set up along the tour route.

Dickerson Park Zoo staff will present a live eagle show. The zoo cares for eagles that have been rehabilitated from injuries but cannot be released back to the wild. Zoo staff will talk about eagle lore, conservation and ecology. Visitors can take pictures of the eagles. Live eagle shows will be presented hourly 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday.

The refuge driving tours and nature interpretive stops will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday. Guided bus tours of the refuge and food vendors will also be available.

The Loess Bluffs refuge is reached via Interstate 29 by taking the U.S. 159 exit west.

For more information about Eagle Days at the Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge, call 816-271-3100, or visit https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Loess_Bluffs/. The website also has weekly updates on waterfowl and eagle numbers at the refuge.

For information about bald eagles in Missouri, visit <http://mdc.mo.gov>.